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Case Study

Reading transcends all learning. To be able to comprehend what we read, we must be able to read fluently. A struggling reader who cannot read accurately will therefore be unable to think about and understand the text. Fluency instruction is a vital piece in the literacy puzzle and must be taught explicitly in the classroom to young readers. Fluency instruction has three parts; accuracy, automaticity and prosody. For this study, I focused on accuracy while reading. A reader must be able to correctly read the words on the page to be a fluent reader. Accuracy is the basis of fluency. In the following case study, I discuss two students, Jonty and India, and describe, analyze and reflect their reading fluency. (*Standard I*)

I taught two different students a fluency lesson on June 15, 2010. The two students I worked with were brother and sister. The family is originally from Australia, and English is their primary language. Jonty is eight and going into 3rd grade in the fall. India is six, and going into 2nd grade. The students come from a middle-upper class family and live in a predominant neighborhood in suburban Atlanta. There are four children in the family altogether; Jonty being the oldest, and India the second child. Both students are white, and are reading slightly below grade level. Neither child receives pull out services for special education. Both children attend Austin Elementary in Dunwoody, Georgia.

The reading lesson took place in their home, at their kitchen table. In Georgia, schools go on summer break in mid-May. Therefore, school was already out for summer vacation when I taught the lessons to the students. While the learning was taking place, there were a few distractions that were challenging. For one, the telephone rang a couple of times during each independent lesson. The students did their best to ignore it, however even I felt distracted by it. This was a surprise to me, because I hadn't thought about this being a problem and therefore did not have a solution for it at the time. In the beginning of Jonty's lesson, his little brother came into the room and started talking with us.

Jonty's mother explained to me that he doesn't particularly like reading, but he did well on his schools CRCT standardized test in reading. When I first arrived at their home, Jonty did not seem interested in reading or taking part of the lesson. Right away this posed as a challenge, because I needed to find ways to get Jonty interested and engaged in the lesson. Jonty enjoys sports, especially hockey and soccer. Jonty also loves technology; he has an iTouch which he plays with constantly. He also loves to play on the computer and with Legos.

India likes to read, however she is still reading at a middle first grade level. India is being tutored this summer in both in reading and math. She says she likes reading but does not like being tested in reading. She loves playing outside and her favorite pastime is swimming. Both India and her mother expressed how much India loves school. She is a very social little girl who enjoys learning.

For my study with Jonty and India, I decided to focus on fluency; specifically accuracy and pacing. When talking with their mother and India's tutor ahead of time by

phone, they expressed that both children would benefit from explicit fluency instruction. India's tutor said that she can become frustrated with reading fluently, and this has affected her overall understanding of what she reads. Jonty's mother explained that he doesn't particularly like to read, so a lesson which taught him why reading is important, in addition to teaching him valuable reading skills, would be beneficial.

Accuracy in reading is absolutely necessary. The ultimate goal is to read for meaning; however this cannot be accomplished without the ability to read fluently. As the "Fluency PowerPoint" states, "To be fluent, a reader must simultaneously recognize most words in text automatically and effectively construct meaning from that text" (slide 2). This is a skill that every reader must learn in order to be successful. Additionally, students must be able to read fluently to be able to comprehend. Chard (2002) explains, "This effortful reading is problematic because it focuses reading at the decoding and word level, which makes comprehension virtually impossible" (p.17).

As previously stated, fluency has three components, the first of which is accuracy. Before automaticity and prosody can be perfected, accuracy must be present. Cunningham (1998) explains, "Lack of exposure and practice on the part of the less skilled reader delays the development of automaticity and speed at the word recognition level" (p.1). Readers need to be able to read quickly in order to concentrate on comprehension, and practicing accuracy can assist with this. "Both rapid reading of high frequency words and rapid decoding as a means to enhance text understanding appear critical for typical reading development" (Chard, 2002, p.1).

I chose to focus my lesson on repeated reading; specifically choral and echo reading.

Chard (2002) states, “These studies provide evidence that the focus on developing students’ rapid processing of print by reading target passages more than once is often effective as a means to improve accuracy and speed, and ultimately leads to better understanding of text” (p.2). There has also been research to suggest that reading selections need to be read a minimum of three times. Chard (2002) says, “Rereading text three times resulted in significantly better performance on a measure of oral reading fluency than reading the text once” (p.15). My lesson will include reading the selected grade level texts at least three times. (*Standard I*)

The lesson involves the teacher modeling fluent reading for students in addition to reading chorally or echo reading with the student. Chard (2002) expresses that it is more beneficial for learners to read with a model than without one (p.17). Chard also comments about the effectiveness of having a model read the selection first. “Having text read initially by a model promoted comprehension, perhaps because it allowed students to focus initially on the content of the passage before they read it themselves” (p.17).

The day I taught the lesson was the first day that I met both Jonty and India. I met with each child independently, therefore both lessons were one-on-one. I read with Jonty first. Since I was not familiar with the children, I began the lesson by introducing myself and explaining that I was studying to be a better teacher, and that I wanted to read with him today. I asked him how his summer was going and what he enjoyed doing during summer vacation. Jonty explained that he was really excited about playing team hockey starting in the fall. I connected with Jonty by telling him that I used to teach in Minnesota, where most of my students played hockey. Jonty lit up when talking to me about his hobbies. I felt it was

important to develop a small, non-teaching related, relationship with the kids before starting the lesson. I wanted to show a personal interest to their lives and personalities outside of school. It seemed that both students were more encouraged and excited about reading with me after these conversations. (*Standard III & IV*)

I began the lesson by explaining to Jonty that I wanted to get to know him as a reader. I administered three different assessments during the lesson. Due to the fact that I did not know these students prior, I wanted to know not only their reading ability, but also their general attitudes and opinions towards reading. I began by informally asking Jonty some questions about reading in general. The first question I asked was, “What is your favorite part of reading?” Jonty responded that he liked the “cool pictures”. The next question I asked was, “Do you think you are a good reader?” Jonty said, “Sometimes”. I felt Jonty’s comment suggested that perhaps he is not a confident reader. I then asked Jonty what kinds of books he liked to read. He said he loves the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series and fictional books. I ended this mini-assessment by asking, “Is reading hard or easy?” Jonty replied that it is “Medium”. Again, I felt this comment suggested that Jonty was not sure of himself as a reader. (*Standards IV & V*)

Later, I met with India and talked to her about what she likes to do outside of school. She expressed that she loves playing outside, and especially likes swimming. I wanted to connect with her as well, so I told her about how I was on a synchronized swimming team in elementary school, and how I loved to swim too. For the informal survey, I asked her the same questions as Jonty. When asked what her favorite part of reading is, India said “the spooky bits”. We then talked about scary books and I commented that I loved suspenseful

books as well. I then asked India if she thinks she's a good reader, and she commented, "Yeah". India explained that she loved the *Goosebumps* series by R.L. Stine, although when I asked her which book she liked best, she explained she has never read one by herself! She also told me she likes "easier" chapter books. When asked if reading is easy or hard, India told me it is easy. From her comments, I gathered that India is a more confident reader but that she might be speaking more from things she's heard rather than her own personal experience. (*Standards IV & V*)

I then administered a "Reading Attitude Survey", to get some more information (*see Artifact 1*). Jonty completed the sentence, "A fiction book is...a book that was made up". He wrote a "Non-fiction book is...a real life book". When Jonty has time to relax, he circled that he preferred to "e. play a video game" or "f. other: hockey". He wrote that he reads "to have fun", and that if he could, he would buy a fiction book. Jonty explained that school reading assignments would be more interesting if "I got to pick the book". This assessment showed that Jonty knows the difference between fiction and non-fiction and that he does not choose to read a book in his spare time. Also, Jonty appears to value choice in the classroom. Therefore, when teaching the lesson to Jonty, I made a mental note to provide Jonty with a choice between multiple readings with the hope of keeping him engaged. (*Standards III & V*)

India completed the "Elementary Reading Attitude Survey" (*see Artifact 2*). India seemed to absolutely love taking the survey (she even asked at the close of the lesson if she could do another one). India seemed to enjoy being able to circle the picture which corresponded to how she felt about that part of reading. There were four picture choices for each statement, and for clarity sake I will call them "bad", "okay", "good" and "very good".

India said she feels “okay” if she gets a book for a present and if she reads on summer vacation. She responded she feels “very good” about going to a bookstore and reading different kinds of books (those were the only two areas in which she circled the highest choice). India feels “good” about reading at school, for fun, and reading in her free time. She feels “good” about starting new books and learning from those books and also feels good about reading in front of her class. India circled the “bad” feeling in response to having to read instead of play, and when the teacher asks her questions about her reading. She also does not like doing workbook pages and worksheets about reading. This assessment showed me that India likes to read, but prefers playing to reading. She also doesn’t like responding to reading questions and appears to not like having to think more deeply about her reading. I took this into consideration when planning which texts to use with India. I made sure to present her with readings on topics I thought she would enjoy. (*Standards III, IV & V*)

Next I completed a running record of students reading independently. Jonty read from the book *The Zacharys’ Plans* (see *Artifact 3*). He read the text fairly well; meaning that he ended with a 94.1% accuracy rate, which means that this book was at his instructional level (it was a level N book). Jonty missed a few words while reading. When Jonty came to an unfamiliar word, he slowed down and sounded out the letters. However, I noticed many smaller words (such as “from”, “has”) he skipped over or inserted another word (“for”, “was”). I consistently encouraged Jonty and told him what he was doing well. Jonty had excellent retellings and was able to provide a lot of information about his reading. He also read the small descriptions to the pictures on the opposing page, even though I did not ask him to. This showed me that Jonty pays special attention to the entire text and does not ignore certain text features like captions (as so many young readers do). My instructional

goals for Jonty were to teach him the echo reading strategy while promoting accuracy and appropriate pacing in his reading. I wanted to provide him with strategies so he does not insert incorrect words in his reading. I felt these goals would help Jonty in his overall fluency (*Standard II & V*).

India read a reading selection entitled, “Hamsters” (*see Artifact 4 & 7*). India read this text at a 93.4% accuracy rate, meaning that this was at her instructional level. While reading this text independently, India needed much more help from me. There were several words that I had to provide for her (after a while of her attempting to sound out the letters and not being successful). India, nevertheless, showed great decoding strategies. She stretched out the word by segmenting each sound, and then put the sounds together to create the word. She did this often while reading. One particular word she segmented was “space”. She said the /s/, then added the /p/, and finally added the ‘ace’. She also looked at the picture clues to help her. My instructional goals for India were to teach her the choral reading strategy to help with her fluency. I wanted to use repeated readings to promote accuracy and appropriate pacing in her reading. India struggled more with fluency than Jonty; therefore her instructional goals were different. India needed more explicit instruction, and therefore I felt reading with a fluent reader would guide her more concretely. (*Standard V*)

Each of the three assessments served a different purpose. The first informal questioning assessment just let me get to know the students a little more. I wanted to know what they thought about themselves as readers in a very informal, conversational way. The second assessment, the Reading Attitude Surveys, were meaningful because they were written. Again, this gave me an idea of their levels and their feelings towards reading in

general. This survey required more precise, specific questioning about reading. The running record assessment actually measured their reading performance and told me their instructional levels. This was necessary in order to plan the lesson for each child, ensuring the reading was at the appropriate level. (*Standard V*)

Due to the fact that I was not familiar to the students' reading levels or interests, I came to the lesson fully prepared with multiple reading selections for a plethora of reading levels. I brought simple one-paragraph stories, Poetry Theatre selections, poems, books and readings on a variety of subjects. Therefore, once I administered the running record assessment, I would know which selections would be appropriate for each child. (*Standard III*)

I chose to use the echo reading strategy with Jonty, using Poetry Theatre. Poetry Theatre is very similar to Reader's Theatre, in that it is read like a play. I chose different Poetry Theatre selections that were made for two characters, we could read these together. I chose Poetry Theatre selections because they are interactive, and I felt it would engage Jonty more than a traditional book or passage. The selections I chose were from www.gigglepoetry.com, and were funny. I also thought this would help get Jonty invested in the lesson. I chose echo reading with Jonty because he struggled more with pacing, and I thought him reading after me would assist him with this. Echo reading consists of a fluent reader reading a sentence from a given reading passage first, and the student echoes it or repeats it.

I selected the choral reading strategy for India because I thought it would benefit her to first hear me model reading the selection all the way through, and then we would practice

reading it together. Choral reading is an effective way for students to practice their pacing and speed of their reading because they are reading at the same time as a fluent reader. By reading with me, India would be encouraged to stay at the same pace as me, and also have greater accuracy because she would hear me say the word correctly. India needed more guidance; therefore choral reading was a good strategy to use with her.

The lesson goals and strategies were matched to Jonty and India's reading needs and abilities. Although India has much greater struggles with fluency than Jonty does (which was evident by the running record reading assessments), each lesson was individualized for them at their differing levels. Both lessons would focus on repeated reading of certain reading selections to help them with their fluency (*Standard II*).

Both lessons with Jonty and India went very well. I am unsure to whether my reading instruction made a meaningful contribution to their overall reading progress. Their overall reading growth is still to be determined. If given the opportunity to follow up with both students and read with them again, perhaps I would be able to see whether my fluency instruction made a difference in their overall fluency achievement. Additionally, I think it can be difficult to truly measure fluency strategies due to the fact that students read different reading selections and each selection contains different words. It is hard to determine what reading selections students will have great accuracy because I am unaware of their vocabularies and which words may hinder their speed and accuracy while reading. However, both students did make immediate gains in their fluency and met their instructional goals and objectives.

I supported both students' success during the lessons by providing instructional strategies for accurate and well paced reading, modeling fluent reading, providing constructive feedback and encouragement. In Jonty's lesson, I began by making him feel comfortable with me by asking questions about him as a person first. I could also see that Jonty did not particularly love reading and from his assessments, I also understood that he did not see himself as a great reader. So, I wanted to equip Jonty with caring, positive feedback that encouraged and made him more confident. During his running record assessment, I was sure to congratulate Jonty for reading every text feature by saying, "Wow, I'm impressed that you read every word on the page without me prompting you to do that. That is something good readers do; nice job!" Jonty also had some great predictions about *The Zacharys' Plans* book on which he completed his assessment. He said, "It might be about them building something and they might have plans. They might have different plans or might be arguing. Their faces show they're mad". Again, I praised Jonty for his prediction, explaining that he used a great strategy by looking closely at the pictures and the looks on the characters' faces. (*Standard V*)

I started the lesson by explaining what fluent reading means. I said, "Fluent reading means you read like you are talking, paying special attention to punctuation and phrasing. Fluent readers read 'quickly', meaning that they read at a natural rate. Fluent reading is important because if you are able to read the text naturally, you will then be able to understand and think about what you read. Good fluency helps us to enjoy what we read. I love to read books fluently because it allows me to have fun while reading!" I wanted Jonty to be aware of the purpose of the lesson and also provide a rationale for wanting to read accurately.

Next, I asked Jonty to choose between two appropriately leveled reading selections “A Perfect Beach Hat” and “Soccer Camp”. Jonty chose “Soccer Camp”, which again showed me that he likes to read books based on his own interests (*see Artifact 5*). I asked Jonty to predict what the passage was about. He said, “It might be about kids who go to soccer camp together in the summer”. I started by first modeling fluent reading for Jonty. I read the entire selection and asked Jonty to listen closely. I provided a purpose for Jonty’s reading by asking him to listen to the pacing and flow of my reading. Next, I asked Jonty to read the entire selection alone. I wanted to gauge his ability to accurately read the selection on his own. He struggled with certain words (“bouncing”, “summer”). Jonty also inserted incorrect words, like substituting “Teddy” for “Ted” and repeating words and phrases. He also did a fair amount of self-correcting. After a one minute “cold read”, Jonty had read 91 words. Gradually releasing responsibility, I then asked Jonty to echo read each sentence. I would read a sentence and Jonty would repeat it. We read the selection three times this way. Before beginning our echo reads, I again reminded Jonty to pay attention to his pacing, telling him this was an important piece to practicing fluent reading. (*Standard III*)

With each echo read, it appeared that Jonty became more confident in his reading. He read faster and no longer made the mistakes he made with his solo read. After three consecutive echo reads, Jonty read the passage again by himself. He read faster and more accurately than his previous read. In one minute, Jonty read the entire selection (109 words).

After reading, I wanted to transfer Jonty’s learning into Poetry Theatre. Before we started, we talked a little about what Poetry Theatre is. I explained that, “Poetry Theatre is very similar to Readers’ Theatre. It is like a play, with different characters to act out. I like

doing Poetry Theatre because sometimes it is really funny! Do you like to read funny books?” Jonty explained that he loves funny books, his favorite being the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series. I told him that I used to teach fourth and fifth grade, and all of my students read that book. Jonty had never done Reader’s or Poetry Theatre before, which was great because I could introduce him to something new. (*Standard VI*)

We read “My New Pet” which is about a boy picking out a new pet at the pet store (*see Artifact 6*). This selection had many words that Jonty didn’t seem to have seen before (“gerbil”, “parakeet”, “Siamese”, etc). This gave us an excellent opportunity to discuss these new terms and how we could figure out what they meant. I asked Jonty how he could determine their meaning. He said, “Look at the words around it”. I told him this was a great way to help him figure out the words’ meanings. I reminded him that he should never skip over these words; to become a better reader he needs to use his strategies to figure them out. Again, we echo read the selection. I read first, to model for Jonty. Then we read through the poem three times, Jonty reading the part of “Child”, while I read the part of “Dad”. Jonty improved the flow and accuracy of his reading significantly through this lesson.

To finish the lesson, I asked Jonty to retell what the poem “My New Pet” was about. Jonty said, “It was about a boy who goes to a pet store to buy a pet and sees all different animals”. I asked Jonty whether the boy ends up buying a pet, and Jonty correctly responded, “No”. We reviewed what fluency means, and how he can practice it on his own or with a partner. I reminded Jonty that fluent reading can be practiced through Poetry Theatre or echo reading with an adult or friend. I again congratulated him for a job well done and gave him a high-five. I asked Jonty why it is important for people to practice their fluency, and Jonty

responded, “So they can get better and become better readers”. I told him that was a great answer.

For a future lesson with Jonty, I would want to focus more on prosody. Although Jonty had minor problems reading accurately (mispronouncing words or reading hesitantly) his fluency increased by the end of our lesson together. Because he reads fairly accurately now, I would want to focus on reading with expression by paying more attention to punctuation, character changes and overall flow.

For the lesson with India, I started by asking her questions about what she enjoys doing outside of school. She said she loves playing outside and swimming. I told India I was excited about reading with her today. We began by discussing what fluent reading is. I explained to India that fluency is important to practice, because it helps us become better readers. I asked her if she thought she could understand something if she couldn’t read it well, and she said, “No”. I told her I would not be able to understand a passage if I couldn’t read the words well. I told India that fluency means that you “read like you are talking”. This seemed to connect with her because she said, “That is what my teacher said”. I told her she was going to pick a selection to read. Her choices were “Hamsters” and “Summer Friends”. India picked “Hamsters” (although this was the same reading she did for her running record assessment). I asked her why she chose it, and she explained that she used to have a hamster as a pet, and she wanted to read the selection again.

I wanted to see if India could improve upon her first reading of the text (*see Artifact 7*). To begin, I asked India to read “Hamsters” on her own. India’s reading was very hesitant and slow (similar to her performance during her assessment). India had trouble with the

words “rodents”, “space”, “exercise”, “cheeks”, and “active”. She also had one self correction (“care”) and several teacher corrections (“rodents”, “healthy”, “mostly”). She read 49 words in one minute. I modeled fluent reading for India by reading the selection next. From my previous assessments, I knew that India struggled with fluency considerably more than Jonty. I told her to be a detective, and to listen really closely to the way I was reading. I also asked her to check to see if I was reading like I was talking. After reading, I told India that we were going to read the story three times, and she was going to read with me. I explained that choral reading means you read at the same time as your partner, and you try to sound like just them. India seemed to perk up when I told her she would be reading with me; this told me that although she says she loves to read, perhaps she felt more comfortable reading with someone. We read through the first time, and India had some trouble keeping up with me. To adapt my reading to meet her needs, I slowed down my pace. We sounded out the words together and India did a great job of separating the letters into their sounds, and then putting the sounds back together. I gave her a high-five and told her she had an excellent strategy for sounding out unfamiliar words. (*Standard VI*)

We read through the passage for the second time chorally and India read with a better flow, and she was more accurate. She still missed the words “rodent” and “cheeks”. To accommodate her, I stopped this time and had her repeat these words after me. I asked her what a rodent was, and India said she didn’t know. I explained that a hamster is a rodent, and mice and rats are other examples of them. I thought it was interesting that India didn’t know what a rodent was; because the passage stated, “Hamsters are animals. They are rodents”. This made me think that India was not yet comprehending what she was reading, perhaps because her primary focus was on reading with fluency and accuracy. We read the passage a

third time using choral reading and India was completely accurate; she said every word correctly. Her flow and speed had also increased. To close, I asked India to read the passage on her own. She read 61 words in one minute, an increase from her first read in which she read only 49 words.

After reading, I asked India to retell what the story “Hamsters” was about. She said, “It was about hamsters and what they look like and what they eat”. I noticed that India was looking at her paper when retelling. This told me that she still might not be internalizing her reading and reading for meaning. She was still focused on fluently reading the text and didn’t seem to comprehend what she read fully. I again reviewed what fluent reading means and how it can be practiced. I asked India how she can practice fluency and she stated that you can practice by reading with a friend or adult or by reading at the same time as they do. I gave India a high-five and thanked her for working with me.

For a future lesson with India, I would again want to focus on reading accurately. India is reading below reading level, and I would want to show her additional strategies that she can practice to increase her fluency, like echo reading or Reader’s Theatre. I realize it might also be beneficial to practice reading sight words and high frequency words with India, so she can gain more automaticity when reading. Because India still struggles with fluency, I would want my future lessons to focus on this skill so she can work towards effective comprehension.

Although I feel the lessons were successful, upon reflection there are always things that I would want to change. If teaching these lessons again, I would want to pay more attention to the lesson’s pacing. I felt India’s lesson was more rushed than Jonty’s and we

didn't seem to have as much time. India's lesson also came right behind her tutoring session, which I would want to change. Instead, I would like to teach the lesson in isolation because I think India would be more focused on her reading. Only being six years old, she struggled with her focus and seemed to get slightly distracted at the end of her lesson.

For Jonty's lesson, I would have more challenging reading selections, and perhaps find some more funny Poetry Theatre selections. I would also want to focus more on prosody and encouraging him to read with expression, although I realize this might encapsulate another lesson objective altogether. I would also want to work with Jonty on rhyming words and perhaps design a lesson about word play. Again, I would want to keep his interest level and engagement levels high, so I would be careful to choose reading selections that he would be interested in.

After reflecting on the lesson, a concern that I had was the lack of higher level thinking questions that I included in the lesson. Although we discussed the reading selections and students responded to comprehension questions, I didn't feel I provided enough higher-level questioning. If I were to teach these lessons again, I would put more of these types of questions into the lessons.

There were critical points in both lessons where my decision making impacted the direction of the lessons. In Jonty's lesson, I decided to echo read with him instead of choral read, although I had originally planned on chorally reading with him. After his reading assessment, I realized that echo reading might serve him better, because Jonty struggled more with reading at an appropriate pace. I also decided to extend the lesson to use Poetry Theatre. I wanted to read a more challenging text with Jonty so we could practice what to do when encountering an unfamiliar word, and I felt Jonty could handle it well. I felt this was

beneficial because Jonty had not read Poetry Theatre before, so I introduced him to something new. Also, we were able to discuss rhyming words that existed in the poem. I felt it was more meaningful to practice a harder text with Jonty because he did well with the “Soccer Camp” passage. (*Standard V*)

For India’s lesson, I decided not to extend the lesson to Poetry Theatre. I felt that India needed more focus with an instructional text, like the text “Hamsters”. When India requested to read the same text as her assessment, I also allowed it because I felt it was a challenging passage for her where she could show real growth. Therefore, the direction of the lesson was impacted, because India’s lesson focused on achieving accuracy and appropriate pacing for one passage. I felt moving onto another passage would only distract India, and I wanted her to be able to focus on one distinct and clear goal. (*Standard V*)

Both students achieved their lesson goals by increasing their accuracy and pacing of their chosen texts. To begin, both students read with much greater hesitation and at a slower pace. The lessons were each individualized for the needs of each student. Jonty benefitted from echo reading, while India needed more guidance and direct instruction from me through choral reading. The lesson objective was to read a grade level text accurately and with appropriate pacing. By using repeated reading with both students, they were able to read the same text over and over and improve on their fluency. Both students achieved the objective because they read with more accuracy each time, ending with reading completely accurately. Jonty read 91 words the first time, and then read 109 words in one minute, which was an increase of 18 words. India read 49 words first in one minute, and then read 61 words, an increase of 12 words.

One of the main reasons I believe the lessons were successful is because I talked with the students for about five minutes each before starting the lesson. By asking them non-school related questions, I was able to have a fun conversation with them and show my interest in them as people (in addition to them as readers). I think this helped them trust me, and be a little more relaxed during the lesson. Having accomplished this, we were able to move on to reading together and learning new fluency strategies. By assessing students, I was able to gather valuable information about their reading level and what specifics I may want to focus on during each lesson. (*Standard IV*)

I learned that students really enjoy being able to choose their own reading selection. I will definitely let students choose reading selections more often in the future (ensuring that they are at the appropriate level). I also learned how important it is to develop relationships with children during reading. Coming in as an outsider that the students had never met before, I was able to establish a positive relationship with each child by the end of our lessons together. It is so important to show kids that you care and want them to succeed. I feel this allows for better lessons, and even more success by students. (*Standard IV*)

The lesson scaffolds I provided were meaningful to students overall success because I was able to tailor the lesson for each child. Although I had the lesson planned out in my mind, I was able to make small changes to it when needed. I was also able to cheer for each student when they performed well. This praise helped guide the lesson because it seemed students felt encouraged to push themselves more.

It was a great experience putting theory into practice. I felt all the course readings I had done really prepared me to teach an effective lesson. In the past, I realized much of my

fluency instruction was imbedded into my reading block and I did not teach fluency as explicitly as I should. This lesson helped prepare me for future lessons in my own classroom because I was able to reflect on what went well and the effective strategies that I used.

(Standard I)

This lesson and subsequent reflection allowed me to grasp the importance of practicing fluency daily in the classroom. By performing a lesson on fluency, I also learned how effective choral and echo reading are. I have used choral reading as a whole group and small group exercise, but did not use it individually with students. I realized how valuable this can be because students are able to hear what fluent reading sounds like, and do it themselves at the same time. I have used echo reading sporadically, and I realize I need to use it more. Repeated reading is also a great way to practice fluency because students are able to improve each time. I think this allows them to see their own growth, which can be so meaningful for them. These are two fluency strategies that I will use much more often next school year.

The lessons taught me that I am an effective reading teacher because I was able to implement several ways of practicing fluency for the students I taught. No matter what you are teaching within reading, each lesson should be tailored and individualized to meet the learner's distinct needs. I was able to see clear results and improvements in the students' reading fluency. Fluency is an integral component in reading, which needs to be explicitly taught. Practicing fluency, specifically accuracy and pacing, will help raise students overall reading achievement. I feel the lessons were an overall success both for me as a teacher; and them as learners.

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