

## TE 842 Focus Project

For this focus project, I have chosen to develop a differentiated lesson plan to help address some concerns I have noticed in one of my students I am currently teaching. One of my professional development goals for this course was to increase my understanding of how to best meet the needs of all my students. I understand the importance of differentiation for each student, and do practice it in my classroom; however, I am always looking for more ways to encourage my student's progress. I feel that throughout this course, I have gained several new tools, especially in the area of teaching and assessing fluency. The lessons I have developed include strategies and activities from our Best Practices in Literacy Instruction book to help my students improve.

According to Reutzel "Dynamic grouping for differentiated reading instruction is begun by placing children into small, homogeneous groups." (p. 420, 2011) The student I have chosen to work with is a young fourth grader who enjoys reading, but is behind in reading. Her DRA score is 28. She is in a small, guided reading group as well as receives individual reading conferences from me. Typically, at the beginning of fourth grade, a DRA level should be a 40. The lesson plan I have developed is designed to take place over a week during guided reading time. I chose to focus on improving Anna's fluency, as that is what I have noticed her struggle with during my individual reading conferences with her.

### **Lesson Plan:**

**Objectives:** Read a short passage accurately and fluently while self-correcting mistakes. Read short passages with expression and phrasing that sounds like conversational speech

RF.4.4 Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

RF.4.4a Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.

RF.4.4b Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression.

RF.4.4c Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

**Rationale:** Fluency is the bridge between phonics and comprehension. It is a critical part of reading. Anna struggles with this aspect of the reading process. Through these lessons, Anna will get practice with repeated reading as well as choral reading, both strategies that have been proven to improve reading fluency.

### ***Materials & supplies needed:***

- *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst
- Fluency passage (The Great Candy Caper) [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com)
- Poetry Piece: *I Taught My Cat to Clean My Room* By Kenn Nesbitt
- Pencil/paper

### **Introduction to the lesson**

I will begin talking about what fluency is and how it helps readers. Specific points I will make include reading should not sound like a robot, but smooth, like you are having a conversation with a friend. I will then explain that I will be working with Anna on how to improve her fluency and that it will be fun!

### **Lesson sequence:**

Day 1:

- To begin, I will explain to Anna that when you read with expression, notice punctuation, and fix your mistakes, you sound better. I will introduce my favorite book, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. I will read the book twice, with her listening. Once will be very fluent (a good model) and once will be very choppy and full of mistakes.
- After reading, we will have a conversation about what was good and what I could do better.
- I will then point out to her that fluent reading does not mean fast reading. I will show her how to go back and fix mistakes she reads when words do not make sense. (Modeled with my *Alexander* book)
- I will then explain that Anna is going to get a chance to practice these skills we just talked about. (Fixing mistakes, reading punctuation, and using expression)
- I will also explain to Anna that it is by lots of practice that we get better, so that is what we are going to do!
- Anna will re-read her favorite part of this book to me, using her best reading. I will take notes to serve as teaching points for future lessons.

Day 2:

- We will review yesterday's lesson and I will remind Anna of what it means to read fluently.
- Pass out the fluency passage- *The Great Candy Caper*
- We will read it several times- I will read it first, then we will choral read the passage two times.
- After that, I will have Anna read it one more time, alone. This time, I will complete a running record on a separate copy to document her progress.
- To end the lesson, I will congratulate Anna on a good effort.

Day 3:

- In order to track Anna's growth, I will assess her again on the same passage from the day prior. (*The Great Candy Caper*)
- Anna will then go practice reading fluently with a partner- they will choose their own books to use for this activity. (we have already practiced this and the kids are familiar with this procedure)

#### Day 4:

- I will introduce the purpose of this lesson to Anna- We will be adding to her knowledge of what fluency is.
  - Reading with expression and feeling helps with your fluency
- We will begin by reading the poem, I Taught My Cat To Clean My Room by Ken Nesbitt. I will read it first, and then Jenna will read it with me twice.
- After we read it together twice, I will take a few minutes to discuss her reactions to the poem. We will discuss the following questions:
  - What is the poem about?
  - What is the author trying to tell us?
  - How do you think the character is feeling?
  - What is the best way to read this so our listeners get these messages?
- After our discussion, we will read it again chorally.
- Lastly, Anna will read it once to me on her own (I will take notes on timing, phrasing, and expression)
- Anna will go off on her own and practice. I will let her know that tomorrow; we will get together and read this again, getting even better!

#### Day 5:

- To wrap up the week's work, I will remind Anna of what we just did.
  - We read with expression and feeling to convey the meaning and messages of the story
  - We made sure to go back and fix any mistakes we made
- Go back and read the poem again. Anna should demonstrate a fluent read at this point.
- I will also remind her that good readers use these strategies every time they read.

#### Assessment/Follow Through

In order to continue Anna's progress, I will ask her to do some homework on a weekly basis.

- Practice reading the assigned fluency passage at least three more times (once to herself, once to her mom, and once to another person of her choosing-dad, brother, etc...)
- Continue to read for at least 20 minutes a night with someone. The books can be anything she chooses, but she needs to be practicing her reading.

I believe that this focused intervention for Anna was very helpful in teaching her what I mean when I say she needs to work on fluency. I plan on using this same format for several other students in my classroom. I also am planning on adapting this format to fit in the structure of a small group. I also believe that the structure of the lessons helped make a difference as well. I based my lessons off of the Wide Fluency-Orientated Reading Instruction lessons described by Kuhn and Rasinski. Anna was also asked to read independently each night. Reading several different types of text was important because as Kuhn and Rasinski state, "This allows learners to encounter many words in multiple contexts and has the potential to expose students to a broader range of concepts as well" (p.285, 2011)

I always knew that differentiated instruction was important, but as I planned and taught these lessons, I realized how important it is to have your instruction based soundly on valid assessments. "Using assessment data is at the very heart of differentiating instruction to meet the

diverse literacy learning needs of all students in the classroom and for monitoring students' responses to the instruction provided-often called response to intervention (RTI)" (Reutzel, 2011, p.415) Based on Anna's data, I was able to sit down and think of specific lessons to target her specific needs.

This focus project has taught me a lot. At first, I saw it as an opportunity to try out some of the things we were reading about in class. I now have a solid lesson plan that I know makes a difference in reading fluency. In thinking about how I can use this in the future, I would like to incorporate some parents to do some of the partner reading activities. I have some parents in my room who are willing to help, and would serve as good fluent reading models for the struggling readers in my class. I am planning on setting up a meeting with these parents, teaching them how to run this 5-day plan, and then letting them work with my students who need it. I am genuinely excited to see how this impacts my students this year!

## **Bibliography**

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