

## CASE 1- William

Analysis of Assessment Data

William is a boy who just started second grade. In order to meet the needs of William and to guide instruction, numerous assessments were given to him including: Alphabet Recognition Chart, Tests of Phonemic Awareness, Phonics Inventory, Sight Word Inventory, Spelling Inventory, and an Informal Reading Inventory. The Alphabet Recognition Chart measures William's ability to simply name the letters of the alphabet. He was able to do so with no problem. The Tests of Phonemic Awareness tests a student's ability to hear/manipulate the sounds that make up spoken words. William's test indicates he has phonemic awareness. These were both assessments that according to the Common Core Standards should have been mastered by the end of kindergarten or first grade, thus he meets grade level expectations. While William has shown mastery in phonemic awareness, his Phonics Inventory shows that he is not meeting grade level expectations in phonics. Phonics is the relationship between letters and sounds. The Informal Phonics Inventory measures a student's acquisition of specific phonic skills, such as letter sounds, digraphs (ch, sh, ph, etc.), and blends (bl, fl, st, etc.). According to the Common Core Standards, a student at the end of first grade should know all of their letter sounds and should be able to read words with the long vowel sounds created by "silent e" (and e at the end of a word that makes the vowel say the long sound) or common vowel pairs (ea, oa, etc.). William shows a mastery of the consonant sounds, but it is still concerning that at the beginning of second grade he does not know the correct sound that c makes or y. William also shows mastery in digraphs. However, William's test shows that he needs systematic instruction for final consonant blends, short vowels, silent e rule, long vowel digraphs, and r-controlled vowels (ar, ir, or, ur, er).

The Sight Word Inventory measures the number of common words used in reading and writing that a child can read automatically without having to stretch them out. The Fry Sight Word Inventory contains numerous lists of words that progressively get harder. Of the first 100, William was able to read 94 words automatically and 1 word he misread and then corrected himself. Without seeing the next list, it appears that William has the beginning of a good sight word vocabulary. The Spelling Inventory is an assessment that measures where a child is on the developmental path of spelling patterns. It has been shown that invented spelling follows a pattern. Thus, by assessing a child's ability to spell certain words, one can see what patterns/stage a student is in to determine what skills needed to be taught next. Looking at William's spelling inventory along with William's phonics inventory, it appears that William is only in the middle to late Letter Name- Alphabetic stage of spelling. He wrote an "i" for an "e" in when and an "a" for the "u" in lump and on the Phonics Inventory, he was unable to read 5 of the 10 CVC words (words that are made up of a consonant, vowel, and then consonant where the vowel is the short sound, such as cat). Thus, it appears that William is struggling with his middle vowel sounds. This would put William at a first grade level in spelling patterns. A beginning second grader should at the lowest be a late Letter Name. Thus, William is below grade level.

The last assessment done on William was an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI). An IRI is a graded passage followed by a retelling and comprehension questions made up of both expository and implicit questions. A student reads a passage and based on their score, reads another passage at a harder or easier level until their instructional level can be determined. The highest level of reading requires no assistance and is called an independent level. The next level is the instructional level. This level requires some assistance to read. The final level is the frustration level. This level is too challenging and is likely to frustrate a student reading it even

if they are receiving some assistance. IRIs not only tell what level a student is reading at, but also how fluently a child reads, whether they use context to help them decode words, if they monitor their reading, if a child reads more words in context than in isolation, whether or not they can comprehend what they read, and what types of questions are troublesome to them.

William's IRI tells a lot about his reading ability. William read a narrative passage at a guided reading level I. He read the passage with 12 miscues (errors). According to the IRI, this text would be an instructional level for accuracy. When analyzing his miscues, most of his miscues were substitutions (he said another word for the correct word). He had one omission (skipped a word), two insertions (added words), and one self-correction. His substitutions indicate that William is relying a lot on the visual of the words to figure out unknown words, such as saying hone for horn or I want for it wouldn't. It appears he looks at the first letter of the word and makes a guess. In terms of fluency, William read 91 words per minute. The normal second grade range is 43-89 words per minute. Thus, William's words per minute are above average. However, his lack of self-correcting and lack of questioning that things doesn't make sense, along with words misread that he knew in isolation (the, it, would, them) indicate that William might be rushing through the text without thinking enough about the text. This is evident in his vague retelling and missed comprehension questions. He only included 3 of the 31 ideas in the retelling. He included some of the characters, one event and a piece of the resolution. The questions at the end of the passage suggest that he could provide more information about the text that he left out of his retelling, but miss some ideas that were implied that he could have answered had he read slower. He also repeated 31 words. Repeating this many words makes reading choppy, which could have had an impact on William's ability to comprehend the text and give more information for the retelling. Overall his comprehension score was in the

instructional range, so level I would be considered an instruction level. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2012), a level I should be read independently by a first grader at the end of the year. Thus, William appears to be slightly below grade level. I would be curious to see what his end of the year in first grade IRI score was. That way I could determine if his low score is a result of the summer slump or if he had always been behind.

### Goals for Instruction

#### Goal1:

According to his assessments, it appears that William is a struggling reader. He is currently reading below grade level and is lacking phonic skills that should have been mastered by the end of first grade so this would be my first goal for him. His phonics inventory is particularly worrisome for me. According to the Common Core State Standards by the end of first grade a student should be able to “decode regularly spelled one-syllable words” (ELA-Literacy.RF.1.3b) and “know final -e and common vowel team conventions for representing long vowel sounds” (ELA-Literacy.RF.1.3c). William’s phonics inventory shows that he cannot do either of these skills. He only could read ½ of the CVC words correctly. For the assessment, they don’t even need to read the word correctly as long as they get the middle vowel sound right. This is definitely a task a beginning second grader should have. Over half of the areas on the phonics inventory show William needs systematic instruction, which tells me that he is greatly lacking in phonic skills. If William cannot accurately decode words, he cannot fluently read a text and will thus struggle with reading comprehension (pg. 23). As texts get higher in level, they become less sight word based (something William seems to know from what the assessments show) and contain more multisyllabic words that require great phonic skills to

decode. If William doesn't know basic vowel sounds (both long and short) he will not be able to move up in reading no matter how many sight words he knows.

#### Goal 2:

My second goal for William would be self-monitoring. Looking at William's IRI, he made 12 miscues and only self corrected one time. Many of William's miscues were meaning changing. It was concerning that when something didn't make sense he just kept on reading. His high number of words per minute and misreading words in context that he can read in isolation (the, it, them, would) tell me that William is rushing through the text. He is not stopping to ask himself if something makes sense or not and how he could fix it. It appears he is focusing more on the words and not on the meaning of the story. While he seems to get the gist of the story, his miscues and rushing prevented him from comprehending more details from the story. According to the Common Core State Standards by the end of first grade a student should be able to "use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary" (ELA-Literacy.RF.1.4c). While William repeats frequently throughout the text, which is another concern, he isn't repeating for clarification. William needs to work on monitoring his reading. He needs to know that we read for meaning and that when something doesn't make sense we have to go back and fix it or ask for help. Reading isn't about rushing through a book. I would like to see William actually slow down and have fewer words per minute and monitor better than reading fast because "comprehension is critical for successful reading" (Morrow & Gambrell, pg. 250).

#### Instructional Strategies

Instructional Strategies for Goal 1:

William's Informal Phonics Inventory was very concerning for a beginning of the year second grader. His scores indicate that he is low in final consonants and blends, short vowel sounds in CVC words, the silent e rule, long vowel digraphs, and r-controlled vowels and -al. A great instructional strategy that would address all these areas of concern in phonics would be Making Words activities. Making Words is an activity in which children manipulate a set of letters to make various words. By changing one letter of a word they can see how new words are made and how the two are similar. This approach is great not only because it teaches a variety of skills, but students love it as well! The teacher guides the lesson so that students are being helped to see the relationships between words. To implement this strategy, the first step is to have students spell a word you tell them. Then you have them change one letter at a time to create new words. Have them do it individually as well as having students show the class what they did correctly so everyone can see how it is done properly. Continue having them change/add letters to teach different concepts. Next, have students read the words created and how they were made. Then sort the words into rhyming groups. Last, the students transfer what they learn by writing words that rhyme with some of the words that were made during the lesson. Work together to give words and figure out how they would be spelling. Each lesson ends with a transfer step so that "children can apply their knowledge of letter sounds and patterns to decode an unknown word encountered during reading or spelling a word they need while writing" (Morrow & Gambrell, pg. 206). Thus, this activity will help William not only learn the phonics skills he is lacking, but teaches him how to apply them when reading so that he can decode the text more accurately. This will in turn increase his comprehension.

Another fun instructional strategy to teach phonics skills to William is through Words their Way picture/word sorts. Words their Way is an instructional approach to word study that

consists of picture and words sorts. “When studying the alphabetic layer (using sorts), students examine the relationship between letters and sounds. They learn to match single letters and pairs of letters (e.g., ch) to specific sounds and, in doing so, to create words” (William, Phillips-Birdsong, Hufnagel, & Hungler). By sorting various pictures or words, William will be constructing his own knowledge of various phonic skills. Looking at William’s assessments, I would start William off with short vowel sound picture sorts due to his score on the Informal Phonics Inventory and Spelling Inventory. To do the sorts I would begin with pictures of simple CVC words with corresponding headings. I would choose to focus on two vowels at a time then work up to sorts with three of the vowels, then four, then all five. To do the sorts, first introduce the pattern to the students. Tell them what they are supposed to learn. Then go over the pictures with them so they know what they are. Demonstrate how to sort them and have them help you. Then, have the students practice sorting on independently or with partners. Continue having them sort throughout the week correcting their mistakes and talking about the skill being taught. Assess them on the previous sort before beginning the next to make sure the skill has been mastered. This can be done by having them spell words that contain the skill that was taught (i.e., for sort a and o spell words like cat, cot, sap, dot). Just like in the Informal Phonics Inventory, all that should be assessed is if the middle vowel sound is correct. Then once all vowel sounds have been mastered, I would do picture sorts with blends. These words sort will help William learn his phonic skills needed to decode the words in reads in his books as well as become a stronger speller.

Instructional Strategies for Goal 2:

William's lack of monitoring is concerning for a beginning second grader. It is concerning because it shows that William is not reading for meaning and is too focused on reading the words and speed. He is not recognizing when things are not making sense. "The National Reading Panel (2000) has determined that instructing students to monitor their reading...increases reading comprehension" (McKenna & Stahl, pg. 173). One strategy to teach self-monitoring to William would be think-alouds. "In a think-aloud, the teacher models how to flexibly use cognitive strategies or handle a comprehension problem that may arise during reading" (pg. 174). In this approach, a teacher would model reading something misreading a word so that the text wouldn't make sense. The teacher would explain that what he/she just read didn't make sense so he/she would have to go back and reread what they read so they could figure out what part didn't make sense. It would teach William that we read for meaning as well as fix-it up strategies to use when comprehension breaks down. Since this is a second grade class and most students should already be monitoring at this age, I would focus on using this strategy in small group time, such as during guided reading time. He then can apply what he just learned, monitoring for meaning, when reading is text for the day with the teacher there to support when needed. If William makes a mistake, stop him and ask him if what he read made sense to get him to really think about his reading.

Another instructional strategy to teach William to self-monitor is a lesson created by the Florida Center of Reading Research. The lesson is called Reading Repair. In this lesson, students are provided with a bookmark with two sides. On one side are things that a child should do before, during, and after reading. On the other side are strategies to use to help them understand their reading when something is not making sense to them. This strategy will teach William what good readers (self monitor) and how to help him fix problems that are preventing



him from understanding the text. By knowing good readers read for meaning and having tools handy while reading to help fix problems preventing him from understanding the text, William is more likely to self-monitor. This strategy is done with a text at William's instructional level. As William is reading, periodically stop him and ask questions to assist in comprehension. Questions can be used from the "When I Read" side of the bookmark (i.e., Was anything confusing?). Record the problem and where it occurred. Have him choose a strategy and try it out. If there were no confusing parts, have him continue. Continue this until the text is complete. This strategy will help William reach his goal because it provides a lot of teacher facilitation. It forces William to be metacognitive, or think about his own thinking. With repeated practice, it will hopefully become an innate skill.

#### Case 2-Sarah

##### Analysis of Assessment Data

Sarah is a fourth grade student. Two assessments were given to her at the beginning of the year, the spelling inventory and QRI informational passages, which is a type of Informal Reading Inventory or IRI (as described above). The spelling inventory is from a word study program called Words Their Way. It is a spelling list that assesses what developmental spelling stage a student is at. Sarah was given the Elementary Spelling Inventory, which measures spelling features from first through sixth grade. Of the 25 words, Sarah spelled 18 of them correctly. Of the 7 errors, it appears one of them (shopping) was a word that Sarah did not hear properly when the test was given. I assume this based on the fact that she wrote throt. She knows the sh digraph because she spelled shower correctly. The other 6 words she got wrong were based on errors with harder suffixes and bases or roots. Using the Words Their Way feature guide, I would say that Sarah is in the Late Syllables and Affixes developmental stage

because she successfully added inflectional endings to base words, but is unable to include unaccented final syllables and only sometimes included less frequent prefixes and suffixes. This level is considered to be an end-of-year spelling stage goal for a fourth grader. Since Sarah is just beginning fourth grade, it appears that Sarah is spelling at a level above a typical beginning of the year fourth grader.

Sarah read two passages, a level four narrative, which was also informational (Guided Reading Level P) and a level four expository (Guided Reading Level Q). Sarah's background knowledge assessment showed that she was unfamiliar (67%) with Johnny Appleseed. While the text was a story, it had a lot of information about Johnny Appleseed and what he did. Sarah read the text with a rate of 71 words per minute and repeated 7 words. An average range for a 4<sup>th</sup> grader is 57-115 words per minute, which puts Sarah on the lower end of average. In terms of miscues, Sarah had 8, which puts her in the instructional level for accuracy (8-32 miscues). Three of the miscues were insertions, three were omissions, and the last two she either didn't even attempt or was an error based on the visual of the word (fronter instead of frontier). Both of these words could be explained by Sarah's lack of background knowledge on Johnny Appleseed. She didn't have the vocabulary to figure them out or self correct herself. Her omissions did not affect the meaning of the text. Sarah's retelling was very vague. She included 6 of the 47 ideas of the story. She included the main character and the main idea and part of the resolution. She did not mention any problems or many events. At the end of the story, 8 questions were asked, 4 were explicit and 4 implicit. She was able to correctly answer all of the explicit questions, but only received partial credit for 2 of the implicit (left out half of answer) and didn't even supply any answer for another implicit question. This puts her at a total of 6 miscues, which is at an

instructional level (6-7 correct). Sarah's inability to answer all implicit questions could be due to her lack of background knowledge on Johnny Appleseed.

Sarah was then given the next passage (level Q). This story was an expository text about early railroads. Her pre-assessment for background knowledge showed that she knew very little about the early railroads (50% unfamiliar). She again read this text in the lower end of average range of words per minute with 76 words per minute. She had a total of 6 miscues making this text an independent level (accuracy) for Sarah (0-7 miscues). All of the miscues were substitutions. She attempted to stretch out words by chunking, but was not successful. Three out of the 6 miscues were mistakes involving numbers (2 of them were dates and another was a number). Her inability to read locomotive (fluently) and valve are most likely a result of her lack of vocabulary about railroads. Her lack of vocabulary/knowledge also showed in her retelling and comprehension questions. She only included 4 out of 57 ideas. She seemed to get one of the main ideas of the story (steam engines replaced horses because they were faster), but missed out on the others as well as all of the details. Her answers to the comprehension questions again reinforce that Sarah only pulled one main idea out of the story. All of her answers are about horses being faster or better. She again did better on explicit questions (3 out of the 4 correct) than the implicit (1 ½ out of 4 correct). For the 2 implicit questions she did not answer correctly she was very uncertain or could not answer at all. Overall she answered 4 ½ questions out of 8, which puts this level as a frustration level (0-5 correct). Based on both IRIs, it appears that level P is her instructional level. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2012), a typical fourth grader should be reading an instructional P or Q at the beginning of the year. Thus, Sarah is currently at grade level. She also appears to be able to score high in accuracy, but struggles more with her comprehension and ability to retell stories.

### Goals for Instruction

#### Goal 1

Based on Sarah's assessments, it appears that Sarah is at grade level. However, there are two areas Sarah needs to work on according to the Common Core State Standards in order for Sarah to meet end-of-year goals. One area is building background knowledge and vocabulary. One standard required by the end of the year is ELA-Literacy.RI.4.10 which states, "By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range". When reading the high level expository text (Level Q), Sarah read with accuracy that makes the text independent, however, her comprehension of the text showed the text was actually a frustration level. Thus, there is quite a discrepancy between the two. According to McKenna and Stahl, "if children cannot read the text relatively accurately, their comprehension will suffer" (pg. 148). Since Sarah showed that she could read with great accuracy, but her comprehension still struggled, it lets the teacher know that there is something besides poor decoding that is causing a problem with comprehending a text for Sarah. Looking at her limited prior knowledge of both texts, as well as her miscues often involving words related to the subject matter of the text, it appears that Sarah's comprehension is hindered by her lack of prior knowledge and vocabulary. According to McKenna and Stahl, "there is a strong relationship between one's knowledge base, including knowledge of word meanings, and one's ability to comprehend" (pg. 172). Thus, in order to build her comprehension when reading expository texts, Sarah needs to work on developing vocabulary and background knowledge

before reading expository texts so that she can understand the words she is reading and thus can comprehend what was read (pg. 23).

## Goal 2

A second goal that would benefit Sarah would be learning expository text structure. In the Common Core State Standard one standard says that students should be able to “determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text” (ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2). Also, Akhondi, Malayeri, & Samad suggest that, “reading expository texts is critical for growth in reading ability and most urgent to rank normal achievers” (Reading Rockets). While Sarah is reading at grade level and was able to read the text accurately, her retellings were greatly lacking. In the level P text she only retold 6 out of 47 ideas (13%) and in the level Q text, only retold 4 out of the 57 ideas (7%). “The openness of the retelling task allows for observation of the child’s thought processes, what the child values as important, and cultural influences in story interpretation” (McKenna & Stahl, pg. 168). Her lack of details tells me that Sarah would not be able to summarize the text or support her ideas with details. By teaching Sarah how to determine importance and about main ideas and supporting ideas, Sarah would be able to focus on what is important, thus helping her remember and comprehend the text. If she started reading already knowing she had to be thinking about what was the main idea of the text and why she thought that way, she would be focusing less on the words of the story and more on comprehending it. A big focus of the Common Core State Standards is using supportive evidence. The student should be able to explain and support their thinking with ideas from the text. The retelling and comprehension question answers show that Sarah is able to get one of the main ideas, but cannot support it. This is why she did better with the explicit questions and couldn’t answer the implicit questions or only gave partial answers.

### Instructional Strategies

#### Instructional Strategies for Goal 1:

Both of the texts that Sarah read were informational. Her pre-assessment of background knowledge showed that she was unfamiliar with both subject areas. In order to increase Sarah's comprehension, she needs to increase her background knowledge and vocabulary. One instructional approach that can be used is listen-read-discuss. In this approach, "the teacher presents, in advance, everything the students will read about, almost as if there were no reading to be done" (McKenna & Stahl, pg. 172). This would be a good strategy for Sarah because it is used for students with little or no background knowledge. The teacher begins by giving an overview of the text structure, background information, and important things to look for. Students then read the text and when they are done, the group discusses what was read. This strategy would give more background knowledge to Sarah before she read the text, which would increase her comprehension of the text. "Teachers can facilitate comprehension of particular selections, however, by providing through background information in advance, including preteaching key vocabulary" (pg. 172). By having background knowledge before she reads the text, Sarah will be able to see how things connect because she already has some prior knowledge. She will be able to comprehend what is happening because she won't have any gaps. Since accuracy is not an issue with Sarah, this approach will give her the background information she needs that she can use when reading the text as well as future texts.

Another strategy to help develop Sarah's background knowledge and vocabulary is experiential activities, such as role-playing. According to Irujo (2007), "the best kinds of

activities for building background knowledge are those that get students involved in manipulating language and concepts, rather than just receiving information from the teacher” (Reading Rockets). For the two stories that Sarah was assessed on, she and her classmates could reenact some of the events. This can be done by something along the lines of reader’s theater or doing different activities based on their roles. By doing this, Sarah would be saying/hearing the vocabulary provided in the text. The teacher would also be giving information to guide students as well. By having experiences with a given content before she reads will increase her background knowledge and give her some place to connect her newfound information to in order to comprehend her text. Then, when Sarah is reading independently she will be able to read more fluently, comprehending the text better.

#### Instructional Strategies for Goal 2:

Determining the main idea and providing supportive details is another goal of Sarah’s. In order to help Sarah, a beneficial instructional strategy would be writing summaries. “Studies by Pressley & Woloshyn (1995) have clearly shown that writing summaries improves comprehension of the material that has been read and enhances comprehension ability generally”(as cited in McKenna & Stahl, pg. 176). A summary writing approach created by David Hayes (1989) called GRASP (guided reading and summarizing procedure) would be a good approach for Sarah. First, Sarah would read the text. Then without looking at the text she would write down what she remembered. Next, she would look back at the book and add more details she had left out. Then, with help, Sarah would arrange the information into categories. After categories have been created, she would write a topic sentence for each and detailed sentences that support it. Lastly, Sarah would revise. (McKenna & Stahl, pg. 176). This

approach would first make Sarah aware of the details she is lacking as well as learn what type of details she needs to add and how to organize it. "Instruction in summarization teaches students to select important ideas, eliminate details, eliminate redundancies, and integrate the ideas in a synthesized and organized manner" (pg. 176). By becoming familiar with summaries and writing them often, she will in turn become a more aware and active reader; one that looks for the main ideas and supporting details. As a result, Sarah's comprehension will increase.

While summarizing is a great method to teach expository text structure/determining the main idea, graphic organizers are another strategy that will help Sarah learn to recognize how expository texts work (text structure) to help her figure out the main ideas and supporting details in a organized, visual manner. In order to do this, students need to be taught key words/phrases to look for to help identify the different text structures along with giving them a graphic organizer for each pattern. This should be done over a course of many lessons with teachers modeling filling out the graphic organizers and slowly getting students involved. When students are ready they then read their own expository text utilizing what they just learned about key words/phrases to identify the patterns and fill out the graphic organizer. According to Akhondi, Malayeri, & Samad, "graphic organizers help students list major ideas under the main idea of the text and put the supporting details under the related major idea. Having a graphic representation of the text's ideas helps readers comprehend and retain the content" (Reading Rockets). Thus, by using a graphic organizer, Sarah will begin reading with a plan and will be able to pin point main ideas and supporting detail and visually the interrelationships among ideas.



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