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Teacher Interview Reflection
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Reading According To the Teacher

My cooperating teacher has been in the teaching field for 39 years all of which were spent between four schools. She currently (and has for most of her career) teaches third grade and has figured out the best practices for effective teaching. South Whitley Elementary school has little funding and has experienced job causalities, so to be an effective teacher is crucial. Having spoken with my cooperating teacher on several occasions, I have gathered how she effectively approaches reading in her classroom.

South Whitely Elementary adopts a reading series each year and the teachers use it in the best way possible to reach all their diverse students. Basals are used regularly in the classroom and are the main form of reading. The students who struggle or find the basal too easy usually get to work with a consultant and read more with literature books and intervention books. The basals are not at different levels; however, the school used to have Tiers. There were three Tiers and the first was what all students started on for reading. Gradually, struggling readers would be identified and would be moved to the second Tier for interventions and ISTEP help, and the third Tier was for those students that were still struggling (in her years there, my teacher never had any students on Tier 3).

Each language arts block was ninety minutes long in which the class worked on vocabulary, fluency, compensation. Some days involved stations (which last thirty minutes) that reinforced what they had been learning and the skills involved. They also practice and listen to
oral reading done with the teacher every day after lunch. The teacher uses small group reading quite often as well, which gives the students a chance to read the book aloud and ask questions which are answered by other students. The students daily work (worksheets and tests) show if there is a need for intervention and what areas need attention.

Assessment is a large part of identifying struggling students and South Whitley Elementary uses different school wide tests to achieve an overall view of its students. In the past they have used MAPS testing to determine the lexile levels of the students. MAPS uses compensation over a story through essays and multiple choice answers to find averages. This year the school is being introduced to AIMS testing which they hope will replace MAPS. AIMS was thrown at the teachers with no training whatsoever and is to be performed three times a year. It allows the school to monitor student’s progress throughout the year in math, fluency, and compensation. The math portion and the compensation portion are done in groups, while fluency is tested in a one on one setting.

Even though my cooperating teacher didn’t quite agree with the school wide tests, she agrees with the reading approach used in her classroom. The diverse reading levels in each classroom need a good structure and leader to achieve success; even though it is difficult at times, these teachers are the experts at it.