

## Reader Case Study: Phase II

During phase II of the reader case study, the reader was a great participant and willing to participate in the activities created for him. The only test done on the reader by the researcher was an IRI. The NWEA and STAR are the other two assessment that the researcher used to evaluate the reader. Looking over the test results, the researcher was having mixed feelings about what the reader should be focused on. Comprehension was the major issue the researcher was going to focus on but recent test results showed that comprehension was right on track and other tests showed that comprehension was below grade level. One sure thing is that the reader does need to work on fluency.

The researcher did an IRI on the reader which consisted of word recognition and comprehension strategies. Starting at level one or first grade, the reader read aloud a list of words to the best of his ability. The reader read lists starting at level one and ending at level four or fourth grade.

The reader started out very strong. For levels one to two, the reader only had two errors out of forty words (two lists made up of twenty words each). Once the reader got to level three and four, words got a little tougher for the reader. In list one (twenty words), the reader had only one error but list two was a different story. List two was made up of fourth grade words that were pretty tough but the reader sounded out the words to the best of his ability on his own. The reader had fourteen errors out of twenty. That shows the researcher that the reader is not quite ready for these levels of words but is willing to try.

Comprehension was the researcher's biggest surprise. Information obtained during interviews gave the researcher an idea that the reader really struggled with comprehension and that it would be a challenge. However, due to test results, the researcher knows that comprehension is not the reader's main problem. The comprehension activities provided with the IRI proved the researcher wrong. Level two was where the reader started at for the comprehension part of the IRI. The reader missed one question and scored an 87.5% and the reader also scored an 80% on the level three test missing 1 ½ questions. Those are pretty good scores and the questions missed were only minor errors. This test proves that the reader is at the right age/grade level for comprehension, which is 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

If comprehension is not the only problem then what is the other issue? Watching the reader perform, the researcher noticed the reader had no expression when reading, rushed through words reading them correctly and incorrectly, and put in words of his own. Watching the reader read the stories, the researcher noticed that when he mispronounced a word that he didn't go back and fix his errors. The reader was also monotone and had no expression when reading. A few times the reader read so fast that he added his own words in the story instead of reading what was on the page.

The things observed tells the researcher a couple of things. One, the reader needs to slow down and focus on the actual words in the text. Two, the reader needs work on how to read sentences when specific punctuation is involved in the story. This punctuation includes question marks and exclamation points.

Another observation that questioned the researcher was the reader's STAR results. The reader scored a 1.5 on the STAR assessment. According to these results, the reader is reads first

grade words and books with 80% accuracy. The grade equivalent is equal to a typical first grader after five months of the school year. Based on these results, comprehension is the reader's biggest struggle.

The NWEA added another spot of hope to the research proving that fluency may be more of an issue than comprehension. The reader scored a 183 on the reading section of the test. The reader's strength was literary text and the weakness was informational text. With informational text, this tells the researcher that the reader needs to work on ideas topics such as cause and effect, main idea, and following directions. Some vocabularies to teach to the reader that would help build on those topics are authors' purposes, order of events, describing, synonyms, and antonyms.

The researcher has developed a few activities to help the reader develop those weaknesses. First, the reader tends to get in a hurry when reading text. Due to the rushing, words are mispronounced, skipped, or added within the text. The best way to fix this problem is developing a signal between the researcher and the student such as snapping or touching the reader's book to slow the reader down. The reader should understand that when they hear/see the signal it means he needs to slow down and look at the text carefully. The researcher will also explain to the reader that reading is not a race. Fluent readers read as though they were naturally talking. The reader will start reading from a text and once the researcher notices the speed increasing then the reader will be signaled to slow down. This technique will strengthen comprehension and fluency. Getting the reader to slow down will increase memory of the text being read and will increase understanding of what is being read as well. As mentioned earlier, reading should be as natural as talking. To demonstrate the technique, the researcher will model

for the reader proper reading techniques the first time through. Second time, the reader will mock the researcher as the reading is done. Finally, the reader will read on his own to see if the acquired skills were picked up or not.

Expression is another weakness observed by the researcher. Using the four types of sentences (interrogative, imperative, exclamatory, and declarative), the researcher will go over these types of sentences with the reader. Together, the researcher and the reader will work on sentence expression. The main focus of this activity is reading sentences with expression based on the end punctuation and not the vocabulary words. Working on expression will help the reader become more fluent because the way a sentence is read can change the meaning of the text.

Because comprehension did not seem like that big an issue with the researcher, the last activities will be focused on ideas that can help improve or strengthen comprehension. One of the test results suggests working on cause and effect and describing to help strengthen comprehension. This is where story picture cards come into good use. Using story picture cards, the reader will work on describing each card with as much detail as possible. If needed, the researcher will ask questions to help the reader generate a more descriptive answer. Comprehension will be strengthened due to this technique because it will get the reader to look for deeper meaning in pictures relating to text.

Based on the pictures of the cards and a random story book, the reader will also work on cause and effect. The reader will use the pictures and answer questions about what could happen based on the researcher's questions. A random story book, one that the reader is not too familiar with, will also be used to work on cause and effect. The researcher will find passages throughout

the book and ask the reader what they think will happen based on the information given. Once the reader has made his prediction, then the reader will read to see if he was right.

Comprehension and fluency are not easy tasks. Different tests examine different areas and give different results as well, which can create mixed feelings for what should be focused on more. Based on observations and recent tests, the researcher has developed strategies that will hopefully strengthen the reader's comprehension and fluency. As the saying goes, "practice makes perfect."

#### Sources Used

Roe, B.D. and Burns, P. C. *Informal Reading Inventory 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.* Houghton Mifflin Co.,

New York (2007). Pgs 63-64, 93-94.