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### Teacher Interview

For this assignment I interviewed a first grade teacher from Jefferson Craig Elementary. She has been teaching for twenty-three years, all have been spent in the first grade classroom. She made the statement that she loves teaching first grade because she gets to witness young children become real readers.

The first question I presented to the teacher was about her role in the reading process. She explained that in first grade they do reading activities most of the day. She does a lot of work with phonics and sight words. Once the students get to a point where they can read a couple of complete sentences, they start to work on comprehension. I have been in her classroom and watched her in action. She incorporates phonics and sight words into her lessons throughout the day. My favorite thing that she uses in her classroom is her rhymes such as, “When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking.” She uses this rhyme for “cvvc” words, to help students remember that the first vowel says its name.

My next question asked how she assessed the reading levels of her students. She commented that she tests phonics skills, such as decoding, with worksheets that she grades. She does a lot of informal assessment by listening to her students read aloud. When they are reading she focuses her attention on their fluency and how they sound out words. To assess comprehension she asks questions while they are reading and they also

have a test every week over their story. She also stated that they give the IU reading assessment three times throughout the year. She did not give me the specific name of the assessment, but it is suppose to test the student's reading skills, such as phonemic awareness.

When asked what kind of data she collects concerning reading skills, she commented that they evaluate the results of the IU assessment, as well as, collecting worksheets, and reading fluency evaluations. She also asks students to read their journals to her; this allows for her to see if the sounds and words they are learning are carrying over into their writing. She also checks to see if the phonics rules they are learning in class are being internalized. Most of the data she interprets comes from informal evaluations. She pays close attention to students in the classroom while they are working independently and in groups. She can then see which students are really struggling. The other data is used to help determine the specific area of struggle for the student.

My last questions focused on how assessment drives her instruction, and what she does with her students that struggle. She made the remark that planning instruction around assessment can be difficult because she has students that operate at many different levels in her classroom. She often runs into a problem where many students have mastered a skill and yet there are still a handful of students that have not. This is a case where she takes full advantage of having a classroom and title one aide. She has those students work with one or both of the aides going over skills that they have not mastered. To plan instruction around assessment teachers take results from assessments that they have given and then plan instruction over what needs to be taught. Assessments of any

kind are check points, it gives the teacher important information about what students have learned and what still needs to be taught or re-taught.

The teacher interview was a good experience; it allowed me to see how another teacher responds to assessment information and what she does with it. It also helped me to understand that informal assessment is just as important as formal assessment. You can gain just as much information or more from sitting with a student and reading to each other; this allows you to assess phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension; it is also beneficial to the student because you are modeling appropriate reading skills. This is information that I will carry with me into my own classroom.