

Background Information

One of my third grade students was the subject for my case study on fluency. I have been Zoey's teacher since the beginning of August and have a close relationship with her. Zoey attends a magnet elementary school in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, a university town. The magnet aspect of the school means Zoey and her classmates are bussed in from all over town. Another component of the magnet school means students academic achievements are high and are considered gifted. This does not necessarily mean all students are above grade level in all aspects. Eight year old Zoey reads slightly below grade level and is socially reserved. Zoey works hard to keep up with her classmates at the magnet school; it takes time for her to fully understand concepts. She is African American and speaks English proficiently at home. Zoey enjoys reading with friends at school and is interested in dinosaurs. She has a positive mindset about reading and is eager to work one on one with me (Standard II).

As a teacher at an International Baccalaureate school, my classroom community is focused on I.B. attitudes that foster a classroom culture of drive and compassion. I use I.B attitudes such as risk-taking, empathy, independence, cooperation, and caring to support my students learning and interests. (I.B). Students guide their learning through enrichment projects based off interests and attitudes are integrated into the curriculum. I strive to have a meaningful relationship with each student to ensure they feel safe and loved within the classroom. I spend time getting to know my students and building trust. To show a united front between parents and myself, I often attend after school activities for my students. Zoey comes to me to share her

worries and joys, this demonstrates she feels safe within my classroom. I believe before your students can learn from you, they have to have a bond with you.(Standard IV).

Zoey's instructional challenges are predominately literacy based, however she does receive additional support in math as well. Alabama state testing results and classroom observations align with areas that are of particular challenge to Zoey. It was determined Zoey needed additional reading support when she was in second grade. This support came as a Lexia online learning account that she continues to utilize in third grade. Lexia is a computer program that supports students literacy learning through games and skill builder lessons done by the teacher. Zoey uses Lexia in the morning and occasionally in the afternoon. She is able to use the program at home but does not utilize this component. I am alerted when Zoey is struggling with a concept on Lexia and a skill builder lesson is then used during intervention time to target the challenging idea. Through the program, Zoey is measuring at an end of second grade reading level via Lexia, this is an improvement from being mid-year second grade reading level at the beginning of the school year. State testing, assessments, and classroom observations display areas within literacy that are of a challenge to Zoey, these include reading comprehension and fluency. Scantron assessment, state testing, determined Common Core State Standards Zoey has mastered or has yet to master. After cross-referencing standard mastery from my personal teachings and observations, I determined Zoey needed instructional support in reading comprehension. Summarizing and drawing conclusions were areas in need of the most support. (Standard II & III). Following this decision I gave Zoey a QRI reading assessment and taught her a lesson on summarizing a text to help us understand what we read. During the lesson I could not

ignore the fact that Zoey was getting hung up on reading the passage and struggled with fluency. Instead of focusing on reading for understanding, she was reading in chunks thus interrupting her reading comprehension. I made the decision to switch the case study focus to better suit my student. Fluency and multisyllabic words became the updated focus for the case study. (Standard I, II and V) .

Assessments

The assessments I utilized in this case study included DIBELS, Scantron Performance Series, Qualitative Fluency Assessment, and Qualitative Reading Inventory. I first consulted Scantron Performance Series, state testing, to determine standards Zoey was currently missing. The test revealed Zoey needed further instruction with reading comprehension, primarily summarizing a text and drawing conclusions. Looking at Zoey's beginning of third grade DIBELS score revealed she also needed support in fluency and accuracy. Zoey was reading 74 words per minute with 96% accuracy while she should be reading 112 words per minute with 99% accuracy. After administering a QRI on Zoey it was evident through her pauses and lack of inflection that she needed fluency instruction as it was getting in the way of her understanding what she was reading. I used Qualitative Fluency Assessment as a pre and post assessment for the case study as well cross-referencing DIBELS and Scantron Performance Series. (Standard I & V).

Design of Case Study

Lessons selected for Zoey were focused on improving her reading fluency through the use of fluency strategies and decoding multisyllabic words. The goal of the first lesson I taught was for Zoey to be able to summarize a text. However when Zoey was reading aloud the text it was evident she was stumbling on reading occasional words and was reading word for word or in chunks. I took notes on the words she did not read automatically and found that all of them were multisyllabic words. After this point I decided it was better for Zoey that I focus on reading multisyllabic words and fluency in order to support her reading comprehension.

Cross-referencing my observations and DIBELS assessments, I concluded switching the case study focus was best for my student. Moving forward, I assessed Zoey with Qualitative Fluency Assessment to determine where she was currently with fluency (See appendix A). I found Zoey infrequently changed pace to align with the tone of the text, infrequently reads with expression and intonation indicating attention to meaning, and some of the time reads in phrases (Jones) (Standard III). This assessment demonstrated the need of fluency instruction for Zoey. While there are numerous aspects to fluency instruction, I choose to focus on the three above due to its prominence when Zoey reads aloud. Working on these components of fluency with Zoey will help build her confidence when reading a text out loud. The instructional goal of improved fluency through multisyllabic word strategies and reading with inflection and tone relates to third grade curriculum through mandatory DIBELS testing and Common Core State Standards. The goals are based off of the reading foundational skills for third grade standards from the Common Core. The standards state “Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words” (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. RF.3.3) and “Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension” (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. RF.3.4) (Common Core State

Standards) (Standard II). With these standards I selected lessons that would target teaching multisyllabic word strategies of breaking the word into syllables and would target reading with tone and inflection through Read Two Impress (R2I) fluency approach and Fluency Development Lesson (Morrow).

I taught Zoey three lessons over the course of a month that were based upon the standards and strategies above. The first lesson instructed Zoey on breaking multisyllabic words into syllables when reading. The second and third lesson instructed Zoey on fluency through the use of R2I and Fluency Development Lesson (FDL) (Rasinski, Padak, Linet & Sturtevant, 1994) (Standard V & VI). To ensure Zoey found success during lessons, I worked with her one on one after lunch while students were silent reading. This ensured a quiet classroom that was clear of distractions and as a result Zoey had my complete attention and she remained focused. I began our first lesson with discussing what multisyllabic words are and what strategies Zoey uses when she comes to them when reading. (Lexia). Zoey's strategies included trying to sound them out, guessing what the word might be, and skipping the word. I choose to start my lesson off with a discussion because I needed background knowledge on Zoey's current thought process for dealing with multisyllabic words and needed to ensure Zoey knew what a multisyllabic word was. I explained to her that a multisyllabic word had more than one syllable, she responded by saying "big long words like dinosaur." This statement demonstrated she understood what words we would be working with. Zoey made a connection with words she had seen while reading and the amount of syllables thus demonstrating she knew what syllables are. This was important because it would signal to me if I needed to instruct Zoey on what syllables are prior to teaching her the

strategy. After establishing we were working on syllables I modeled sounding out magnet with letter tiles. I demonstrated moving the letter tiles into syllable groups based on vowel placement. After breaking the word I sounded out the first group /m/a/g/ and said “mag” then the second group /n/e/t/ and said “net” then I read the entire word, “magnet”. Zoey followed by sounding out magnet like how I modeled. At this point I gave Zoey letter tiles and the word ‘kitten’ to separate and read. Zoey moved the tiles into two groups with kit and ten. She then sounded out the first group /k/i/t and said kit. Then she repeated this with the second group, /t/e/n/ ten. She put the two together and read ‘kitten’. We continued this pattern for eight more words, by this point Zoey did not need to sound out each individual group before reading the whole word. For example, she read ‘public’ by separating the syllables and reading pub then lic and putting the syllables together. This demonstrated Zoey was comprehending the strategy of syllable separation to read multisyllabic words. Moving forward from this lesson I would continue with the same strategy but would include three and four syllable words. I used only two syllable words for the first lesson because I wanted to ensure Zoey had a solid understanding of reading two syllable words before moving onto larger words. As an educator it is vital to teach students within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) this lesson was within Zoey’s zone meaning it was challenging to her but she could still complete the lesson.

Two fluency lessons followed the multisyllabic word lesson with the same environmental settings, Zoey and I worked one on one while students silent read. The lesson began by discussing reading with expression and how readers do this to help us think about what we are reading and its meaning. I read a passage to Zoey in a monotone voice and asked her to think

how I can improve my reading. She told me I sounded like a robot and it was hard to understand what I was reading about. I then read the same passage again to Zoey but read with inflection and smoothly. I asked her how I sounded that time and which time helped her understand better. She said the second time she understood better because it would like I was talking, she could tell something important was happening because my voice went up. I explained to Zoey that fluent readers pay attention to punctuation because it tells them to pause or to raise the tone in your voice. I asked her what happened when I came to a comma when I read or an exclamation point. She said I paused with a comma and sounded excited with exclamation point. I told Zoey our goal of the lesson was for her to start to sound like that too when she read. To accomplish this, I used the Read Two Impress fluency strategy described in *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction* (Morrow) (Standard VI). I gave Zoey short reading passages that she would read slightly behind me reading them. After reading together Zoey would reread the passage on her own. By using this strategy Zoey is able to hear how I made adjustments to my voice while I read and then make the same adjustments to her own reading (Morrow, p279). Our first passage included numerous exclamation points to demonstrate a loud noise. Zoey missed raising her voice on the first exclamation point but then remember for the rest. We continued with the R2I strategy for an additional three passages. At the end of the lesson I asked Zoey how she felt her reading sounded like now compared to when we first started. She explained her reading was now like “singing a song, its smooth and sounds good.” Our final fluency lesson had the same format as the previous one. We recapped by discussing why we read with inflection and tone. Zoey explained how it helps the listener and reader understand what is happening in the story. The difference between this lesson and the first is the fluency strategy utilized. For this lesson I used the Fluency

Development Lesson described in *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction* (Morrow) (Standard VI). This strategy entails teacher and student reading the passage together, the student rereading solo, and then discussing the meaning of the text. (Morrow, p.278). Zoey and I read together the first passage with inflection and tone and then Zoey read on her own. Zoey read with inflection while reading and made a connection to the text after she read. She described a movie she watched this past weekend that also included a princess and a frog. This connection demonstrated Zoey was understanding what she read and was able to make meaning and connections with it. Zoey and I continued the fluency strategy for the rest of the passages. Moving forward I would have Zoey read longer passages and with a peer. Reading with another student would allow Zoey to not only self-monitor but monitor a classmate, to listen for inflection and pauses. Ending the lessons I gave Zoey the Qualitative Fluency Assessment to determine if she improved her overall reading fluency (Jones) (See Appendix F). On the post assessment, Zoey moved to reading some of the time in phrases, reading with expression or intonation, and reading to indicate attention to meaning within the some of the time boundary. This is an improvement from infrequently doing the above while reading. She also moved from self-correcting miscues that interfere with meaning some of the time to correcting almost all of the time. The assessment demonstrates Zoey's growth in fluency and shows there is room for improvement. More time working on fluency either by reading aloud with a friend or intervention with me would continue to help improve Zoey's reading fluency. In addition I used DIBELS to view improvements to accuracy and words per minute (Multisyllabic words and fluency strategies).

Progress and Growth

It is evident through Scantron Performance Series, state testing, and DIBELS that Zoey demonstrated an improved understanding of multisyllabic words and an increase in reading fluency. Prior to intervention work, Zoey scored a 2308 in reading on Scantron, placing her in average high category with a grade level estimate of starting third grade (See Appendix B). Following weeks of intervention and three months of learning Zoey increased her score by 194 points earning a 2502 and placement in average high category and grade level estimate of the beginning of fourth grade (See Appendix C) (Scantron). In DIBELS, Zoey began the year reading 74 words per minute at 96% accuracy after intervention she is reading 104 words per minute at 99% accuracy (See Appendix D & E). These results demonstrate Zoey's growth in fluency and multisyllabic word reading. (DIBELS) (Standard III).

Moving Forward

To keep Zoey moving forward, individual check-ins or conferences during literacy instruction would help ensure she stays on track, discussing what she is reading and what strategies she can use when she comes across a multisyllabic word. A way for Zoey to practice with fluency would be to read aloud to others. I would encourage Zoey to partner read with a peer and listen for their inflection and tone as well as hers. In addition, I can read aloud texts with varying tones to the class so students understand how reading should sound. I will also continue to encourage Zoey to use Lexia at home to improve her overall literacy skills. If I was to teach these lessons again I

would make them include topics of interest to Zoey. Out of all the passages only two were of interest to her, the princess and kitten. She shared with me her love of dinosaurs and animals in the beginning of the school year. Next time I would use multisyllabic dinosaur names to teach her strategies, I think this would get her excited about finding multisyllabic words in books and reading them.

References

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- Morrow, L., Gambrell, L. (2019). *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction*. New York: Guilford Press.
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Artifacts

***Lessons attached via pdf**

Appendix A - Qualitative Fluency Assessment Pre

Qualitative Fluency Assessment

A fluent reader: Zoey _____
(student's name)

- 3 Points to words for temporary tracking or to help decode a challenging word
- 3 Changes pace to align with the tone of the text
- 2 Reads in phrases
- 3 Rereads for phrasing to adjust expression or intonation
- 2 Reads with expression and intonation, indicating attention to punctuation
- 3 Reads with expression and intonation indicating attention to meaning
- 2 Self-corrects miscues that interfere with meaning
- 1 Reads with appropriate volume and pace
- 1 Reads words automatically, with occasional pausing for explicit decoding work


1 = Almost all the time
2 = Some of the time
3 = Infrequently







Comments:



Zoey reads with the same tone and expression no matter the context of the story. She reads smoothly with an occasional slow down with multisyllabic word.

Jones, S., Clarke, L. W., & Enriquez, G. (2010). *The reading turn-around: a five-part framework for differentiated instruction*. New York: Teachers College Press.

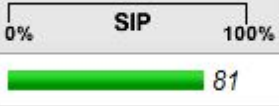
Appendix B - Scantron Performance Series Fall Assessment






Reading Test (Grade 3)	
Score	Ability Estimate
Scaled Score	2308 SEM: (62)
	0% SIP 100%
Reading Overall	 65



Score	Ability Estimate
Overall	
Unit Score Range	1000  3700
Vocabulary 2334–2434–2534	
Long Passage 2035–2153–2271	
Fiction 1949–2126–2303	
Nonfiction 2245–2420–2595	

Performance	
Rating	Average-High
Score	1 NPR 99
National Percentile Ranking	 51
Score	<2.0 GLE >9.9
Grade Level Equivalent (GLE)	 3.0

Appendix C - Scantron Performance Series Winter Assessment

Reading Test (Grade 3)	
Score	Ability Estimate
Scaled Score	2502 SEM: (66)
Reading Overall	 0% SIP 100%

Score	Ability Estimate
Overall	
Unit Score Range	1000 ————— 3700
Vocabulary 2375–2469–2563	
Long Passage 2405–2562–2719	
Fiction 2295–2460–2625	
Nonfiction 2401–2578–2755	

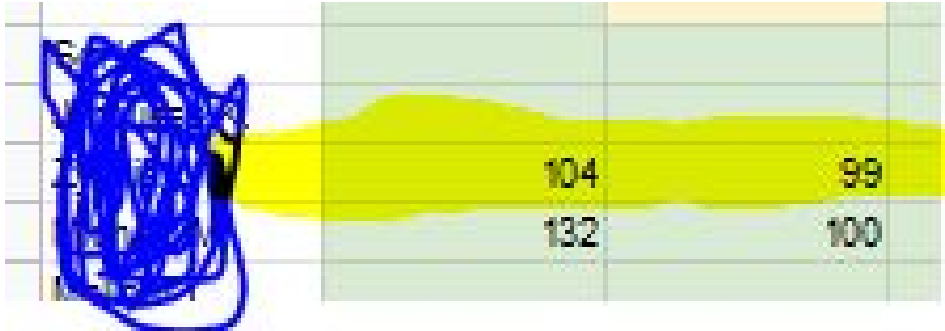
Performance	
Rating	Average-High
Score	1 NPR 99
National Percentile Ranking	 56
Score	<2.0 GLE >9.9
Grade Level Equivalent (GLE)	 4.1

Appendix D - August DIBELS

	UH*	Accuracy	Nonsense W's	WR*
Amelia A.	106	94	42/14	57
Kristen B.	82	94	67/17	39
Reyn B.	71	93	104/33	56
Jay C.	97	91	127/38	66
Isabella C.	105	99	143/46	65
Lucy D.	90	98	80/25	55
Robert E.	105	92	74/11	88
Margaret E.	106	98	147/46	65
Jeffrey G.	92	97	138/40	60
William H.	139	100	141/44	75
Andrew H.	112	98	129/37	57
Kevin I.	120	95	149/45	72
Sarah J.	210	100	296/82	101
Jonathan K.	113	99	132/40	52
Zoe L.	74	96	119/34	53
Victor M.	97	96	187/47	54
Victory N.	109	99	126/28	59
Megan O.	211	100	227/60	102
Isaac P.	166	99	199/59	81
Isaac Q.	93	94	101/30	56

Zoe (yellow highlight): 74 Words per minute at 96% Accuracy

Appendix E - November DIBELS



	104	99
	132	100

Zoey (Highlighted): Read 104 words per minute at 99% accuracy

Appendix F - Qualitative Fluency Assessment Post

POST

Qualitative Fluency Assessment

A fluent reader: Zoe
(student's name)

- 3 Points to words for temporary tracking or to help decode a challenging word
- 2 Changes pace to align with the tone of the text
- 2 Reads in phrases
- 2 Rereads for phrasing to adjust expression or intonation
- 2 Reads with expression and intonation, indicating attention to punctuation
- 2 Reads with expression and intonation indicating attention to meaning
- 1 Self-corrects miscues that interfere with meaning
- 1 Reads with appropriate volume and pace
- 1 Reads words automatically, with occasional pausing for explicit decoding work

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