

Reader Case Study

Jeff Bauman

Corrective Reading

Professor Heather Schilling

December 8, 2006

Reader Case Study – Phase 1

The child that is being used for this reader case study is a female student in the fifth grade. Her socio-economic status is considered low. The child's father has been in jail on more than one occasion and it is rumored that her mother left her at an early age. The student currently lives with her grandmother and several cousins. This student does like to write but often her writing does not make sense. She also enjoys reading; however, she tends to struggle with it. Her greatest reading weakness is believed to be reading comprehension. This is one area the researcher will spend time on during the tutoring phase of the case study. The researcher learned this information from the student's teacher. She stated that this student is a very likable person and is a pleasure to have in class.

The assessments that will be administered are the required IRI, a Running Record, and finally an assessment dealing with reading comprehension. As of this point more than one informal assessment may be used dealing with comprehension. This third comprehension based assessment will most likely be one that focuses on the student answering questions and holding discussions about what they read. I have considered using a benchmark test along with the running record. The reason I considered doing this is because a benchmark also looks at the comprehension of what the student reads for the assessment.

I have formulated a preliminary plan of action for this student in my head. I plan to first assess this student. Then I will take what I learn from the assessments and apply that knowledge to formulate lessons according to the student's level of interest. This is my primary plan since the student also often has trouble staying focused. If I can plan

lessons that are within the student's interest level, I will have a better chance of making the information "stick." Finally, I would like to use another assessment that also focuses on the student's interest of writing. This assessment will use writing prompts to assess what the student has read. Here then I will not only be checking reading ability and comprehension but I can also focus on improving the student's writing ability.

Reader Case Study Phase II

On November 7, 2006, the student was re-assessed for reading capabilities. The researcher administered two of the assessments himself while the third assessment was one that had been given class wide by the teacher. The student seemed very willing to participate in these assessments and the mood was very cheerful. The first assessment administered was an IRI (or BRI). The current reading level of the students had not yet been fully established so this assessment seemed to be the logical place to start since it has the vocabulary tool to place a student's vocabulary level with their reading level. The results of this test were quite surprising. This student had been identified to the researcher as a lower level reader; however, with this assessment the student seemed to rank near the top of their grade level's performance. This assessment started with a grade one list of vocabulary words. To the researcher's surprise, the student mastered these words quite easily and moved directly through grade two also. Grade three gave the student some slight trouble; however, grade four was another easy list of words for the student. The list of words identified for grade five, which is where the student is currently enrolled, identified her at an instructional level. The researcher moved on to grade level six to find the student's frustration level. The student did very well

throughout two-thirds of the list; however, as she reached the end of the list she began to miss word after word and became frustrated quickly. Her score on the grade six list of words was a thirteen out of twenty which is identified as being in the frustration level. From this portion of the BRI the researcher learned that the student does not struggle with lists of vocabulary words, even those that are aimed towards her specific grade's reading level. The second portion of the BRI is reading of short passages. The assessment began at grade four to see how the student handled reading actual text rather than simply vocabulary words. The student read through the fourth grade passage with only four total miscues and two significant miscues. This amount of error is identified by the BRI as independent/instructional. On the comprehension questions then, the student missed two questions which placed her in the same independent/instructional area. When the researcher asked the student to read the fifth grade passage is when the most information was learned during this assessment. The student had twelve total miscues and one significant miscue. This placed the student above the frustration level. In addition the student missed five of the comprehension questions which also placed them in the frustration level for comprehension. From this assessment, the researcher learned that the student struggles with the reading of text more than they do with simple vocabulary words. This supports what the teacher informed the researcher of before they began with the student.

The second assessment used in this case study was a running record. The researcher administered two running records. The researcher was told before he began that this student has trouble with comprehension of what she read. The teacher thought if they were to administer an assessment that contains comprehension questions it might be

helpful. The teacher also commented that they might use one at a lower grade level to check for comprehension of text where the student does not have to struggle with what they read so much. For this reason the researcher administered two level 20 running records. On both assessments the reader scored in the 90th percentile or above for reading accuracy. They made less than ten errors on both selections. On the comprehension portion, which is where the focus was being placed, the student missed only one question on each assessment. This told the researcher that when the student does not struggle with reading the text they seem to comprehend it better. Since the comprehension portion of this assessment is where the focus was laid, the researcher does not plan to rely on the results of this assessment nearly as much as the other two assessments.

The third and final assessment tool used during this portion of the case study was a CARS test. CARS stands for Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies. This assessment looks at a variety of factors including finding the main idea of a story, recalling facts and details, understanding sequence, recognizing cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, making predictions, finding work meaning in context, drawing conclusions and making inferences, distinguishing between fact and opinion, identifying authors purpose, interpreting figurative language, summarizing, and distinguishing between real and make believe. This assessment is given several times throughout the school year. The results from four administrations of this assessment have been given to the researcher. Scores for this assessment can range anywhere from zero to twelve. The school in which the student attends has guidelines as to how well students need to score on this test to have mastered the grade level. Their guidelines state that the student needs to have scored an eleven or twelve at least twice in a row in order to master

the material. The four scores obtained so far are somewhat scattered across the spectrum of what the researcher expected. The first time the assessment was administered the student received an eight. This score is seen to be very acceptable for a score at the beginning of the year. On the second administration, the student received a seven. The third administration a four was earned, and on the final administration, the student earned an eleven. Looking back as to which questions the student missed, a small pattern can be identified. On three of the four exams, the student missed the question identifying the main idea of the passage. Also, the student failed to receive points for understanding sequence three of the four times. According to these scores, half of the time the student struggles with making predictions and identifying the author's purpose. The scores obtained from the CARS assessment have seemed to prove valuable in that they give the researcher insight as to specific areas where the student is struggling. Another advantage to these scores is that they have been obtained through a number of assessments over a course of different days. This helps to eliminate the chance of catching a student on a bad day.

As a plan of action for this student, the researcher will be focusing on two major areas. The first area is reading comprehension. It has been clear that the student can comprehend what they read when the reading is not too difficult; however, it is also evident that if the reading level gets too difficult the student struggles with comprehending what they read. The second area of focus will be those skills pointed out by the CARS scores. These will not be major areas of remediation; however, they are important and will be the focus of some of the remediation time. The remediation time will take place for only one hour of the day two days per week. This hour will be during

SSR (self selected reading) time. During this time the student will receive help with the two areas discussed above. For comprehension remediation, the student will first work with fluency since comprehension and fluency are directly connected. (A fluent reader will comprehend much more of what they read than a non-fluent reader.) Fluency will be developed with repeated readings and through some phonics instruction. Phonics instruction will not be the main focus of any instruction due to its connection to young ages; however, it will be implemented where necessary. The other main focus of my remediation/tutoring will be the items discussed from the CARS scores. The first focus from these scores will be on finding the main idea of a passage. The student will work on improving this skill by reading a passage and then telling the teacher/assistant what the main idea of a story is. If the student struggles with coming up with the main idea in these passages, the teacher/assistant can help point out sentences in the passage that give clues towards the main idea. The next focus from these scores will be on understanding sequence. This will be done in a similar manner as the main idea portion. (The student will read a passage and the teacher/assistant will help them to understand the sequence within the passage.) The other areas of the CARS scores that show problems will be worked with as time allows during the remediation/tutoring sessions.

690 Zebra Lane
Rochester, IN 46975
November 11, 2006

The parents of Case Study Child
1234 Rochester Street
Rochester, IN 46975

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Case Study Child

My name is Jeff Bauman. I am a reading specialist from Manchester College. I have had the sheer pleasure of working with your child in the past couple of weeks. We have worked together to come up with a plan of action to improve her/his reading skills. I have administered many reading tests to your child to improve my knowledge of her current ability. Through the results of these tests I have come up with a plan of action that we would like to implement to help your child read better. In the following paragraph you will find my recommendations as to how we can improve your child's reading ability. Again it has been a pleasure working with your child.

I have gathered much information from my time with your child. I have found that he/she is near his/her grade level ability in vocabulary; however, he/she has trouble reading that vocabulary when it is in a written text. Also, I have also learned that your child has trouble finding the main idea in a story, understanding sequence within a story, making predictions, and identifying the author's purpose in a story. Using these findings I have designed a plan to remediate your child in reading. This plan includes giving him/her one on one attention during SSR time twice per week. SSR stands for self selected reading and is a time where students read quietly a book of their choice. During this time, your daughter/son will be in a separate quiet area working with me on some of the items I mentioned above. As seen fit by myself and the other teachers working with me, we can cancel his/her services at any time followed by some testing to prove her gain in ability.

If you have any questions regarding what your child will be doing during school or why we are recommending these services, feel free to contact me or your child's teacher any time. Thanks!

Sincerely Yours,

Jeff Bauman
Reading Specialist
Manchester College

690 Zebra Lane
Rochester, IN 46975
November 11, 2006

The Teacher of Case Study Child
123ABC Elementary School Lane
Learnersville, IN 12345

Dear Teacher,

My name is Jeff Bauman. I am a reading specialist from Manchester College. As you know I have been working with one of your students, Case Study Child. I have tested him/her and have taken the results to come up with this plan of action to improve her reading skills.

I administered three tests, a BRI, Running Record, and the CARS test. The results of these were all very similar. The BRI told me that he/she has trouble reading age level appropriate vocabulary when it is in text. Also, it told me that he/she has trouble comprehending what he/she has read. The Running Record gave me similar results as the BRI. It showed that he/she has trouble comprehending what he/she has read, however, as the reading level gets easier, he/she tends to comprehend more. The CARS test then pointed out some specific details of reading comprehension that he/she needs to work on.

As for my plan of action, I plan to work with this student two days per week during SSR reading time. During this time I will work with her to help develop fluency, which in time should help her comprehension skills. Also, we will work on some of those individual skills outlined in the CARS test such as finding the main idea in a story, understanding sequence, making predictions, and identifying the author's purpose in a story.

I feel with adequate time we will be able to improve Case Study Child's reading dramatically. I am excited to have the opportunity to work with him/her on a more personal basis.

Sincerely Yours,

Jeff Bauman
Reading Specialist
Manchester College

Tutor Session Lessons

Session One – November 16, 2006 – 9:30 – 10:00 (SSR Block)

- Read with her in her reading counts book.
- Ask questions about the book to see how well she comprehends it.
- Do the “What’s the Main Idea?” worksheet from scholastic.com.

Session Two – November 28, 2006 – 9:30 – 10:00 (SSR Block)

- Reading comprehension activity, Mr. El and the Princess.
- Read through the selection and then have a discussion using the questions at the bottom.

Session Three – December 1, 2006 – 9:30 – 10:00 (SSR Block)

- Read with her in reading counts book
- Play a reading game online at www.eduplace.com/kids

Session Four – December 5, 2006 – 9:30 – 10:00 (SSR Block)

- Administer final running record using a section from her reading counts book
- Go to the library and pick out a book together that is appropriate for her.
(Teach her how to pick books that are at her level and are appropriate for her.)

Improvement Narrative

Following four sessions of reading tutoring, the case study student did show significant improvement in her reading. The student showed the most significant improvement in her reading confidence. This seemed to be one of the major problems with the reader’s ability to read well. Also, the reader gained knowledge and showed ability in picking out appropriate books to read for the future. This will help the reader grow even more in her confidence as she will not be trying to read books that are too difficult. The last running record did not show much improvement however. The researcher feels this is so because the reader lacked confidence when reading in front of others. When the first assessments were administered, she was by herself, so she performed better than usual. The researcher has noticed a great improvement in the student’s ability to read aloud in class when called upon. She no longer gets nervous or attempts to pass her turn on to the next person. Again, when comparing the assessments

from the beginning to the end of the tutoring time, the reader did not make great bounds of improvement; however, it is the researcher's opinion that the reader will have much more success in reading now since her confidence is built.

Experience Reflection

When I reflect on this experience, I find that I have gained much knowledge in working with struggling readers. There is no amount of class instruction at the college level that will teach a pre-service teacher as much about working with struggling readers than to actually work with a struggling reader. I feel this project is a great experience to take part in during methods block. Not only has it given me experience with assessing a reader, developing a plan, and then implementing that plan, but it has also helped me to "get my feet wet" in my student teaching placement. If I did not have my reader to work with during this time, I would have found myself observing instead of helping, however, since I had a specific student to work with, I was able to take a more pro-active part in providing instruction in my classroom before I arrive in the spring.

When I look back to my attitude on reading at the beginning of this semester and then re-evaluate my attitude now, I find some change. I still remember the very valuable times of my mother and grandmother reading to me as a child, however, I now have a better understanding of how to stop children from having the bad experiences that I did. In my first reflection on my reading attitude, I mentioned round robin reading where the teacher almost fell asleep while we read. I know this still takes place in some classrooms today. However, I know that because of my education and time at Manchester College

and my experiences this fall at Riddle Elementary; I can promise my students that they will never experience anything to that extent in my classroom.