Intervention Plan for a Struggling Third Grade Reader

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Student Profile and Assessment Data

C is a third grade student who has been placed in the "low" reading group. She was recently assessed in reading using the following tests to determine her areas of difficulty: QRI-5, Z-test, Informal Phonics Inventory, Fry Sight-Word Inventory, DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency, and Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.

C received a total accuracy score of 49 errors out of 591 words and a total acceptability score of 16 meaning-changing errors on the QRI-5. This would place her at the instructional level for the grade three reading passage: A New Friend in Europe. C received a score of 35/96 idea units recalled and 6/8 questions answered correctly on the comprehension portion of the QRI-5. The two questions C answered incorrectly were both explicit questions. A score of 6/8 items on the questioning portion of the QRI-5 again places C at an instructional level for this passage.

C reads words she already knows quickly but is frequently slowed when trying to sound out words. She received a score of 12/36 on the Z-test. This test showed that she struggled with blends and long vowels but read the CVC words okay. The Informal Phonics Inventory provides a greater diagnosis of the spelling patterns with which she struggles. C received the following scores on the Informal Phonics Inventory: 20/20 consonant sounds, 3/5 consonant digraphs (th, sh, ch correct), 9/20 beginning consonant blends (bl, cl, gl, pl, st, sp, sm, sk, sl correct), 5/12 final consonant blends (nk, nd, ng, ft, st correct), 10/10 short vowels in CVC words, 4/4 silent e, 3/10 long vowel digraphs (heat, week, fee correct) 2/6 diphthongs (joy, oil correct), and 3/6 r-controlled/r (tar, hall, sir correct). These scores would place her at the mastery level for: consonant sounds, short vowels in CVC words, and the rule of silent e, the review level for: consonant digraphs, and the systematic instruction level for: beginning consonant blends, the

final consonant blends, long vowel digraphs, diphthongs, and r-controlled/-al words. *C* also scored 84/100 on the Fry Sight-Word Inventory, which would indicate that she needs more practice with sight-words.

C's fluency level was assessed using the DIBELS assessment of which she received a score of 54 WCPM. This score would place her in the at-risk category for reading fluency for her grade level. Phonemic awareness is not an issue for *C* and with an 87th percentile score on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test; vocabulary is also not a big concern.

Interpretation of the Assessment Data

The combination of each of these test scores indicates that *C* would best fit the profile of a Word Stumbler (Valencia & Buly, 2004). *C* struggles with decoding (as indicated by the Informal Phonics Inventory) however; her low percentage of meaning-changing errors on the QRI-5 indicates that she does read for meaning. *C* scored very low on the fluency assessment though, she reads words she already knows quickly. She is frequently slowed when trying to sound out words, which would indicate that her low fluency scores would be best attributed to her low level of decoding and word-recognition skills. *C* was able to answer correctly each of the four implicit questions on the QRI-5, which indicates that she is able to make inferences and comprehends what is read. However, the types of questions *C* missed (both explicit) and her low retelling score would suggest that *C* has difficulty remembering information directly stated by the author and lacks understanding of story structure. *C's* most significant area of weakness is decoding. She also shows weaknesses in the areas of fluency, remembering explicit details, and understanding story structure. *C's* strengths include attention to reading for meaning, the ability to make inferences, and an optimistic attitude about reading.

Description of Multi-Week Intervention Plan

In order to improve *C's* overall reading ability, we will need to spend time in systematic phonics instruction. The goal is to increase *C's* fluency and comprehension by increasing her skills in word-identification through this instruction. In addition, *C* will need instruction of story grammar and attention to explicit detail in a text in order to increase her retelling score and her ability to answer explicit questions. Since *C* was able to read at an instructional level of a grade three QRI-5 passage and since she shows the ability to attend to meaning, it is important that *C* continues to read texts that are at an appropriate content as well as instructional level.

My intervention plan for *C* is based on a three-week plan of daily thirty-minute one-on-one or small-group (depending on the needs of the other students in class) instruction. Each session will follow the same structure in order to provide consistency and predictability within each session. The reading material we will use will consist of texts that are read in class. This will ensure that *C* continues to be intellectually challenged by reading grade-level content. This will also allow the opportunity to provide additional support with grade-level text to ensure that *C* finds success with the reading of the materials that are used during whole-class instruction. In addition, *C* will be provided with assisted reading through partner reading and tape recordings during in-class readings.

The first ten minutes of the intervention session is allotted for revisiting previously read material with a focus on fluency. During this time the activities used include echo-reading and repeated reading of the previously read material. On the first day of intervention this will be a reading section read earlier in the day in class. This will allow *C* the opportunity to practice reading with fluency and expression with familiar reading material thus strengthening her fluency ability. While our work with decoding will most likely have a more significant impact on increasing *C's* scores on the DIBELS assessment, it is still necessary that we continue to work on

fluency with familiar texts so that she can continue to practice reading with ease in order to reach a proficient level of fluency for her grade level. This will also allow me to quickly assess any areas within that passage that may still prove to be problematic and may be prohibiting *C* from understanding any content knowledge we are learning in class. Finally, after *C* has received instruction of the five-finger retelling strategy, we will begin to assess *C's* comprehension of the text by having her provide a retelling of the reading. This will also allow me to quickly assess her progress with retelling and understanding of story structure.

The next ten minutes is allotted for word study with a focus on expanding *C's* sight-word vocabulary and improving her decoding skills. We will spend a few minutes reviewing, practicing, and adding words to *C's* stack of word cards. For each word added to *C's* stack of word cards, she will need to provide an illustration or a sentence with the word on the back of the card in order to connect the word with meaning. To review the words, we will use various word sorting activities based on letter and sound sorts and meaning sorts. *C* will be provided with a sorting prompt to indicate the words she needs to review for example, I would say, "Read to me words that start with two consonants," or "Read to me words that stand for something you can see." This extra practice with sight-words is necessary for increasing her score on the Fry Sight-Word Inventory and for increasing automaticity with words that are difficult to decode. I will also ask *C* to sort her words by "words I know," "words I almost know," and "words I don't know." This will allow both *C* and I to monitor *C's* progress and will provide on-going reinforcement as *C* watches her stack of "words I know," cards grow.

After our work with sight-words, we will spend the next seven minutes focusing on decoding skills. This is an area in which more systematic instruction is needed. In order to increase *C's* decoding skills, we will begin with a review of consonant diagraphs with a focus on

the /wh/ diagraph. After *C* shows automaticity with these letter-sound relationships, we will move on to study beginning consonant blends with the main focus being on the *R* blends. Once *C* has made adequate progress with beginning consonant blends, we will begin our study of the following final consonant blends: /pt/, /mp/, /ct/, /lt/, /sp/ /sk/, /nt/. Once these letter-sound relationships have been established, we will focus a moderately paced instruction on the following long vowel digraphs: /oa/, /ai/, /ay/, /ue/ followed by instruction of the following diphthongs: /ow/, /ou/, /ew/, aw/. Finally, we will need to work on r-controlled and –al words. We will compare and contrast new spelling patterns using word-sorting activities during our work on decoding skills. After sorting a new set of words by spelling pattern, *C* will record her word sorts in a word journal in which she will continue to add to during independent reading. We will also capitalize on *C's* understanding of consonant sounds, short vowel sounds, and the rule of silent e by using word making activities in which *C* will need to apply her new understanding of the letter-sound relationships to create new words, which may also be added to her word journal. We will also use word hunts with our previously read text to find additional examples of words with the studied spelling pattern. Finally, *C* will be encouraged to find additional examples of our focused patterns in the upcoming reading material, during independent reading, and within environmental print found outside of school. These lessons and activities should help *C* gain further understanding of digraphs and blends as well as within word spelling patterns. *C's* low score on the Z-test suggests that she is not familiar with the compare-contrast method for recognizing words. Thus, in using compare-and-contrast methods such as word-sorting activities, *C's* score on the Z-test should improve as well as her ability to recognize and quickly decode these spelling patterns. The making-words activities will allow *C* to apply and extend her knowledge of these spelling patterns thus strengthening her understanding and ability to

recognize these patterns. The word hunt activities will allow *C* to practice recognizing these words in context. By asking *C* to look for these words outside of the classroom, I hope to increase her consciousness of the targeted spelling pattern thus adding to her repetition with these words.

The final ten minutes is allotted for the introduction and reading of new text with a focus on comprehension strategies. I will provide an introduction of new reading material that will be used during upcoming whole-class instruction and we will work on developing prior knowledge for the text. I will also read a section of the passage to model fluent reading while using think-alouds to model comprehension strategies. Due to *C's* low retelling score on the QRI-5, I will focus explicit comprehension instruction on story grammar and the five-finger retelling strategy. We will use story maps and graphic organizers to help *C* organize the main ideas of a passage and make connections with the details provided in the text. Once *C* shows understanding of story structure, I will teach *C* the five-finger retelling strategy to help her remember the following key features of a good retelling: 1. I told where the story takes place (the setting), 2. I shared the names of the main characters, 3. I told about the problem in the story, 4. I told about at least three important events, 5. I told how the problem was solved (the solution). *C* will be instructed to apply these strategies to her reading and to be prepared to use this strategy to provide a retelling of the assigned reading. These lessons should help *C* become more attentive to the explicit details the author provides in the text thus improving her retelling and question scores on the QRI-5.

Description of Assessments During and After Intervention

When determining if *C* is making appropriate progress, several measures *for* and *of* student learning will be used. First, I will measure *C's* fluency progress by using curriculum-

based measurements at the end of each week. *C* will read a short passage, taken from a text used class, of which I will use to measure *C's* rate and accuracy. I will also monitor *C's* sight-word automaticity throughout our review sessions and will be able to see which words with which she is gaining automaticity through her growing stack of "words she knows." I will also retest her sight-word knowledge using the Fry Sight-Word Inventory half way through and at the end of the multi-week intervention so that I may have a formal assessment of her improvement. I will continue to use portions of the Informal Phonics Inventory to test for on-going progress and to ensure that *C* has reached a mastery level of a spelling pattern before moving onto the next level of instruction. I will also retest *C* using the Z-test at the halfway point to determine that *C* is making progress using a compare-contrast approach. I will do a final assessment using the Informal Phonics Inventory at the end of the intervention in order to get a formal means for measuring *C's* progress and to inform any further action we may need to take. Finally, I will monitor *C's* ability to provide adequate retellings during her daily retellings of the assigned readings. I will also assess *C's* comprehension progress of explicit details using the QRI-5 at the end of the intervention. *C* will be provided with on-going feedback of where she is at, where she needs to go, and of the progress she is making in order to keep her motivated throughout the intervention process.

Intervention Rationale

The result from C's Informal Phonics Inventory indicates that decoding skills and effective word identification are the primary problems leading to *C's* poor performance on the DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency assessment. In addition, *C's* score on the Z-test suggests that she is not familiar with compare-and-contrast methods of word recognition. For this reason, this intervention plan provides daily instruction and review of spelling patterns and decoding by

analogy. In addition to word recognition, this intervention recognizes that *C* needs continued practice with fluency by providing her with additional opportunities to hear and practice fluent reading which is another essential step to moving *C* out of the at-risk category on the DIBELS assessment. The use of echo-reading and repeated reading will allow her practice the words on which she stumbles during her reading. This repetition will add to *C's* growing rate of word recognition and automaticity. This intervention plan also addresses *C's* low retelling score on the QRI-5 by including explicit instruction of story structure and by providing *C* with a strategy to help her remember the elements she needs to include during a retelling. More importantly, this instruction of comprehension will assist her in attending to the explicit details provided by the author. Finally, *C* shows a positive attitude towards reading and in order to retain this optimism this intervention plan allows *C* to continue to working with age-appropriate texts that will continue to challenge her intellectually.

This plan recognizes *C* as a word stumbler struggling reader and is tailored to meet her following needs: 1. Additional instruction using a compare-contrast approach to specific spelling patterns, 2. Additional fluency practice and opportunities to hear fluent reading, and 3. Explicit instruction of specific comprehension strategies. Through this additional instruction, on-going reinforcement of reading progress, and her positive attitude, *C* should be well on her way to overcoming her struggles with reading and becoming a proficient reader.

Bibliography

Valencia, S.W., & Buly, M.R. (2004). Behind test scores: What struggling readers *really* need. *The Reading Teacher, 57(6),* 520-531.