

Second Grade Literacy Case Study

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**Abstract**

Zack is underdeveloped socially for the second grade and is reading at a kindergarten reading level. I performed a series of interest and phonic assessments to narrow in on his strengths and weaknesses. I also observed his social and reading behavior and met with his father to further conclude any areas of need that will help Zack perform better academically and socially at second grade level.

## **Second Grade Literacy Case Study**

### **Student Background**

Zack is a 7-year old second grader. He is from an upper-middle class family that is biracial. His mother is white and travels for work quite often; his father is black and stays at home with the family. Zack has an older brother and sister. Zack has moved around a lot due to his mother's occupation as a Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) and was currently in Belgium for most of September 2016.

Zack was chosen for this case study because he is reading at a kindergarten level and he has social-emotional issues that are transparent while at school. Zack's developmental reading assessment (DRA) upon entering the second grade was a 4 with a reading engagement level of 4, an oral fluency of 10, and a comprehension level of 18. This is Zack's first year at Denver Elementary.

Zack showed signs of anger and a lack of anger management during the first week of school when all students were assigned a color square when they meet on the carpet for lessons. At the beginning of the afternoon period, another student was sitting in Zack's green square and Zack burst into tears and began shouting, which turned into a temper tantrum. Both the mentor teacher and I pulled Zack from the carpet and I brought him to my table to talk about his emotions and behavior. This behavior was underdeveloped for a second grade student, who should be able to adjust to a compromise. This was our first red flag that Zack has anger management problems.

During independent reading when students are expected to read silently at their desks, Zack would occasionally become disruptive, talking loudly, unable to focus on reading, and he would get warnings quite often, every day. During guided reading, Zack

would behave much better one-on-one with a teacher or interventionist. Zack enjoyed the one-on-one attention and would follow through with the expectations of the 20-minute guided reading lessons.

### **Data Assessments and Analysis**

The following assessments were performed on Zack in September 2016:

- Interest Inventory
- Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS)
- Dolch Sight Word Test
- Phonemic Awareness (Rhyme)
- Phoneme Blending
- Phoneme Segmentation
- iReady Literacy and Reading

#### **Interest Inventory**

The first assessment I decided to perform on Zack was the Interest Inventory. I wanted to find out more about what Zack knew about his family, what he does during his free time at home, and what his hobbies and interests are. This information was important to collect to gauge if reading fell into any of his hobbies, interests, and at-home activities. This interview showed me several things.

I was surprised that Zack did not know his home address or how to spell his last name. I asked him if anyone ever read to him at home and his response was “no.” His favorite school subjects are gym, art, and “recess.” Any favorite thing or hobby involved video games, even the types of books he enjoyed involved *Minecraft* (a virtual video game to create communities). His answers about what makes a good reader and what makes a person not a good reader involved an expected student-teacher response from

what he thought was a correct or good answer: a good reader is “reading books even if they are hard” and not a good reader is “reading too easy books.”

### **Analysis of the Interest Inventory**

Zack needs more access to reading materials at home and his older siblings or parents need to enforce reading as an important, fun activity in the home. It would be great if someone in his family read to him and then had him read a short book per night to them. The interest inventory emphasized his interest in TV and video games, which should be used as rewards for concentrating on reading at home. Zack needs one-on-one reading guidance at home and he is not receiving this, which affects his attitude toward reading at school. There needs to be a level of importance toward reading to Zack from an authority figure in the home.

### **ERAS**

The ERAS was the second assessment I gave Zack because I wanted to see how he gauged his own interest in reading at home, at school, and during long periods of breaks from school. Zack was fairly honest about his responses.

Zack’s attitude toward recreational reading scored at an interest level of 25 out of 40, which does not show a high level of interest in reading considering this shows a 60% percentile, where 40% of children his age who love recreational reading would score above him.

Zack’s attitude toward academic reading scored at 22 out of 40, which does not show a high level of interest in reading at the academic level. This shows a 55% interest toward academic reading where children his age who love to read would most likely score 45% percent above him. In all, Zack’s interest in reading is mid to low, however,

he'd be very excited to receive a book as a gift, which could be the fact that he likes to receive presents regardless of what the present is.

### **ERAS Analysis**

Zack did answer favorably toward reading on a rainy Saturday, reading for fun at home, starting a new book, going to the bookstore, reading in school, reading school books, reading stories in class, and reading out loud in class.

Through observing Zack during independent reading time, it was very difficult for him to focus and he would disrupt the class by talking or moving around the room. We offer unique and different spaces for students to read if they'd like to move around, however, when Zack chose a new place he mostly would look at picture books or sneak a graphic novel and look at the pictures. Zack's interest in gaining information from the text was not apparent. He has such a low reading level, he may have felt out of place with the type of books he was allowed to read compared to the others in the class.

I believe Zack answered most of the questions about enjoying reading and books because he wanted to please me as the interviewer. His answers about using a dictionary and taking a reading test were unfavorable because deep down inside, he may have felt that he wouldn't succeed using a dictionary or taking a test. Any question that pertained to learning from reading was answered low. This may be due to the fact that Zack is not comfortable reading to learn because he may be able to sound out words but yet not completely comprehend what those words mean.

### **Dolch Sight Word Test**

The third assessment was a Dolch Sight Word test. I needed to gauge how quickly Zack could read, pronounce, and define sight words. The expectation to recognize sight words

within three seconds is very important because if a student is struggling with sight words, it will slow down their fluency and comprehension. Zack struggled to recognize words from the Pre-primer and Primer lists, which are equivalent to what a kindergarten student should know.

### **Dolch Sight Word Analysis and Activities**

My mentor teacher required me to test Zack's knowledge of Dolch Sight Words. I began with the Pre-primer and Primer lists. During his assessments, I would give him positive reinforcement. I made a flashcard for the words that he struggled with, sounded out, or verbally cued wrong. Sight words should be recognized immediately within at no more than three seconds, according to my mentor.

After the flashcards were made, Zack and I would use 10 flashcards per day until he was able to recognize the word quickly and define the word or use it in a sentence. We would play a ladder game with the words he struggled with the most. I laid out five flashcards in front of him vertically. There were four red chips at the bottom and Zack would move the red chip to each card and say the word. If Zack did not get a word correct he had to move the chip to the bottom of the ladder and start over. Once he got all four chips to top of the ladder, he got a fist bump and a sticker. His response to completing the ladder each day was favorable. He was very proud of himself for completing the ladder. Zack would become bored with the ladder game if I were to do it more than once a day with him, so I only did one ladder per day until each mastered each word.

**Phonemic Awareness Assessments**

The next three assessments I used for Zack dealt with his phonemic awareness. The first assessment, Rhyme, showed his ability to make new words using the ending sounds of the known word given. Zack was given two words that rhymed and had to choose one word that rhymed with the group; this section is Rhyme Choice. Out of eight words, Zack gave four correct responses. Zack was given two words that rhymed and had to give me another word that rhymed with the group; this section is Rhyme Supply. Zack gave me six correct responses out of eight.

The Phoneme Onset and Rime assessment was successful for Zack. He achieved a correct response for all eight words. This required Zack to create a word from groups of letter sounds. The Phoneme Blending assessment was also fairly successful where Zack provided seven correct responses out of eight. This required Zack to create a word for each sound of the letter.

The Phoneme Segmentation assessment was also a good achievement for Zack. I verbally said a word to Zack and he had to tell me each sound he heard in each word. Out of the eight words, Zack got all eight correct.

**Phonemic Awareness Analysis**

Zack's biggest struggle was with Rhyme Choice and Rhyme Supply. Zack needs to learn how to distinguish similarities and differences in words through auditory cues and generate words that rhyme. This area of need is helping him master ending rimes, such as, -at, -ay, -ip, -un, and -ake.

Zack was able to recognize phonemes and rimes when asked the word but he was not able to create or generate words that included certain rimes. To further help Zack



generate real words with rimes, it is important to introduce Zack to rimes beginning with a vowel-consonant (V-C) combination. Introducing Zack to a new V-C each week and having him generate words with those same rimes would help him improve generating new realistic words and spelling those words.

### **iReady Literacy and Reading Assessment and Percentile Information**

The iReady assessment was a school-wide assessment that is computer-based. Students performed the assessment on a laptop at their desks. The assessment placed Zack at a Level K reading level, which paralleled to his DRA score. Zack scored at the 14% percentile out of the entire second grade cohort—meaning 86% of his second grade cohort scored higher than him.

### **Plan of Instruction**

My goal was to spend one-on-one time with Zack to improve his rime recognition and generation, improve his Dolch sight word awareness and comprehension, phonemic awareness, text structures, making sense of a text, and help him understand that reading can be fun when you learn new things through comprehension and guided reading.

I met with Zack on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for 30 minutes each day. On Tuesdays we would concentrate on Dolch sight words, building ladders, and rimes. I would use flashcards for the Dolch words and then have him build one ladder with five Dolch words. I would have him use a white board to spell the Dolch word for me three times and then I would have him use it in a sentence for me.

Zack participated in Orton-Gillingham (OG) sessions every afternoon with the entire class. They were introduced with a new rime every week and would practice word

generation, tapping out sounds, verbally saying the sound, and word recognition with the same rimes. I would review these rimes with Zack on Thursdays.

On Wednesdays, Zack was introduced to a nonfiction book and we would review two high frequency words and one partially known word. I would introduce him to a sound that appeared throughout the books (/f/, /i/, and /fr/). I then would give Zack an orientation of a new book, choose vocabulary words from the books, and had him use reading goals during reading (use pictures to help you identify words and ensure the words and text make sense). After he read the book aloud to me, I'd ask him three comprehension questions at the factual level. He was successful in answering.

On Thursdays, I'd do a Running Record on the same book for the week, review his sight words and rime for the week, and ask him interpretative and/or applicative comprehension questions about the nonfiction text. Then we would go into a writing activity, which I found to be very difficult for Zack to produce one complete sentence. We worked on mostly one word at a time, but he could only complete a phrase and not a complete sentence.

Zack comprehended the DRA level 6 book well and answered his comprehension questions. This is where I noticed his struggles with writing where he could only create phrases and not complete sentences independently. In the running record for his level 6 book, Zack self-corrected one word (horns to hands) and successfully read the entire book.

I moved Zack to a DRA level 10 book the next week. Zack used the pictures to identify tricky words, however, he only comprehended facts about his favorite bat—the fruit bat. The fruit bat was his favorite because it didn't eat anything living. Zack chose

his favorite facts from the book during his retell. In the running record, Zack had one error (reading “they” instead of “bats”). He did not self-correct. He was successful in answering the comprehension questions.

Zack enjoyed the one-on-one attention while reading and I believe this improved his attitude towards reading when given positive reinforcement. I feel this one-on-one time filled his need that he may not be getting at home. My overall suggestion is to get his parents (his father) to understand how important it is to practice reading and becoming more involved in reading with Zack is in the home. Zack has the potential to increase his reading level with more support in the home. Socially, however, Zack needs help with controlling his anger and adapting to change.

My plan of action was to send home his Dolch word flashcards, a home book bag with four just-right books, and a handwriting performance workbook along with a letter to his parents on how they could help him increase his reading level with these tools. Unfortunately, Zack moved to another state, which I first saw as an early struggle with his social and reading skills from moving quite often. Zack needs stability and reading reinforcement in the home. After a meeting with his father, my mentor teacher, the principal, the interventionist, and myself at the school we found out that Zack’s mother is rarely home because she travels for business and his father was not too involved in helping Zack with his reading. His father was more concerned with getting back to work himself and had a job lined up where they were moving stating that they would be around more family members in the new home. I was unable to perform a third lesson with Zack because he moved.

During the meeting, my mentor teacher and the principal suggested that Zack begin his new school in the first grade due to his underdeveloped social skills and reading level. Zack is a small boy and my mentor teacher and the principal felt this was the perfect opportunity to get Zack back on track socially and academically since he was entering a new school. His new classmates would not need to know, which would be easier for Zack to adjust to emotionally and academically.