CASE STUDY OF A 6TH GRADE READER

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RAW DATA SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Reading Interest Inventory/Seven Questions about Reading:  There are three questions and answers that I want to focus on in this raw data analysis.  What do you do well as a reader?  Answer—speed; read quickly; and know the words.  Do you read at home?  How often?  Answer—Yes.  Every night.  These three answers should have clued me in that she was going to be a good reader.  The old adage practice makes perfect applies to reading as well.  The more you read the better a reader you become.  The fact that she is reading every night increases the likelihood that she is a good reader and her answer that she reads quickly gives weight to that statement.

Reading Strategies Interview/Reading Interview:  There are two questions and answers that I want to focus on in this raw data analysis.  What do you do if you don’t understand a paragraph or an entire page?  Answer—Read over.  Now that you’ve completed the book, what do you do?  Answer—Put book down; stretch.  Jackie was aware of the useful strategy of rereading when comprehension breaks down.  Jackie’s failure to think about what she has read once she has finished reading is a potential problem for comprehension especially where expository texts are involved.

Word List to Select Reading Level:  The words that Jackie was unable to pronounce she was also unable to provide a meaning for them.  Although she only missed four words not five (since she self corrected “gorge”) I chose to start my miscue analysis at the 6th grade reading level because she did not have comprehension of the words she missed.

Narrative Passage Form A, Level 6:  Jackie read this passage very quickly.  She had not heard of the word physician although she knew what a doctor was and knew that a surgeon was a kind of doctor.  See miscue analysis forms for additional information.

Expository Passage Form SS, Level 6:  Repetitions increased greatly from the narrative passage at the same level.  Jackie was not as confident reading this passage as she was reading the narrative passage.  Jackie’s retelling appeared to be more of a struggle with this form and she had more difficulty with comprehension.  See miscue analysis forms for additional information.

Narrative Passage Form A, Level 7:  Repetitions increased from Level 6.  While Jackie still read quickly her fluency was not as good at this level as it was at level 6 but she still had good comprehension of what she read.  See miscue analysis forms for additional information.

Expository Passage Form SS, Level 7:  Repetitions decreased from Form SS, Level 6 but substitution errors doubled.  Jackie appeared pained with trying to recall comprehension answers.  She became agitated and wanted to quit.  Jackie did not know vocabulary which would have made it much easier for her to read the passage, she did not
know the term “compulsory attendance laws” or the word “leisure.” See miscue analysis forms for additional information.

**Narrative Passage Form A, Level 8:** Overall Jackie had very good comprehension of this passage although she did not know the meaning of “congenial.” The majority of her miscues did not change the meaning of what was being read. See miscue analysis forms for additional information.

**Narrative Passage Form A, Level 9:** This narrative passage is in many ways like that of an expository social studies article. With the reading of this passage Jackie’s number of self-corrections increased as well as her number of repetitions. Jackie once again had trouble with vocabulary. For example, she did not know what the words “unprecedented” and “lucrative” meant. She also had a break down in comprehension with this passage. Jackie thought the people voted against the lake. She didn’t pick up on the point that the people voted against a disposal system that discharged waste directly into the Pacific Ocean. See miscue analysis forms for additional information.

**Retrospective Miscue Analysis:** I reviewed with Jackie her reading strategy of rereading when meaning broke down and how that was a good thing because it showed that she was monitoring her reader. But I questioned whether she wasn’t using the strategy when she didn’t need to do so.

**Class Observation February 21, 2003:** This class observation was completed prior to conducting the miscue analyses. The observation took place working with Jackie in a small group environment in the library. Jackie was very distracted and failed to complete her assigned writing tasks. Based on how she acted during that observation I assumed that she was a poor student and was going to be a poor reader.

**Class Observation March 4, 2003:** This observation was completed after conducting the miscue analyses. At the time of this observation I was aware that Jackie was not a poor reader after all. I was looking to see if her classroom behavior supported that she was a good reader or not. What I saw was a student who has great potential to be an A student if only she was able to focus herself. Instead, per the mentor teacher, she is a B-, C student.

**Fluency Scale:** Overall I would rate Jackie’s fluency as being above average between a 3 and 4 using the three dimensions of phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Jackie is generally well-phrased but she does not pay any attention to expression. In regards to smoothness, Jackie has breaks caused by her excessive repetitions. But her pace is consistently conversational. Please see individual miscue analyses for additional information regarding fluency.

**Qualitative Analysis of Two Writing Samples:** Jackie’s weakest area of writing is mechanics. She is a poor speller and does not use punctuation correctly. Her strongest area is style. Jackie has a strong sense of audience and a sense of herself as a writer.
**Please note:** I was unable to provide originals of the writing samples. One of the writing samples the mentor teacher needed to keep for comparison with Jackie’s proficiency exam writing and the other writing is in a class notebook maintained in the classroom. I was also unable to provide originals of some of the miscue analysis’s I completed. I did not anticipate that Jackie would read as well as she did when I prepared for testing her. Therefore, I had not made copies of any of the forms above the 6th grade level. As a result, I had to write in my book at the time of the readings. In order to give you the originals I would have to give you my entire book and I assume that you do not want that.
Qualitative Analysis of Two Writing Samples

What is visible?

In looking at the two writing samples I find the way the print itself appears on the page to be very interesting. Jackie’s writing slants both directions. This physical shift in how Jackie writes probably is due to a break in her thought process. But this physical shift could also cause breaks in the writing process by breaking the flow of what she is trying to communicate.

Mechanics: Punctuation, Spelling, and Capitalization:

Jackie fails to use any quotation marks in her piece when she is indicating conversation between characters. She also sometimes has errors in the way she uses commas. An example of this occurs in the first sentence of the writing sample titled “Personal E.N.” Overall, Jackie uses capitalization correctly. An example where she misuses capitalization appears in the first sentence of the above sample where Jackie capitalizes the word downtown. Spelling appears to be a weakness for Jackie. She misspells several words including embarrassing, security, disappointment, realized, panicking, stunk, camera, and relief.

Sentence Structure and Grammar:

Jackie fails to use past tense correctly in her writing. In the “Personal E.N.” sample she repeated says “when it happen” instead of happened. Jackie also constructs incomplete sentences and run-on sentences. Jackie uses a lot of sentence fragments but the majority of these are when she is trying to convey conversation. Since her meaning is pretty clear from the context I do not think this is a real problem.
Organization:

One large item of organization is lacking in Jackie’s writing sample “Personal E.N,” that is the use of paragraphs. If Jackie used paragraphs it would be easier for the reader to comprehend her story. Jackie’s story and short note to me both appear to follow a logical progression. Jackie starts out with a general statement then she gives more detailed information. This shows that she has clear and logical thinking.

Style:

This is the section that I believe is Jackie’s strongest. I believe that she has a strong sense of personal identity which carries through her writings and identifies pieces as her own. Jackie shows a talent for writing in such a way that draws the reader in. She seems to be talking directly to the reader. Jackie also provides commentary on what she is writing. The following statements are examples of this seed of writing: (1) “Boy was it embarssing [sic],” (2) “How dumb was I,?” and (3) “Its [sic] me Jackie.”
Case Study Summary

What does this student know about literacy?

Jackie effectively uses the cueing systems of grapho-phonemic, syntactic, and semantic when she is reading. In reviewing the results of the six miscue analysis’s which were conducted for this case study, there is not a cueing system which stands out for either lack of use or for more use than the others. However, many of her miscues are only partially correct grapho-phonemically. This makes sense when one views Jackie’s writing samples which contain many spelling errors (Jackie’s difficulties with spelling are elaborated in more detail below under the difficult category). Although proficient spelling is not necessarily an indication of a proficient reader it does give some explanation for her grapho-phonemic errors.

What are this student’s strengths?

The fact that Jackie is motivated to read is a great strength. Many middle childhood students do not have such motivation. She indicated during the reading interest inventory that she reads books of her choosing every night at home. I also believe that her fluency is evidence of the fact that she probably does read frequently since fluency increases with volume read. Her motivation to read is a great benefit because reading research has shown that the more you read the better a reader you become.

Another strength Jackie has is that she monitors her reading by rereading and is aware that she does so. Repetition of words or phrases, rereading, was present in all of the six miscue analyses conducted. Jackie’s use of rereading shows that she is monitoring as she reads. Her metacognition of this reading strategy is evidenced in her
answer to the question posed to her during the reading interview, “what do you do if you don’t understand a paragraph or an entire page?.” Jackie’s answer was that she reads over.

A third strength that Jackie has is her reading comprehension when reading narrative texts. When reading the 6th grade level narrative passage Jackie only had four nonrepetition miscues and had very high comprehension. At the 7th grade level Jackie had 20 miscues but only 8 miscues once repetitions were removed and she still had very high comprehension. When reading the 8th grade level narrative passage Jackie had 10 nonrepetition miscues, 23 repetition miscues, and high comprehension. It was only when she read the 9th grade level narrative text that she began to have trouble. At the 9th grade level she had 34 miscues counting repetitions and 18 miscues without repetitions. She also had a break down in comprehension. In the earlier texts she had been able to successfully answer almost all of the comprehension questions and give a detailed retelling of the story but she was unable to do so with this text. I would argue that this is largely due to the text mimicking that of an expository text.

**What is difficult for this student?**

Jackie has difficulty reading expository text. This is evidenced by the fact that she read up to the 9th grade level when reading narrative text but only read up to the 7th grade level when reading narrative text. In addition, when responding to questions concerning the expository text she became very agitated but she was calm and appeared confident when answering the questions for the narrative text. In addition, her comprehension after reading the 7th level of the expository text was lower than that of the comprehension she had with reading the 9th level of narrative text.
Based on my class observations of Jackie I believe that she has a difficult time remaining focused on school work. I believe this is part of the reason why she does not perform as well on the expository texts as she does on the narrative texts. I also believe this is the cause of many of her writing problems. Jackie’s writing, as evidenced by her two writing samples, is weak in the area of mechanics. She is a poor speller and does not use punctuation correctly.

**What does this student need to work on next?**

Jackie needs to learn other reading strategies to use rather than continuing to rely on the use of repetition. This is especially important in order for her to advance in her reading of expository texts. As a follow up to my reading assessment of Jackie I plan to sit down with her and have the two of us together set one or two goals for her to work on over the next few weeks. I will use the goals we have set to plan future reading strategy mini-lessons for the entire language arts class of students. I believe that Jackie’s areas of weakness are probably shared by many of her classmates and I can not devote my time to focusing on one student.

These strategies will be geared to improving comprehension. At first I will focus on other monitoring strategies to help break Jackie’s reliance on rereading. These strategies will include reading ahead, asking myself if it makes sense, asking myself if I am learning what I want to know, and asking for help if I need it.

In the reading interview when Jackie was questioned as to what she does when she finishes reading a book, she replied “I put the book down and stretch.” Jackie did not suggest that she thinks about what she has just read in anyway. Therefore, I would also want to teach some after reading strategies so that she can learn the confirm part of a
good reader. Once again these strategies would be particularly important in increasing her comprehension of expository text. These strategies will include teaching Jackie to summarize as she reads, to summarize after she reads, to note the main idea, and to note important details. I will also teach her evaluative strategies such as asking herself how she feels about what she has read, asking herself whether she agrees or disagrees with all or part of what she read, and asking herself whether she learned what she wanted to know.

Make recommendations for content area instructional support.

As a future social studies teacher I see Jackie’s difficulty with reading social studies expository text to be of particular concern. I see how important it is that she receives additional reading support and education in the social studies classroom beyond what she receives in language arts class. I like the suggestions that are contained in chapter six of the book Reading for Understanding. I want to focus on the word knowledge section and the procedure which is located on page 107. The reason for this focus on word recognition is because Jackie had difficulty with the vocabulary in the expository pieces. I believe that if she had had more background knowledge of the type of vocabulary contained in expository writing that she would have been able to successfully read and comprehend the expository passages.

The prereading strategy is called “Survival Words.” The procedure is as follows: (1) the teacher chooses several words from a text that the students will be reading that might pose difficulty for the students and that the students are likely to encounter again; (2) the students make a chart which has columns headed Word—A—B—C—D—Meaning; (3) the students copy each word down under the column headed Word; (4) the
students then check the appropriate A, B, C, or D category for each word: A is I know the meaning, and I use the word; B is I know the meaning, but I don’t use the word; C is I’ve seen the word before, but I don’t really know it; and D is I have never seen the word before; (5) the students are then instructed to write the meanings of as many of the words as they know in the Meaning column; (6) after students have rated their word knowledge and written their meanings, the students are put into groups and are asked to share with each other the meanings that they are most confident about; and (7) the teacher then goes over their charts with them, answers any questions they may have, and gives the students additional information about or help clarifying words with which they still have difficulty. This prereading strategy would help students to learn and retain the words that might otherwise trip them up when they read their class text. I believe this collaborative approach would really help students get to “know” what the words mean instead of just memorizing them for a quiz and then never thinking about them again.