

Analyzing Student Data

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Analysis of Assessment Data: William

The first student to be analyzed was William, a second grader. There were four different assessments given to William all measuring different concepts. The **Qualitative Reading Inventory** (QRI) is individually administered informal reading inventory designed to provide information about conditions under which students can identify words and comprehend text successfully and conditions that appear to result in unsuccessful word identification or comprehension (McKenna & Stahl, 2009). **Informal Phonics Inventory** measures knowledge of consonant sounds, diagraphs, blends and vowel variations (McKenna & Stahl, 2009). **Fry Sight-Word Inventory** included 100 high frequency words identified by sight (McKenna & Stahl, 2009), and an **Elementary Spelling Inventory**, which measured a scale of developmental word knowledge (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011).

William's QRI provided insights in regard to William's comprehension while reading from the narrative piece, "The Bear and the Rabbit". He had a difficult time comprehending the differences between the characters. William did not understand that one character sang and one played an instrument. This confusion may stem from William's miscue of "hone" in place of the word "horn". Prior to reading, William was unable to make a prediction about the text despite having 78%, a relatively high, concept question score. He also failed to self-correct within the passage when his miscues led to a sentence that did not make sense. It is also important to note that William read 91 words per minute (WPM), placing him within the third grade range according to the Ranges of Oral Reading Rate scale.

From the Informal Phonics Inventory, William struggled with blends, short and long vowels and r-controlled vowels. In each of these categories, William scored a 50% or below. It is evident that William struggles in blending two letters together and switching vowel sounds in words. In contrast, William was extremely successful in the Fry Sight-Word Inventory assessment, scoring a 95%. However, in linking the assessments together, it is important to point out that four of the 100 words from this inventory were words that were marked as miscues from the QRI. This may speak to the speed in which William was reading during the assessment, hindering his comprehension.

Lastly, the Elementary Spelling Inventory included the first ten words from the *Words Their Way* word study program. The list is designed to increase in word difficulty with each additional word. The assessment shows William spelling 1/10 words correctly. William spelled only the first word correctly, the easiest “bed”, and was unable to spell any further words accurately. Out of the ten miscues from William’s reading 7/10 were all graphically similar in their beginning sound. His Elementary Spelling Inventory indicated he had spelled 10/10 words with the correct beginning sound. It is clear there is a connection among these assessments as well. In comparing the words from this assessment to Miscue Analysis Chart I completed, it is evident that William is able to spell and identify the beginning letter sounds of a word but struggles with blends and word endings, including short and long vowel sounds.

From all of these assessments, it is important to relate William’s abilities to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These grade level based standards include skills that a student needs to master within each grade. While William’s assessments were

performed in September of second grade and he is considered to be reading at grade level, his comprehension is in need of improvement. As CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.RL.2.1 states that students must ask and answer such questions as *who, what, where, when, why, and how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text by the end of second grade, William would benefit from additional support in this aspect.

Additionally, his overall phonics in regard to segmenting and blending words is another area of focus due to CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.RF.2.3 stating that students must know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. More specifically, in regard to vowels, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.2.3. A says that a student must distinguish long and short vowels when reading regularly spelled one-syllable words. The phonics and letter sound knowledge relates to CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.2.3.B in which one must know spelling-sound correspondences for additional common vowel teams, as well as CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.2.3.C Decode regularly spelled two-syllable words with long vowels. These are standards in which William will need support to master by the end of second grade.

Goals for Instruction: William

The first goal that would benefit William's reading development is to build comprehension strategies. This is a significant goal for William as it is within the middle tier of the Modified Cognitive Model (McKenna & Stahl, 2009) that identifies important foundational skills to build successful readers. This is something that is important for William to master as the above CCSS RL.2.1 indicate that a student must be able to ask and answer *who, what, where, when, why and how* to indicate understanding. This was something that William was unable to do in his QRI assessment. Questions such as, "What

did the rabbit do?" or, "Why did the bear and the rabbit become friends?" were both answered incorrectly. While he did provide answers, they were inaccurate, stating that, "The rabbit singed with him." when the correct answer was "The rabbit got his horn." or "Because they both liked to sing." when the answer was "because of their love of music". These questions provide great insight to William's comprehension and the lack of monitoring during reading. He had instances in which he substituted many words making a sentence grammatically incorrect affecting his understanding. One example of this is "Own who sings like that must be nice" and "I want be nice to have a friend". While William's retelling was generally accurate, it neglected details that are important to understand as a reader.

The second goal that would benefit William's reading development is to focus on blending and segmenting words to improve accuracy. This is relevant for William because it reflects the CCSS of RF.2.3 A-C. The simple fact that there are three standards within the realm of vowels; phonics and word analysis emphasizes the importance of mastering this skill. These abilities were lacking in William's Informal Phonics Inventory scoring below 50% on 5 out of 9 assessments. Most notably in The Rule of Silent E, r-Controlled Vowels and -al followed by final consonant Blends, Short Vowels in CVC words, and Long Vowels in Diagraphs. Again, William's Elementary Spelling Inventory indicated that he is strong in beginning sounds but suffers in blends as seen in "win" for "when", "sip" for "ship", and "dive" for "drive". While these errors are key to analyzing, it is also vital to notice that the error of "hone" for "horn" in William's QRI may have been a catalyst in his poor comprehension in the aspect of the rabbit's character traits. Had this r-Controlled vowel

been read accurately, perhaps William would have had a better understanding of the character's differences.

Instructional Strategies: William

To address the first goal of building comprehension strategies, an instructional strategy would be to implement the use of graphic organizers. In McKenna and Stahl, this strategy is said to help to recall ideas from the story, which can include story maps, Venn-diagrams and compare and contrast tables. Graphic organizers reflect the text structures and aid in organizing the ideas within a story and recalling the events, ideal for William to help support his comprehension (McKenna & Stahl, 2009). To implement this strategy, it would be wise to introduce the graphic organizer prior to reading, discuss the kinds of information expected to be asked to guide their focus during reading. I would also suggest using sticky notes or page tabs to stick to the pages where the answers were found. In this way the student is actively engaged, doing "detective work", for certain information that improves comprehension. I expect that the use of this strategy would meet one of William's goals as it lends itself to keeping ideas and thoughts organized, acts as an overall guide to the "Five W's" of who, what, where, when, why, and comes in a variety of forms.

The second instructional strategy to address building comprehension is retelling. This is a strategy of choice because ReadingRockets.org indicated that children's story retelling influenced both story-related comprehension and expressive vocabulary as well as nonstory-related receptive language and early literacy development (Dunst, 2012). Finding from this research article also showed that the use of the characteristics that experts consider the important features of retelling practices was associated with positive

outcomes. This could be implemented at the beginning of reading. Retellings often include different qualities such as: problem/solution, main idea, or beginning, middle and end. In William's case, I would discuss the type of retelling required, beginning, middle, end in his case, and review those three parts of a story. By including what some consider a "mini-lesson", before reading, William will be able to focus on finding three main parts of a story that he would then share orally. This addresses CCSS RL.2.1 in that he would be identifying the key details in a text.

For William's second goal of blending and segmenting words for accuracy, one instructional strategy would be the "Guessing Game" described by Morrow and Gambrell. Objects such as a hat, ball, chalk, book etc. are placed in a bag. Children reach in the bag and stretch out the name of the object they chose then call on a classmate to guess what it is. A variation of this game that's also discussed by Morrow and Gambrell is "Ghost Talk" One child chooses an object in the room and says it by stretching it out very slowly. Both these games provide practice in segmenting and blending as children segment words by stretching them out and other children blend the words together to guess them (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011). This activity could be implemented during guided reading groups. Groups would consist of 4-5 students participating in either game that would focus on the phonics of the letters. This would meet the goal of blending and segmenting words, as it requires students to "stretch" out the sounds and spell the words being said, a task William was unable to perform. It also addresses the CCSS RL.2.3, creating mastery in skills second graders are expected to achieve.

The second instructional strategy to satisfy William's segmenting and blending goal are vowel sorts. This is a beneficial strategy for William as these categories in his Informal Phonics Inventory were graded at 5/10 and 0/4. Vowel sorts can be used through Smartboard activities similar to those I have used in my own classroom. Students will identify the pictures with correct vowels and drag the images to the corresponding vowel on the page. By doing so, they will become more familiar with the different vowel sounds and be more comfortable in "flipping the vowel". Additionally, the Magic E Smartboard activity in which students change consonant-vowel-consonant words by adding a silent 'e' on to the end can also be used for blending and segmenting words. This again emphasizes the different sounds vowels can make within a word. This could be used at the beginning of Reader's Workshop as a whole group activity where students will be reminded of the vowels and the two pronunciations they have. They can be prompted to use these two different sounds when reading independently when they see a word they do not know. This instructional strategy is important to include for William as he has significant room for growth in this area based on his assessment results. It also speaks to the CCSS RL.2.3A-C and the relevance of mastering these concepts.

Analysis of Assessment Data: Sarah

The second student to be analyzed was Sarah, a fourth grader. Sarah participated in three assessments, two of the same variety. The first two assessments were QRIs. The first QRI given to Sarah was a narrative, which tells a story but is informational, titled "Johnny Appleseed". The second QRI assessment Sarah participated in was an expository passage, telling information, called "Early Railroads". Similarly to William's case, these QRI assessments measure conditions under which students can identify words and

comprehend text successfully and conditions that appear to result in unsuccessful word identification or comprehension (McKenna & Stahl, 2009). The second assessment Sarah participated in was the Elementary Spelling Inventory, which measures developmental spelling knowledge (McKenna & Stahl 2009).

Sarah's QRI provided insights in regard to Sarah's comprehension while reading from the narrative piece, "Johnny Appleseed". Sarah scored a 67% in unfamiliarity on the concept questions given prior to reading, a weak score in background knowledge. Overall, Sarah was able to read the story with few miscues, either adding words that did not alter the meaning of the text or reading "fronter" instead of "frontier", "e-rope" instead of "Europe" and one self-correction. Her retelling scoring sheet shows a very vague response, one in which few, if any, events could be checked off the retelling list. One of the most notable parts of this QRI is how many words Sarah omitted or responses were, "I don't know." This trend shows signs of few, or no, strategies being used to help solve challenging words or questions.

The second QRI provides deeper understanding to Sarah's strengths and weaknesses. This expository piece, "Early Railroads", began with concept questions in which Sarah scored a 50% and had undetermined familiarity scores. In reading Sarah's concept question responses and her generalized prediction, it is clear that Sarah has very limited background knowledge of the topics that will be covered in the passage. While some may argue that Sarah did have responses to each question, her responses were very vague and almost limited in their depth. Sarah's miscues in this text include substitutions, phonetically recited words, and reading the years in math terms. While these errors are

important to note, the most telling portion of this second QRI was her extremely imprecise retelling. The most telling portion of the QRI came from the list of explicit and implicit questions. Sarah's responses included "I don't know", "I think he lost though, right?" and "Didn't they say E-rope or something?" These types of responses highlight the lack of not only confidence but also comprehension. Again, one important thing to note is the lack of skills and strategies Sarah withholds to applies during reading.

The last assessment was the Elementary Spelling Inventory where Sarah was to spell 25 words that become more challenging as the words continue. Sarah scored a 75% on this assessment, five of the errors being the last five and most challenging words. Sarah's ability to identify the beginning letter sounds of words is accurate in 19/20 words and generally has a strong overall concept of letter sound recognition. This is evident as she had few errors in her QRI, though some words were omitted.

Relating these assessments to the CCSS is an important step to take in order to understand areas in need of development. Though Sarah's assessments were performed in September of fourth grade and is considered to be reading at grade level, her background knowledge is in need of support as CCSS.ELA LITERACY.RI.4.7 states that students must be able to interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears. This speaks to the fact that Sarah was able to provide answers to the pre-reading questions, yet did not apply them to her comprehension while reading so she would benefit from additional practice with this skill.

Secondly, Sarah has room for improvement in comprehension. This is an important

skill to have according to CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.RI.4.1 and 4.2 where students refer to details in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and inferencing as well as determining the theme of a story and summarizing a text. Sarah's comprehension skills from both QRIs show that she would benefit from support in this area.

Goals for Instruction: Sarah

Based on these assessments, one goal for Sarah would be to build background knowledge. As stated above, RI.4.7 requires students master the ability to interpret information that contributes to their understanding by the end of fourth grade. This is an important goal for reading development as background knowledge plays a vital role in gaining understanding with any lesson in school. As Sarah goes through school, she will encounter many lessons in which she is required to reflect back to a previous event, time or memory to draw a connection to the text. It has been said that connections enable deeper comprehension and meaning for learners. This is also significant as it is a part of the central tier in the Modified Cognitive Model (McKenna & Stahl, 2009). Additionally, Dr. James Kim identifies in his YouTube video that we have domains of knowledge that help us understand text. Matching books to a student's reading level and interest guides students to more successful reading opportunities. The more you know, the easier it is to comprehend and that the other core subjects from the CCSS focus on background knowledge from as early as Kindergarten, thus benefiting students in the long run (Kim, 2014). Therefore, Sarah would see great success in practicing building background knowledge.

A second goal based on Sarah's assessments is to build comprehension strategies. From RI 4.1 and 4.2, students must be able to identify details in a text during discussions and include implicit and explicit meanings. This type of comprehension is important to master early in education as reading genres continue to include these structures and concepts that the reader must be able to interpret. It is important for Sarah to develop these reading skills so she can self-monitor during reading instead of omitting words or leaving questions unanswered. She displayed this tendency during her QRI, which faulted her significantly. Additionally, knowledge of text is another element found within the middle tier of the Modified Cognitive Model from McKenna and Stahl.

These three assessments may be separate in their topics but common in their theme. Sarah's results allow similarities to be found in her abilities and in her weaknesses. Sarah's lack of background knowledge and comprehension are both emphasized through her dialogue during questions and her low scores in the pre-reading concept questions. It is also important to note that Sarah is missing two of the three elements in the middle tier of the Modified Cognitive Model: knowledge of text and background knowledge. Even further, Sarah lacks strategic knowledge, in which students have their own strategies to solve reading challenges. Without these core foundational skills, Sarah will not be able to meet overall reading comprehension. Tanya's PowerPoint also stated that students are struggling in reading comprehension if any of these strands break down.

Instructional Strategies: Sarah

To address the first goal of building background knowledge, one instructional strategy would be to introduce the vocabulary of the text prior to reading. This was

discussed in Morrow and Gambrell, which says that vocabulary instruction is essential to content-area learning. This would be a great strategy for Sarah as many of the texts she will be reading in fourth grade, as well in future grades, will be informational texts. The authors go on to say that students make the mistake of believing that because they can furnish on definition, they know everything they need to know about the term. Students need to know that they do not have complete knowledge specific to the discipline (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011). Additionally, Tanya Wright adds in her PowerPoint presentation stating that vocabulary is like the tip of an iceberg, knowing a lot about the concept of the topic, conjuring up a whole schema. Studies done by Neuman & Write argue for content-rich vocabulary, which provides natural opportunities for repetition and supports comprehension of school texts (Wright, 2014).

This is why vocabulary is vital to comprehension. This could be used prior to reading through whole group discussions and note taking. The teacher should have the knowledge of the vocabulary words prior to the discussions in order to better prepare students for the content. An extension of this activity would be through a picture walk of the content (if pictures are included in the text), furthering understanding of the content through images. This strategy would help students like Sarah activate other ideas or concepts they may have in relation to the text to provide deeper, or as Wright says, a more “rich” understanding and increase motivation and interest in a student.

A second strategy to build background knowledge would be through the use of KWL charts, representing what the students know, want to know and what students learned. This pre-reading strategy could be completed as a whole-group activity. This is an ideal

strategy for Sarah to gain background knowledge as other students have the opportunity to contribute thoughts and ideas that may aid in Sarah's thought process during reading. This instructional strategy is something commonly used in classrooms and has been discussed as a useful tool within discussion groups for this course by fellow teachers. Teachers find great success in KWL because of its pre-reading and post-reading feature. Sarah would not only gain information to use during reading, but will also revisit ideas and lessons learned after reading, making this strategy worthwhile.

The second goal to build comprehension strategies may be met through an instructional strategy discussed in McKenna and Stahl called Reading Guides. These activities are to be completed *during* reading and come in various forms. Students may be asked to complete charts, interpret diagrams, add illustrations, written responses or answer questions (McKenna & Stahl, 2009). Since Sarah's comprehension responses in her QRIs were very limited, a reading guide would provide Sarah the opportunity to focus on the important details of a story that are being asked in the activity, supporting comprehension of the text. This would also provide Sarah the chance to go back to the reading and reread in areas she did not understand, increasing her self-monitoring and guide her towards achieving the CCSS expected.

While Sarah may read independently and use reading guides to help build comprehension, a second instructional strategy is to model comprehension strategies through think alouds. When teachers reflect on what they do to make sense of a text, they generate a list of mental activities that students can then use on their own. Some of these strategies include discuss predicting, inferring, questioning, visualizing, rereading and

revising the problem. This is something that I commonly do in my first grade classroom. These think alouds, often done during read alouds, allow students to see and hear what fluent readers do to check for their understanding. If Sarah had exposure to the ways in which people address reading challenges, she would be more successful in her comprehension of a text and accomplish the CCSS, preparing her for fifth grade.

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