

Literacy Analysis
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Brief Background and Reason for Project Focus

The student that I have selected is a male, entering the ninth grade. This student is my neighbor and I have known him for ten years. He attends a Catholic school in which he has always done well and received above average grades. In conversations with his mother, I have learned that although he is not weak in reading, it is not one of his strengths either. He told me that he hates reading and that it is very boring to him. His mother asserts that it can take him up to ten minutes to read two pages because he gets so bored with it and does not want to read. With this in mind, I would like to work with this student to find out more about his motivation to read and to see if that can be improved. I also hypothesize that if he is taking ten minutes to read two pages, it could be affecting his comprehension or even fluency.

Home and Family Life

My student is 14 entering ninth grade in the fall. He was tested at a tenth grade reading level. The student is a white male who speaks English as a first language. His father was born in Brazil, but English is the only language that is spoken in the house. The student is non-disabled and has no special education needs. In the home, his mother and older brother are both avid readers. The two of them are “constantly reading” as was relayed by his mother. His brother, who is a senior in high school, earned a 36 on the reading section of his ACT test. In contrast, his father occasionally listens to audio books, but rarely reads. My student and the father are very interested in sports and do not

enjoy reading. My student reads for school assignments or chooses magazines. His mother and brother are very interested in reading, however his father is much more interested in sports. I believe my student takes after his father who does not like to read. This could be a reason for my student's distaste in reading.

Emotional Climate

The current classroom climate is just a one on one setting at the student's home. This will make him feel more comfortable with reading and hopefully he will enjoy it more. When the student engages in literacy activities, he is bored. He does not talk as much as he normally does and gives short answers that lack detail. He is uninterested and acts like he just wants to finish the activity as soon as possible.

Literacy History

The biggest challenge that this student presents is his lack of interest. He says that he hates reading and I can tell that he is very bored. This causes him to answer questions in short answers that lack some of the important details. I believe that his boredom could be contributing to some of the below average scores that he got on his comprehension questions. I also believe that his boredom is causing him to visualize the text less than he should which could contribute to poor scores. His mother loves literacy and his father very rarely reads. When his father does read, it is a sports magazine, not a book. This could have a big impact on his son's desire to read, or lack of desire. His mother reads numerous books and would like my student to follow her lead.

Tests Given and Summary of Test Results

The first test that I gave to my student was the Delaney Assessment to learn about his motivation to read. His mother told me that he “hated to read” so I wanted to have a better understanding of just how much distaste he has and why. I also chose to use the QRI III to assess his comprehension of what he was reading. I felt that if he hated reading so much, that he also might not comprehend what he was reading.

When constructing the Delaney Assessment, researchers realized that they must ask different questions to adolescents than they do to children. They also realized many students feel that schools devalue the types of things that they are literate and competent with (Pitcher, 2007). The goal of this assessment is not to simply learn how motivated a student is to read, but it breaks down the students self-concept as a reader as well as how much value the student places upon reading. To find this, I asked my student 20 multiple-choice questions; ten questions were related to value, and ten were related to self-concept. In my finding, he scored a 33/40, or 83%, on his self-concept as a reader and a 17/40, or 43%, on his value of reading. Since I know a little bit about his background as a student, this tells me that he has always been encouraged to read by parents and educators and he believes that he is a reasonably good reader. Unfortunately, at this age in his life, he sees very little value in reading, and I would guess that he just sees reading as something that his mother and teachers make him do to complete assignments. Conversely, his father sees more value in sports, which is what my student more closely relates to. With this in mind, I may try to get him to read short articles about sports and see if his motivation to read improves so that he values reading more.

The second test that I chose was the QRI III. “The QRI-3 measures comprehension in several ways: through an analysis of the student’s retelling, through the answers to explicit and implicit comprehension questions, through the use of look backs that allow readers to search in the text for information to answer questions not previously answered correctly...” (Leslie & Caldwell, 2000, p. vii.). I first had my student read out loud for a minute to test his word rate and his fluency and then had him finish the passage silently. Once finished, I asked him to re-tell the story in as much detail as he could and finished with five explicit comprehension questions and five implicit questions. In his retelling of the story, he gave a brief answer that included most of the important information but lacked some significant details. Upon answering the comprehension questions, without looking back, he answered four of the implicit questions correctly but only two of the explicit questions correctly. This puts him at a frustration level. After looking back in the text to answer some that he got wrong, he improved to 5/5 in explicit questions and stayed at 4/5 for implicit questions. After looking back, a score of 9/10 puts him at an independent level. This pretest told me that he can decode words, he has a good rate of reading, and if he does not know an answer, he can go back and find it. On the negative side, his responses were so short that it was difficult to decipher whether he truly understood the information or was just recalling some general information. With this information, and the knowledge that he does not like reading, I think that it is possible that he is not always visualizing the text. He may have a visual here and there but not on a constant basis which could cause him to miss some details. This could hinder his comprehension of the text in totality as well as the enjoyment. With the information from both pre-tests, I will start with short articles about sports and try some

think-alouds to model how I read so he can see some of the thought processes that I have as a reader. My hope is that this will aid his comprehension and enjoyment of reading.

Lesson Plan

Focus/Date	Objectives	Materials	On-going assessment	Steps
7/17 Think alouds (Modeling)	Model think alouds for him to try to develop more visualization as he reads.	QRI III – think aloud portion	I will ask comprehension questions to look for more detailed responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discuss with the student possible reasons for poor pre test score -Introduce the idea of think alouds - Read the story together and model the think aloud strategy -Have the student practice this strategy -Ask comprehension questions
7/18 Individual think aloud and silent visualizing	Introduce a sporting magazine to have him continue to think aloud and visualize	Espn.com	I will ask comprehension questions to look for more detailed responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Remind my student about the think aloud strategy -Discuss that he should be having that conversation in his head in this session -Let the student pick an article online to read -As we read, the student will stop every few paragraphs to have this discussion.

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Reflections on Differentiated Literacy Lesson Plan

My student had a strong distaste for reading. I saw this from his test results and his own admission. I believe this distaste for reading and his boredom is also hindering his comprehension. Because he is bored, he is not visualizing all of the text. He might be making a picture here and there, but those pictures have too large of a gap between them and missing key details to the story. This theory makes sense because in his pre-test, he recalled main points, but did not give enough of the supporting details. After modeling the think-alouds, and helping my student practice this strategy, I believe that there was a meaningful contribution to the student's overall reading progress. This is evident in the data. On the pre test, he scored a 6/10 on the comprehension questions before looking back. He improved to an 8/10 on the post test in just two weeks. But more important, within the comprehension question data, his summary was much more complete in the post test than it was in the pre test. I made a check mark next to each part of the story that he summarized and there were considerably more checks on the post test than the pre test.

To support the student's success, I first modeled the strategy of think-alouds (Paris et al., 1983). After two or three paragraphs, we would both stop and I would talk about what I was visualizing, any connections I made or question I had from the vocabulary and what I considered to be the most important information. I wanted him to observe the process before he tried it himself. I modeled the process for the first part of the lesson, then we did it together and finally he tried it independently. This is a

transactional strategy instruction that can provide a richer explanation of the process involved in strategic thinking (Brown, 2008). During his reading, after every two or three paragraphs, we would both stop reading. The goal was to discuss the scene that was being painted by the author and make predictions for the upcoming parts. During the second lesson, I no longer told him exactly where to stop, but allowed him to choose his own stopping point. We would discuss exactly what he was visualizing in his head.

The goal was to get my student to visualize the story more so that he would have a better understanding of what he was reading, and therefore enjoy it more. I wanted it to be more like a movie of constant pictures. I cannot speak to whether or not he enjoyed it, but as I said before, he showed great improvement in the data from the pre-test to the post test. Even though there is evidence that suggests he showed substantial improvement, that does not mean that everything I did was perfect. It is possible that in the pre-test he was nervous or shy. Maybe I could have pushed him more to answer questions more completely or give more details in his summary. In the post test, I did a better job of creating the safe environment where my student was more open and willing to make a mistake (Almasi, J. F., 1995). If I were to make changes, I would work on fostering that environment for the pre-test as well.

The major component of this lesson was modeling think-alouds and then moving on to having the student practice the think-aloud strategy and finally having the student practice this strategy in his head (Mandel Morrow & Gambrell, 2011). The strategies that I was able to utilize in this project were all new to me, but I feel I will be able to use them again in the future.

Recommendations

My student has always been above average in school and in reading. That being said, I believe that it is possible that his parents and teachers always just assumed that he was visualizing, so he did not need to be taught any additional strategies. Now that he has been taught these new strategies, in order to continue his progress, he will have to continue to practice them. He should continue to stop while reading and have this inner dialogue until it becomes second nature. If he is constantly visualizing the text, it will become more like a movie, he will be more engaged with the text and therefore reading could end up being a more enjoyable task. One strategy that might aid this would be to place a sticky note on every other page as a slight reminder that he needs to stop and visualize. If he continues to develop this strategy, he will have more success with reading, which in turn could change his attitude toward it. Being successful in something is always more enjoyable.

Another recommendation that my student could utilize to make the reading more interesting would be to make predictions. As he predicts, he can continue reading and see if his prediction was correct. With predictions, reading becomes more like a game and something that he can enjoy. Even if he is reading something that was assigned by a teacher and not a topic that he enjoys, attempting to predict what comes next could be a strategy that could make reading more bearable for him.

Finally, I would recommend that my student may just have to accept that in life he will always have to read, so he might as well try to improve at it now and become the best he can be. Much like running laps in soccer, or lifting weights in football, one must put in the proper work in order to see the desired results!

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Appendices of Work

Summary of the story - Pretest

Level: High School

and toward the reception hall. A chilly wind blew through the huge room. Someone had opened the drapes and shutters of the dozens of windows rising from knee level to ten feet above my head, each framing a view of the River of Perfume, Song Hu'o'ng. ^{158 wpm}

Silent time: 3:17

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Retelling Scoring Sheet for
Where the Ashes Are—Part 1

Setting/Background

- "Wake up,"
- my mother shouted.
- Explosions and gunfire echoed through the rooms
- of the government guesthouse.
- It was two days
- before the New Year.
- Rather than stay at grandfather's house,
- my father felt
- we would be safer
- where soldiers
- had been assigned
- to protect him.
- My father worked for the government
- of South Vietnam
- as a civilian deputy
- to the governor.

Goal

- He sent us to visit his parents.

Events

- Although my father had been warned
- about a possible escalation
- in the fighting,
- he said,
- "There's a ceasefire.
- It's New Year's.
- We'll be safe."
- The road into town had been taken over
- by a convoy of tanks
- and trucks
- transporting soldiers
- U.S. soldiers.
- In the guesthouse,
- my mother,
- my sisters,
- and I fell asleep.
- Firecrackers went off
- as people celebrated the New Year.
- No one knew
- that along with the Year of the Monkey,
- the soldiers had arrived
- the Viet Cong soldiers.
- No one could tell
- when the firecrackers stopped
- and the gunfire began.
- A bullet shattered a porthole
- as we skipped down the steps.

Other ideas recalled, including summary statements and inferences:

Explicit and implicit comprehension question results - Pretest

Level: High School

7. Describe the guesthouse.
Explicit: it was large; it had high-ceilinged rooms; arched corridors; twenty bedrooms; thick walls; heavy curtains; a double staircase; marble steps; a carved banister; elephant tusks; a huge vestibule; a reception hall; and windows over ten feet (Because the author uses detail to evoke imagery, the reader should be able to describe at least three features of the guesthouse.)

marble, 4 bedrooms
 2 stories, marble pillars, spiral staircase

8. What was father's position within the government of South Vietnam?
Explicit: he was a civilian deputy to the military governor or he worked for the government. (The most important idea is that he worked for the South Vietnam government as a civilian and was not part of the military.)

Civilian ~~the~~ guy helping Vietnam Army

9. Give two reasons why the family went on this trip despite the possibility of increased fighting?
Implicit: they usually went during the holidays, or the father believed they would be safe, or they visited their grandparents a lot

New Year,
 father located different spot

10. Why weren't the children afraid to go to sleep on the evening before the New Year despite all the loud noise?

Implicit: there were so many firecrackers going off that they couldn't tell gunfire and fireworks apart, or they thought all the noise was fireworks, or they didn't really hear it because of the insulated walls and heavy curtains.

Knew they'd be safe

* lookback: ceasefire

Without Look-Backs

Number Correct Explicit: 2

Number Correct Implicit: 4

Total: 6

___ Independent: 9-10 correct

___ Instructional: 7-8 correct

6 Frustration: 6 or less correct

With Look-Backs

Number Correct Explicit: 5

Number Correct Implicit: 4

Total: 9

x Independent: 9-10 correct

___ Instructional: 7-8 correct

___ Frustration: 6 or less correct

Rate: $707 \times 60 = 42,420 /$ ___ seconds = ___ WPM

Summary of the story – Post test

High School

Level: High School

him. It would be sixteen years before I saw him again. STOP

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Retelling Scoring Sheet for Where the Ashes Are—Part 3

Setting/Background

- They accepted my father's protestations that he was not a general.

Goal

- He and the other men were taken inside the mansion.
- Women and children were sent into a basement.

Events

- I led the way.
- Mother knew that women would be sent to look for food or nurse the wounded.
- Men would have to gather the wounded and the dead.
- Dieu-Quynh was at risk of being drafted for this.
- "My daughter is ill," mother explained.
- The soldiers left us alone.
- "Your husband wants to see you," a voice announced.

- My mother went up alone.
- She returned.

Goal

- "We're going to see your father in a while."

Events

- "What are they going to do to him?" I asked.
- "Oh, he'll be all right. They said all he needed was re-education. They're taking him somewhere, but he'll be back."
- "What's re-education?"
- "It's like school." Ma was happy to have water for my father to drink until she tasted it.
- It smelled of Mercurochrome.
- The soldiers had used the water to wash the wounds of men and then poured back portions now laced with Mercurochrome.
- My father was happy to see us, but his face showed no such emotion.
- I glanced around my parents' bedroom.
- It had been turned upside down.

Resolution

- Sometime past midnight, soldiers took my father away with other men.
- A rope was hooked through his elbows and tied behind his back while his wrists were bound together in front of his chest.
- He was also tied to the man in front of him.
- It would be years
- sixteen years

Explicit and implicit comprehension question results – Post test

Level: High School

8. What did the mother bring to the father to eat and drink?
Explicit: rice and tea made from water with a red disinfectant in it

9. Where was the family going to stay after the father left?
Explicit: at their grandparents' house

X no idea
grand parents house (look back)

10. Where do you think Cha went at the end of the story, and why?
Implicit: to prison or to a work camp, because he was tied up and being forced to go (To get full credit the reader should give a reason for the answer.)

Tied up

Without Look-Backs

Number Correct Explicit: 3
Number Correct Implicit: 5
Total: 8

___ Independent: 9–10 correct
 Instructional: 7–8 correct
___ Frustration: 6 or less correct

With Look-Backs

Number Correct Explicit: 5
Number Correct Implicit: 5
Total: 10

Independent: 9–10 correct
___ Instructional: 7–8 correct
___ Frustration: 6 or less correct

Think-Aloud Summary

Think-Aloud Statements That Indicate Understanding

- Paraphrasing/Summarizing _____
- Making New Meaning _____
- Questioning That Indicates Understanding _____
- Noting Understanding _____
- Reporting Prior Knowledge _____
- Identifying Personally _____

Think-Aloud Statements That Indicate Lack of Understanding

- Questioning That Indicates Lack of Understanding _____
- Noting Lack of Understanding _____