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Phase II

In order to pinpoint what the reader needed help with the most, the researcher decided to administer the IRI and compare the data with what her NWEA and STAR scores reported. The researcher first acquired the reader's scores from the cooperating teacher. Then, the researcher identified an IRI that seemed appropriate for the child and easy for the researcher to interpret. After choosing to use the *Classroom Reading Inventory* by Nicholas J. Silvaroli and Warren H. Wheelock, the researcher continued by copying the necessary pages on which to record the student's work. When everything was ready, the researcher met up with the reader to administer the test. The researcher explained to the reader that she would be taking a type of test; the reader did not seem to mind at all.

The researcher began the test by having the reader go through the list of sight words. Based on the fact that the researcher knew nothing about the reader's reading level, the researcher chose to start at the very beginning. The reader breezed through the first four levels with very few problems. As she reached level three, however, the researcher could tell that the reader was becoming less and less familiar with the words. When the reader got to level four, she began simply skipping the words that she did not know. After 20 words, the reader had only correctly identified one. It was obvious that she was becoming frustrated by not knowing the words and did not want to try to sound them out, so the researcher ended that section of the exam at that level. The difference in success from levels three to four was so dramatic that it was obvious to the researcher where the reader's cut off was located.

Following this portion of the test, the reader was asked to read a passage and then answer comprehension questions about it. Once again, the first four levels were extremely easy for the

reader, and she had no problems answering the questions. As she read level three, however, a very odd thing happened. While struggling greatly with word recognition throughout the passage, the reader still did fine answering the comprehension questions. Confused by this occurrence, the researcher decided to continue on and see how the reader did with the next level. At level four, she did much better with both word recognition and comprehension. The researcher gave the student the option of either stopping or trying the next level, and the reader eagerly decided to keep going. Levels five and six, however, proved to be more than the reader could handle. She struggled so much with decoding the words that she had a hard time comprehending what was happening in the story. The results of this section of the test placed the student at level two for independent reading.

After looking at the data collected through this IRI, the researcher realized that the reader's biggest problem was word recognition. When the story that she struggled with was read to her, the reader was able to answer the comprehension questions correctly; therefore, it can be deduced that because she could not read the words, she struggled with comprehension. The researcher then went back and looked at the results of the other assessment that the reader's teacher had provided. Her NWEA scores showed that her RIT range for word recognition (165-182) was below what it should be for her grade level (185). This placed her in the 60th percentile of students her age. The NWEA tests also had the reader placed in a first grade Lexile range of 171-321. According to her STAR scores, however, the reader reads at an independent level of 2.9 and received a grade equivalent of 2.8. Looking at her scaled score, she scored a 343. As was thought by the researcher, the reader is just above average for what a second grader should be reading.

Using the results of the three assessments, the researcher decided to work solely on word recognition with the reader. The researcher believes that with some work on word recognition, this reader will be able to read and comprehend at a much higher level than she is presently. In order to address this issue, the researcher will implement word flashcards, repeated reading materials, and word recognition games into the time spent with the reader.

Plan of Action

The plan of action designed by the researcher was created in order to help the reader improve on her word recognition skills. By working on this skill, the researcher believes that she can help the student become a more fluent reader and ultimately lead to better comprehension of longer texts. All of this is done in order to help her become a more successful reader.

In the beginning of the tutoring sessions, the researcher will use word flashcards (pg. 39-43)¹. In preparation for the next session, the researcher has purchased a box to store the flashcards in and found the high frequency words for second grade. These words were then broken down into four groups and written on notecards. Each day that the researcher meets with the reader, they will go over a group of flashcards and see how many of them she knows. The ones that she does know will go in one part of her flashcard box; the words that she does not know will be put in the front of her box. It will be the reader's responsibility to take the flashcard box home with her after each session and practice the words. The next time that the researcher and the reader meet, the words that the reader did not know the session before will be added to the new group. At each session, the reader will also write each word three times on a sheet of paper. The researcher feels that this is a good strategy because the more times that the

¹ Meyerson, M.J. & Kulesza, D. L. (2006). *Strategies for Struggling Readers and Writers*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

reader sees the word the more likely she will be to remember it the next time she comes across it in a text.

When the researcher and the reader have finished their work for the day, the reader likes to simply read a book for enjoyment purposes. The researcher loves doing this because it allows her to hear the reader read an authentic text. In order to make this help the reader's word recognition, the researcher will have the reader read the same text multiple times (pg. 43-44)². The first time that the reader reads the story, the researcher will pay close attention to the words that the reader does not know. As she reads it the next few times, the researcher will pay attention to whether she is getting the words after seeing them multiple times. Sometimes readers will get to the point where they know the story so well that they are not really reading the story but are simply reciting it. To avoid this, the researcher will only read each book a few times and then will find a book with similar text to read after that.

In addition to these two strategies, the researcher also thinks that it is important to add a little fun into the mixture. One of the games that the researcher will use is called the word ladder which makes use of the word flashcards (pg. 55)³. The researcher will create a game board that has a ladder drawn on it. On each of the steps of the ladder the researcher will place a word flashcard face down. The student then begins at the bottom of the ladder, flips over the card, and reads the word. If she gets it correct, she moves on to the next step. Correctly identifying all 12 words will earn her a prize for the day. The main words that will be used in this game are the ones that the reader has been struggling with the most. However, it is also important to add some of the words that the reader does know in order to boost her confidence while playing the game. This will provide a bit of a challenge for the reader and let the researcher see if she did her

² Meyerson, M.J. & Kulesza, D. L. (2006). *Strategies for Struggling Readers and Writers*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

³ Kaye, P. (1984). *Games for Reading: Playful Ways to Help Your Child Read*. New York: Pantheon Books.

homework and learned those words. If the reader should mess up before the top step, she will continue to the top and add any other mistakes to the take home pile for the night.

The other activity idea that will be used in the sessions is word bingo (pg. 61)⁴. The game is played exactly like the regular game except that instead of numbers the board is made up of the sight words. Using this technique will help the student work on hearing a word and then identifying what it looks like on paper. The researcher feels that this will work well because it is taking the idea of the word flashcards and doing it the opposite way.

One of the most important aspects of this plan of action will be informing the parents of what is being done in our sessions. The researcher feels strongly about involving the parents in the reader's education; letting them know what they can do at home to help the process will only make it better. Suggesting books for the reader to read that will supplement the word recognition work that we are doing in our sessions is just one of the ways that the teacher can also help in this process. Through the support of the reader's parents and teacher, the researcher believes that the reader is on the path to word recognition success.

⁴ Kaye, P. (1984). *Games for Reading: Playful Ways to Help Your Child Read*. New York: Pantheon Books.

November 6, 2007

Dear Mr. and Mrs. McKee,

Before I begin talking about Mattie, I would like to thank you for letting me work with her this semester. She has done very well with me so far, and I believe that the rest of the semester will go just as well. Through various assessment tools, I have found that Mattie needs to work on her word recognition skills. She does a wonderful job comprehending the stories and understanding what is going on in them; however, she could comprehend them even better if she did not get caught up in decoding the words.

In order to work on this, I have devised a plan of action that I believe will help Mattie become better at recognizing and decoding words as she reads. The first thing that we will work with is word flashcards. I have used the words from a list of high frequency words that all second grade students should know and placed them on flashcards. Each time that we meet, Mattie and I will go over these cards to determine which words she already knows and which ones we will need to work on more. The flashcards that Mattie does not know will be sent home with her to work on for the next time that we meet. I would appreciate it if you would work on these with her at home. She will also be writing these words three times on a sheet of paper, so this can be done at home as well if she continues to struggle with a certain word. I believe that this will be beneficial to her because the more she sees a word the more likely she will be to remember it the next time she sees it in a text.

Another strategy that we will use in our sessions is rereading texts. Each session we will read two or three books; I will be paying close attention to the words that Mattie does not know as she reads it through the first time. At the end of the next session, we will read the same books again. Repeatedly seeing the same text will allow Mattie to recognize the word or words that she struggled with the time before and fix them. This is another thing that you can do with her at home on a regular basis.

Word recognition games will also be a part of our sessions together. The word ladder and word bingo will help Mattie practice what she has learned and add a little bit of fun to each session. Thank you for all of your support during this time, and I encourage you to ask Mattie about what she is doing and help her continue to work on these skills at home.

Sincerely,

Danielle Moeller