

VII. Reflections on Your Differentiated Literacy Lesson Plans

During this time spent with Gabby, it is evident that she has made progress in her literacy abilities since the beginning of the school year. She is a motivated and cooperative learner who finds a true joy in reading, despite her struggles. She is committed to learning and participating in whole-group instruction and during individual conference time.

One of the ways in which Gabby's reading instruction has made meaningful progress is through her Fountas and Pinnell reading level growth. Earlier in the school year Gabby was not able to read past letter B books without becoming frustrated. As the year has continued, Gabby has been able to read from the letter B, C and D books. It is clear that a combination of Gabby's own willingness to commit to reading as well as the daily reading support services, home practice and the interventions done during this project has allowed her reading to flourish.

Gabby has been able to better recognize short and long vowel sounds and patterns in words to improve her accuracy and fluency. This can be seen in the documents completed by Gabby during Part 2 of this assignment.

It was important to ensure student success during my time with Gabby. Recognizing her reading struggles and being aware of her strengths and weaknesses was very important. By administering pre-assessments of many different varieties, I was able to better comprehend exactly what areas of struggle would be most important to focus on for Gabby. Additionally, I wanted Gabby to feel comfortable working with me in the classroom environment. Gabby was given the opportunity to work with me

independently when the class left for recess and enjoy some “informal” teacher time where she did not feel the pressure of performing in front of her classmates.

This type of approach was beneficial for Gabby as she felt comfortable, at ease and more able to communicate her thinking verbally. She was less hesitant to discuss her thoughts and share her strategies in solving words. There was also the simple fact that there were no interruptions causing her comprehension or thinking to be altered. While first grade is a loving and up-beat place to be, it is also a lot of management and students require significant assistance from the teacher in the biggest and smallest of events throughout the day. By eliminating the interruption time during my lessons with Gabby, she was able to improve in her performance.

I was also mindful of the prompts, feedback and manipulatives I used in my lessons with Gabby. I made a conscious decision to include hands-on activities that would allow Gabby to focus on fine-motor skills as well as reading strategies that were the focus of the lesson. Although Gabby does not need significant work in her fine-motor skills, it is still a first grade skill that students need to practice frequently. Additionally, I made an effort to use deeper thinking questions and comments that would allow Gabby to elaborate on her decisions and thought processing. Instead of allowing her to sort objects to the left or right, I explained and modeled the way in which the sorts or nonsense words should be talked out.

The lessons that were completed with Gabby were all geared toward the results of her pre-assessments from Fountas and Pinnell and ReadingA-Z. One of the most critical moments during instruction was when Gabby could be heard sounding out words and

self-correcting while I watched. These moments are ones where teachers may not be able to witness as they happen, but rather after-the-fact, resulting in a big circle or arrow to words or pictures that were sorted incorrectly. While listening to Gabby “chunk” words with short and long A vowels, I was able to hear her thinking and talking out where the words should go on the sort. This moment was so telling of Gabby’s progress in her reading and demonstrated how beneficial the lessons planned for Gabby were.

Evidence that Gabby had achieved her instructional goals is through her newest Fountas and Pinnell reading level as well as in her completed lessons. These provide insight to the progress she has made since September with the help of reading support services and continued practice at home.

If I were given another opportunity to teach this lesson with this student, I may change a few things to better benefit the child. In order for the student to be more actively engaged in the lessons, I may spend more time choosing activities that were more “center” or “game” oriented rather than a cutting and pasting game. Additionally, I could have altered the nonsense words with the magnetic letters to a Smartboard activity where Gabby could utilize the classroom technology to gain better understanding. These two factors would have been appropriate and be considered more “active” in their content and give Gabby the chance to spend time doing things that not the whole class would be participating in, creating a positive notion in her mind.

My reading instruction for this student could be more developmentally appropriate and responsive to her unique needs in a few ways. I have added allowed Gabby the chance to include some Italian words or sign words that belonged in the word family that we were

studying or create a word in Italian on the whiteboard with magnetic letters. Giving Gabby this freedom could have created more of a confident feel to the lesson and made her feel comfortable enough to show what she is capable of in three different mediums.

One of the aspects of my reading lessons that demonstrate my use of newly learned techniques to provide effective learning is my experience in administering Fountas and Pinnell assessments in conjunction with Reading A-Z. These two different forms of assessments are somewhat newer to my school district and I continue to practice administering these assessments each school year. As I become more comfortable and aware of each text students may read, I am better able to anticipate what kinds of reading difficulties students may have when they read with me.

VIII. Recommendations to Teachers and Parents/Caregivers

It is in the best interest of the student that daily practice and skills are practiced at home with parents and/or care givers. Routine practice and continued efforts both at school and at home will allow Gabby to improve and maintain her progress so far this year in her literacy.

One recommendation is to read nightly with Gabby. It is important that Gabby not only reads aloud stories to family members at home, but that she is re-reading those stories to improve in accuracy and fluency rate. Gabby has great motivation in reading, making this step something that is less of a requirement and more of an enjoyment.

It would also be beneficial for Gabby to continue literacy practices and skills at school through learning partnerships. This approach would be most appropriate if Gabby were paired with a student who has excelled in their reading and can model fluency and

other reading strategies that Gabby has not yet mastered. This approach is two fold in that Gabby gains awareness and knowledge through a classmate, while the classmate is able to better practice their routines and reading habits. Additionally, Gabby will feel the support and bond from a student who can better-relate to her learning versus an adult at home.

Last, it is vital that Gabby continues gain exposure in all types of literature. While first grade provides students with many different types of books at many different levels, variety is what Gabby needs. Students who have read from a variety of genres and authors are able to develop deeper comprehension strategies and critical thinking skills that may not be exposed if reading from strictly their “preferred” text. This can be achieved through library trips, online programs such as Raz-Kids and ReadingA-Z. These also provide Gabby with technology engagement allowing Gabby to become a part of her own learning.

IX. Appendices of Work

Appendix A

Lesson 1

Focus: Long A Vowel Sound

Date: October 21, 2014

Objective: Student will create consonant-vowel-consonant-vowel patterns on magnetic board with magnetic foam letters and read words aloud with the correct long vowel sound.

We will first review the CVC pattern with the short a pattern. This vowel sound pattern will be briefly practiced to strengthen background knowledge of vowel sounds. Then, the student will create long vowel sounds together with the teacher to focus on long vowel sounds by “flipping the vowel” from short to long. The pattern (CVCV) will be modeled

first by the teacher and read aloud by dragging their finger below the created word and reading it aloud. The student will practice with the teacher after three examples. The student will then create a word that has been said orally by the teacher. The student will be sitting at the rainbow table with the teacher in the classroom. Mastery of this lesson would include correct building of long A vowel words and correct pronunciation of long A words.

Common Core State Standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.3.C

Know final -e and common vowel team conventions for representing long vowel sounds.

Instructional Materials:

- Magnetic Board
- Magnetic Alphabet Letters

On-going assessment:

Student will be assessed on mastery of this skill through long vowel sorts and word identification during reading.

Appendix B

Lesson 2

Focus: Word Family (-ake)

Date: October 23, 2014

Objective: Student will complete word family activities including long a vowel sounds, first reading the words orally, then matching the long A pictures to their word family word.

The student will review long A vowel sounds and the ways in which the vowel says “it’s name”. The student will be presented with the long A word family –“ake” and complete a picture-word match by reading the long a word out loud, then filling in the answer. The student will be located at the rainbow table during the review then sent to their desk to finish the activity independently.

Common Core State Standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.2.A

Distinguish long from short vowel sounds in spoken single-syllable words.

Instructional Materials:

- Magnetic Board
- Magnetic Alphabet Letters

- -ake word family activity pages

On-going assessment:

Long A and other vowels will continue to be focused on with word family patterns throughout the year. Proper completion of this lesson would result in correct picture-word matches and accurate pronunciation of long vowel sounds in word families with an –e at the end.

Appendix C

Lesson 3

Focus: Short A / Long A Word Sort

Date: October 24, 2014

Objective: Student will complete short and long vowel sort activity page by correctly placing pictures into appropriate vowel sound section.

The student will review the –ake word family and long A vowel sounds that have been practiced in lessons 1 and 2. The student will recall the short A and long A sound differences with the teacher at the rainbow table and the “flipping the vowel” strategy. The student will be given directions for the sorting activity and will review the pictures with teacher together. The student will then complete the cut and paste activity independently. Mastery of this skill would result in correct sorting of the long A and short A pictures.

Common Core State Standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.2.A

Distinguish long from short vowel sounds in spoken single-syllable words.

Instructional Materials:

- **Short a / long a worksheet**
- **Scissors**
- **glue**

On-going assessment:

Student will continue to practice short and long A letter sounds during reading and in word family focuses each week and “flipping the vowel” strategy.

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