

Observation Survey Case Study

Observation Survey was administered to D. in the first grade at 9:30am.

Attitude/Interest Inventory

This student is very enthusiastic when it comes to all school work. It is inspiring that he remains so upbeat even though he is a struggling reader. I was excited to ask him some questions from the attitude/interest inventory to learn more about where this love of learning comes from, and perhaps how to harness it for future one-on-one reading lessons. I asked him if he reads at home, when he reads at home, if anyone reads with him, if he believes he is a good reader, what makes a good reader, and if he could pick any kind of book to read what would it be? He told me that he reads at home, before bed, to himself. Just as every student in our first grade class likes to say, his favorite books are chapter books. Of course, he likes the idea of chapter books, but cannot read them yet. He also said that he likes “other books, too”. He says that he thinks he is a good reader because a good reader can read books. His favorite book is called *That’s Not My Train*. This would be his first pick if he could read any book, but other than that he said, “I don’t really know what I would read”. These answers seem short and not well thought out, but it was quite the contrary. He was very thoughtful when answering and took his time thinking. Much like all the other first graders, he seemed like he wanted to impress me, the teacher, by telling me that he reads alone and loves chapter books. Due to his enthusiasm and extremely positive nature, I believe he would like any type of book, whether it is too hard, too easy, about trains, or about the weather. His attitudes and interests will make him a very fun one-on-one student to work with. Getting the student interested is usually the first step to success!

Letter Identification

In deciding who would benefit most from extra reading help this semester, my Cooperating Teacher (CT) suggested I work with D. because she was not sure if he even knew all of his letters, or all of the sounds that correspond with the letters. Because of this, I was not surprised to see that D. got a couple of letter names wrong. I was more surprised to see that he got so many correct. He seems to be good at single letter identification, but his literacy drops severely when he is trying to read a whole word. He scored 52 out of 54, putting him in the stanine group 3. He seems to confuse the letters that look alike (like p and q) or sound alike (like P and D). This assessment was pretty easy for D., who declared at the end "Well that was easy!" It was beneficial to start out with the easiest assessment to get him warmed up for the rest. I am sure the survey is put together in this way on purpose.

Word Test

The Word Test started to reveal D.'s weakness in reading full words. He got 10 out of 15 correct, putting him in stanine group 2. In the words that he got wrong, he got the first sound correct in four out of five. In the other word he got wrong (he thought going was dream), he pronounced the first sound 'g' as 'd' and was lost from there. For the words that he got wrong, he did not automatically know them as sight words. He looked up at me for each of the words he got wrong, not confident in his answers. Three of the incorrect words were replaced by real words. This shows that he gets the first sound, but probably needs to take his time in stretching the other sounds out. He also might need help in putting the sounds together. The other two incorrect words were totally made up. This shows that he was trying to sound the words out but couldn't quite put them together. He got the sounds in 'Mr' correct, sounding out 'merr'. For the word 'big' he sounded out 'beesh'. Overall, I noticed he knows his two-letter words and his commonly used sight-words. He needs to take his time to stretch out the more uncommon words and search for the sounds within the word, not just at the beginning.

CAP

The Shoes book really entertained D. He is so enthusiastic that he started looking through the book before I even had the score sheet out of my folder. I had to gently, nicely try to tell him not to look at it yet. Before I was able to get the book back, though, he had already seen the page with the upside down picture. This just made him even more excited to start this “fun” challenge. He scored 16 points out of 24, which put him in the stanine group 3. Again, he did not know or care that he got many of the questions incorrect. He was able to demonstrate a basic, strong knowledge of how to read a book. He knows where the book starts and ends, where the text starts and ends, if the picture or text is upside down, the left page is read before the right page, the meaning of punctuation marks (except for the question mark), and the corresponding capital and lowercase letters. He was able to find the specific words in the text, granted it took him quite a long while. We had recently gone over the concept of “wait time” in our graduate level science class, so I decided to use it here. I am glad I did because it took him many minutes to find both of the words, but he never gave up or got discouraged and eventually found both of them. This gave him more self-confidence than if I had told him to stop without accomplishing the task. The use of wait time also worked for #13, the change in letter order. He got the correct answer, but told me that he found ‘adn’ right before he almost gave up. This shows that he believes in himself and is not discouraged by the length of time it takes him to complete the questions. This will come in handy when I, most likely, have him take his time to stretch out his words. He was not able to correctly identify what was wrong for item #10 (line order altered), or the change in words order in #12. He would have scored better had I been able to explain question #22 for him in a more suitable way. I am pretty sure that he thought I was asking him to find the word “word” instead of just pointing out a single word. He was confused and kept focusing on the word “were”, saying, “Well here’s the letter but I don’t think this is it”. I assume he was searching for the letter ‘w’ that he can hear at the beginning of ‘word’. I believe the entire last section (#21-24) confused him a bit, with the cards. Even though I know he knows what a capital letter is, he was unable to identify one. After a while I told him to

take the cards away and just look at the sentence as a whole. This seemed to help get him focused again. Overall, he seemed to do well with the basic concepts about print. He is not a very strong reader, though, and was unable to identify the out of order lines and the changes in words order that a stronger reader would be able to identify. As he becomes a stronger reader in both word identification and then comprehension, he will become stronger in identifying these text mistakes.

Written Vocabulary

D. was a little confused about writing all of the words he knew, so I used the prompt words to help him. He wrote all of the first set of prompt words in the ten minutes allotted. He got 31 correct and 8 incorrect. This put him in the stanine group 3. Many of these words are sight words that have been discussed and practiced in class. One of the patterns I am seeing throughout these assessments is that he continuously confused the d, g, p, b sounds. They are very similar in look and sound. In the written vocabulary assessment, he misspelled 'ball' as 'Dol'. He has the right idea at the end of the word, but the beginning is clearly showing a 'D'. If it had been a lowercase 'd' I would have put it down to getting the letter backwards, which still would have been counted wrong according to the scoring sheet, but would make more sense. The confusion of these letters will have to be addressed. Otherwise, he is strong in his phonetic awareness in these simple words. We will need to work on translating this to reading, though.

Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words

D. took his time writing each word. He was able to score 31 out of 37 points and securely sit in stanine group 3. He used the correct punctuation marks when I told him that the sentence was over. His use of capital and lowercase letters was not correct throughout the text. He began correctly, using a capital 'T' for 'The', but then continued to use a capital for the next word, 'Bus'. He did not use a capital letter for the second sentence even though he knew we were starting a new sentence. This demonstrates his lack of knowledge regarding the letter 'b'. It also shows that he needs to work on his sentence structure a

little bit more, until it become ingrained in his writing. The main point is that his phonemic awareness is actually very good. He did not get every word or sound correct, but he got at least one phoneme in every word correct. Two great examples of his awareness would be 'comen' and 'lad', his attempts at 'coming' and 'let' respectively. He is getting the basic sounds and just needs help identifying the correct sounds. I know from previous observations in class that he does not know the '-ing' sound, which would be great to work on with him. His attempt to spell 'let' is encouraging, too. He gets the first sound, and then tries his best to stretch the word out for the next two sounds, which are very close to the correct ones. It is encouraging to see that he knows how to stretch his words out when writing. Hopefully this will translate to his reading.

Text Reading

I used the Sentences for Initial Passage Selection form to choose the initial DRA book for D. I started him on Form A: Level 1. He had six errors in the first three sentences. For each incorrect word, he got the first sound correct. I thought it would be perfectly reasonable to start him at Level 1 in the DRA books. I took a running record and he had no errors at all. We moved on the Level 2 with only one error (an omission of the word "and"). We moved on to Level 3 where he had one error and one self-correct. I stopped at this level because it was not representing what he was able to read from the text. He was using picture cues for each book. He is excellent at using the picture cues. The only time he was unable to use the pictures correctly was for the one error he made, which was using the word "high" for the word "rope". He was only using picture cues at this point, which is demonstrated by the fact that high and rope have no similar phonemes at all, but look similar in the picture. His use of meaning and structure cues were great, but he did not use visual cues in terms of the text. For D., this was not a very good test for text reading. If the pictures had been taken away he would most likely have had to stop at the Level 1. If he applied his picture cues to his phonemic awareness the pictures could be helpful, but

he doesn't seem to go back to the word to make sure it is correct after looking at the pictures. This will be something useful to teach him.

Words Their Way Spelling Inventory

D. was as enthusiastic as ever during this assessment. I told him we would start with the first five words, just so it wouldn't seem like a very long assessment. I thought he would get bored after a few words and giving him an ending point seemed like a good idea. I labeled his paper from one to five so he would be able to keep track of where he was. He immediately got the first five words wrong. He seemed eager to continue, and I thought it couldn't hurt to gather more data if he was up for it, so I asked if he wanted to do five more. He gave me an enthusiastic "yeah!", so we did five more words. He got all of these wrong, too, but was excited about it anyway. Since we did not finish all of the words, I cannot give a final score. I can safely infer that he would have gotten 0/25 words correct. I can also analyze the words that he did attempt. His use of consonants, both initial and final, was very good. He scored 6/7 in the consonants section. His knowledge of short vowels was okay, as he scored 3/5 in this section. He does not have a strong grasp of digraphs, blends, or long-vowels. Out of the 14 times these features were used he did not correctly use any of these them besides the 'br' blend. I have noticed that his use of long-vowels is lacking in his writing through this assessment and in class work. For example, he spells 'here' as 'her'. He knows the sound is there, but does not know how to properly spell the word. D. has been able to demonstrate his knowledge of consonants and some vowels. He has not mastered the digraphs, blends, or long-vowels yet. I would say he is still in the early stages of spelling. The focus of word study instruction for D. should begin with the short-vowel sounds, to make sure he has a firm grasp on that concept. The use of 'e' and 'u' seem to be the most troublesome. He should also learn the different digraphs, such as 'sh', 'wh', and 'ch'. Learning how to stretch the words out will be helpful so

he can identify the letter blends like 'mp', 'fl', 'tr', 'pl', 'dr', and 'sp'. Then we should work on the long vowels in words such as 'here'.

Overall Analysis

It was interesting to see how different assessments gave such drastically different results of D.'s abilities as a reader. If I had simply given him the text reading assessment, I would have thought he was reading on a much high level than he really is. I would not have been able to say that his use of picture cues was the strong suit, not his ability to decipher text. His reading foundation is quite good, as he identified almost all of the letters correctly and can identify the consonant sounds consistently throughout his reading. He has trouble with the higher level concepts, such as digraphs, blends, and long-vowels. I saw this consistently throughout the assessments. His use of digraphs and blends was lacking during the writing sections: writing vocabulary and dictation. The word test also showed that he does not have a firm grasp on this concept in his reading either. The one single-letter sound that still confuses him seems to be 'b'. He got it confused with 'd' multiple times in his writing and reading. He does not always get them confused though, so maybe he needs to slow down and look closer at these letters. Speed is a big issue for D. as well. If he slowed down while reading while trying to figure out a word, like he does in his writing when he is sounding something out, he would be much more successful. He continuously got the first sound right in the reading activities, but failed to get the final sounds right. He will need to learn how to slow down and stretch the word out. His use of meaning and sentence structure was varied throughout the assessments. He was able to make his one error in the text reading section work in the sentence using meaning and structure, but he was unable to do this in the Sentences for Initial Passage Selection. I will need to find a way to incorporate illustrations that help D. figure out the words in books, but are not the sole cue he relies on.

Implications of the Results

It is hard to say which levels are easy and instructional for D.. He was so good at using picture cues that he hardly gives any hints to problems he had in the text. Based on other readings that he did during these assessments, I would put him at a level 2 or 3 for instructional. Level 1 would be easy for him. He likes reading any type of book that makes him feel like a “good reader”. In other words any book that he is good at reading. Some important features that the instructional texts should have are sight words that are easy to read for him (to boost his confidence) and some challenging words that are not necessarily supported by the pictures in the book. He needs to learn how to slow down and stretch the words out. He also needs to learn the digraphs, blends, and long-vowels that are lacking from his repertoire. He needs to be able to practice these concepts until he fully understands them by the word alone. The first reading strategy I will teach will be to slow down, stretch the word out, and try to find each sound in the word before putting it together. He is so good at identifying the first sound of a word, but has a lot of trouble finding the rest of the sounds. If we can start to solve this problem during the first lesson, I think we would have a much easier time over the following five. The word work might consist of making sure that D. has mastered the beginning and ending consonants and short vowels. Then we will start to go over digraphs, blends, and long-vowels. I think it would be helpful to use words that all start with the same letter so he can see the importance of stretching each and every word out, even if he thinks he knows what it could be from the first letter. We could use a word sort with ‘sh-’ words, ‘tr-’, and ‘e-e’ words. My CT likes using poems with these words in them (as seen in her word study lesson observation). The poems are easy to remember and easy to apply new word concepts to. Writing strategies could be incorporated into the reading strategies. It is better to combine them so D. will see the full literacy picture. He can start by reading these words and sorting them into their correct groups, and then write them in his writer’s notebook for class work and homework. We can also incorporate these words into the poem he learns and write that in the notebook as well. These words can also be incorporated into sentences used throughout the day in other disciplines. Flashcards without

pictures would be a good reinforce for learning these words. He would have to use his phonemic awareness to figure out the words instead of relying on picture cues.

What You Learned

This assessment was enlightening in many ways. I did not know how long this assessment and case study write-up would take. I am amazed at how many different factors go into the literacy learning process. Each student deserves to have their own one-on-one time with the teacher, like I will be doing with D., but this takes so much time. I understand why teachers use small reading groups much better now. The DRA and PALS testing is not as involved as the *Observation Survey* but they help teachers place students in groups that suit their abilities. Having the students in small groups makes it easier for the teacher to teach, but I still wonder if each child is getting the individualized attention they really need. What I learned from analyzing D.'s assessments, is that each student can have a much more unique set of skills and weaknesses than I ever thought possible. I am glad I get to work with one student for now. Being able to identify and figure out how to deal with each weakness is much less overwhelming than dealing with 5 sets of unique issues at the same time. I also learned that not all of the assessments give an accurate picture of the student's strengths and weaknesses. The assessment as a whole gives a much better picture of this. It is important to look at all of the results, as well as observations made outside of the assessments, to fully understand how well the student is performing.