

Observation
LLED3425 Assessment Portfolio

Who: "Ariana"

Date: Wednesday, September 4, 2013

Time: 8:40 – 9:20 A.M.

Where: 2nd Grade Classroom, Literacy Block, Literacy Centers

Classroom Demographics: 24 students, 13 male and 11 female

Notes:

- Teacher is at the front of the room explaining instructions for each literacy center and which group is moving to which center
- Most of the class is on the carpet at the front of the room; four desk clusters are arranged in a row behind the carpet space at the front of the room; some students whose desks are in the front row of their table cluster sit at their desks (six students in desks)
- Ariana sits at one of these desks, across from one other student at her table cluster
- Her eyes are on the teacher the entire time she is talking
- Time is called for first center, Ariana walks straight to her station
- Runs into another student, apologizes
- First center is at the computers; tries several times to log into her account, asks student next to her for help
- Logs into starfall reading practice website
- Starts bouncing her legs and bobbing her head, almost dancing, after the music for the website begins; puts on headphones
- Laughs at a silly story she is reading; turns to neighbor and says through the headphones, "Look! If I click this word, it says 'let's dance'!"
- She and the student sitting next to her continue pointing to their computers and telling each other about the games they are playing; they are speaking through headphones, tone of voice is loud; teacher walks over and explains, "You can't hear yourself as loud with the headphones on, but other students can, so please try to use your whisper voices. You can pick up one earphone if you need to say something;" Ariana and other student nod
- Giggles at pictures
- Continues interacting with student next to her, "look at this! This is cool" etc.
- Both she and the boy next to her are consistently working even while talking
- Time is called to switch centers; Ariana walks to her desk, gets flashcards for word sort center and a pencil, walks straight to carpet and sits down
- Word sort center is on the carpet at the front of the room; five students in Ariana's group, spread around the carpet working; no teacher directly monitoring, classroom teacher is sitting at table nearby working with three students
- Says "Okay, let's see..." (possibly self-narrating, possibly talking to neighbor, but neighbor does not respond)
- Picks up first flashcard, writes "short" and "long" in two columns on paper, looks at her card, reads the word out loud, then writes it on her paper; repeats

- Continues reading flashcards and writing words on her paper; after several minutes, "I already have 12!" – counts out loud as she points at each word on her paper
- Writes a few more words; paper keeps shifting as she is trying to write (writing on a single sheet of loose-leaf paper and using white board to bear down)
- Puts the rubber band back on her cards
- Sits and looks around (9 minutes remain on center countdown)
- Starts looking at neighbor's paper, erases a word on her paper then re-writes the same word, spelled differently; paper is sliding around when she is trying to erase
- Writing is difficult to read and very large (takes up several lines on lined paper)
- Teacher sitting at the table directs attention to carpet, reminds students that if they are done, they need to turn their sort into the turn-in box and read at their desks
- Ariana starts walking towards turn-in box; stops along the way to talk to a student at her desk before continuing and turning in paper
- Walks back to desk, pauses, grabs scissors and bends down, cuts a string off her shoe
- Walks back to the same student she spoke to before, puts the string on her head, giggles
- Turns around, makes eye contact with teacher, immediately walks over to library and grabs a book
- Walks back to her desk with the book; stops and talks with other student again
- Bell dings, Ariana looks up immediately to the centers rotation chart

Reflection:

This is not the first observation I have performed, and I feel that I have improved with each one. While I still struggle at times to remain impartial and unbiased, it has gotten easier for me not to insert my own opinions, judgments, and assumptions while taking my initial field notes. I wish that Ariana had not been at the computer for so much of the observation, and I did not realize this was going to be her center when I began my observation. I did gain helpful insights during the computer time, however, so it was not fruitless.

Ariana seems to be a very motivated, very attentive student. Every time the teacher was talking, Ariana was looking at her, and she moved to her next activity as soon as time was called. Towards the end of the observation, Ariana did begin speaking with a classmate when she was asked to read, but one look from the teacher set her back on task. It seems that she is friendly and enjoys the company of her classmates, but it does not greatly detract from her work. While at the computer, the talking that was happening was all pertinent to the reading games, and the talking

that occurred later was during a fairly unstructured transition time. I think that structured small group and partner work are a good idea for instructional and practice activities for Ariana.

Her bouncing, dancing legs and constant giggling while at the computer station implied that she really enjoys the online reading activities, something that could be incorporated into future lessons and assessments. Something I noticed during the word sort center was her difficulty writing and erasing. Her struggles with the sliding paper on the white board while writing could be easily solved by using a clipboard, something I plan to suggest. The neatness and size of her handwriting on the lined paper imply that she could benefit from extra handwriting instruction and practice. Something that will require further observation is her independent reading time. The fact that she spoke with a classmate, clipped strings on her shoes, and did not begin reading right away when she was told she had independent reading time could imply that she does not enjoy reading on her own and was avoiding it, but it might not mean this at all; she might have recognized that she only had a few minutes to read and did not find it worthwhile. she might have just really wanted to cut the string off her shoe and talk with her friend, etc. This is something I can observe and assess further.

After speaking with my mentor teacher about Ariana, I have learned that she is an English language learner still receiving ESOL services. My mentor teacher finds Ariana to be a "sweet student who works very hard." According to assessments and records, Ariana is actually on-level when it comes to sight word lists and decoding. When I asked why she recommended her as the focus of my study, my mentor teacher explained that she feels Ariana's comprehension is below level due to her language learning and would like to see improvement specifically in this area of reading. Because of this, I will likely focus many of my future assessments and lessons on reading comprehension.

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

School _____ Grade 2nd Name Ariana

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?



2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?



3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?



4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?



Reading Attitude Survey
LLED3425 Assessment Portfolio

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Scoring Sheet

Student Name Ariana

Interviewer _____
Teacher _____

Grade 2nd Administration Date 9/11/13

Time: 7:45 A.M.

Scoring Guide

4 points	Happiest Garfield
3 points	Slightly smiling Garfield
2 points	Mildly upset Garfield
1 point	Very upset Garfield

Recreational reading

1. 3
2. 4
3. 2
4. 4
5. 3
6. 4
7. 3
8. 4
9. 3
10. 4

Raw Score: 34

Academic reading

1. 3
2. 2
3. 4
4. 3
5. 2
6. 3
7. 4
8. 3
9. 4
10. 3

Raw Score: 31

Full scale raw score (Recreational + Academic): 65

Percentile ranks Recreational

72%

Academic

53%

Full scale

62%

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

5.

How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?



6.

How do you feel about starting a new book?



7.

How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?



8.

How do you feel about reading instead of playing?



9.

How do you feel about going to a bookstore?



10.

How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?



11.

How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read?



12.

How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?



Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

13.

How do you feel about reading in school?



14.

How do you feel about reading your school books?



15.

How do you feel about learning from a book?



16.

How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?



Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

17. How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?



18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?



19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?



20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?



Reflection:

The environment in which I conducted this reading interest survey was not ideal, but coupled with my observations and conversations I feel that its results are still an accurate description of Ariana's reading interests. I met with Ariana around 7:45 in the morning after she arrived at school but before morning meeting began. We met at a table in the hallway outside the classroom, so the morning rush was still occurring around us, adding many distractions. Ariana did not look up or look away many times at all during the survey, however, so she did not seem to be too influenced by the distractions. I prefaced the survey by explaining that I had some questions that would help me understand more about what she thinks of reading and would help me learn how to be a teacher. I have learned in similar situations in the past in which a student might feel singled out by having to "do something extra" that monopolizing on my own identity as a student, explaining that *they* are helping *me* learn, generates greater interest in the task at hand.

The survey's results show that Ariana has an above average interest in recreational reading and a close-to-average interest in academic reading in school settings. This does not greatly surprise me, as Ariana appears to enjoy independent reading time the most out of the reading activities in which I get to see her engaged. She always has her book box out and takes advantage of free reading time. I have noticed her frequently "picture walking" through books, though, so it makes sense that having to gain information out of texts was something she interpreted as mildly upsetting if she believed it to mean having to read all of the words. She is often looking at a book, however, and there are many times when she can be found reading out loud to herself or under her breath, sounding out words and actually orally reading the text. She participates in read alouds during small guided reading groups but not during whole class times.

When speaking with my mentor teacher about Ariana's reading interest, she agreed that Ariana seems to be an eager reader and a hard worker. The observations I have made regarding Ariana's focus and seeming attentiveness to her books during independent reading time are also things my mentor teacher has noticed. Her timidity in volunteering information during reading discussions has also been observed by both my mentor teacher and me. The teacher thinks that her reading comprehension and therefore confidence might be negatively impacted by a slight language barrier, as she is an English language learner. However, many times when directly asked, Ariana provides appropriate responses, and she responds favorably to books with silly or relatable stories. She often laughs or makes slightly theatrical responses to the content of books. With knowledge of her high recreational interest level and her average academic interest level, I can boost her interest in "academic" reading during school by connecting it to reading for pleasure. Using fun and relatable stories during instruction and guided reading is one way of doing this. Encouraging Ariana to share during a more comfortable small guided reading group environment might also boost her confidence in reading, which will likely increase her overall reading interest level, as well.



Level 22: Tricks with a Kite

Assessment Record

Name: [redacted]

Analysis of retelling (meaning, main ideas, coherence, vocabulary, reference to text)

Uncle Ken teaching the boy how to fly a kite.

Questions to check for understanding (check if understanding acceptable)

1. How did Uncle Ken control the kite?

Response: By holding the handles



2. What were some of the tricks that he did with the kite?

Response: He did loops + circles



3. What happened when Lee tried to fly the kite for the first time?

Response: The boy was nervous to fly the kite



4. Why do you think Lee and her uncle flew the kite at the beach?

Response: It would be fun if you go to the beach to fly a kite.



5. Explain why people often get nervous when they try something for the first time.

Response: When they're little & they grow up, they don't know how to fly a kite anymore



Reading level

Accuracy level:

112/206 = 1: = 93 %

Self-correction rate:

_____ = _____ = 1:

Reading level (with understanding):

Easy / Instructional / Hard

Analysis of reading behaviors (print concepts, meaning cues, structural cues, visual information, self-monitoring, self-correcting, fluency, expression)

Follows along with finger sometimes. Fluid reading with occasional happiness; little expression; many misreads are visual

Recommendations:

Encourage self-checking ("Does that make sense?") + meaning making

Teacher: [redacted]

Date benchmark assessment completed: 4/18/13

Reflection:

The environment in which I administered this running record assessment was very similar to that in which I conducted the reading interest survey. I pulled Ariana into the hallway to meet at the same table, but this time we met during literacy centers around 9:00 A.M. instead of before the school day began. This meant that the hallway was less trafficked and therefore less distracting, but there were still a few passersby and slight commotions. Ariana does an excellent job of staying focused on her reading, but for future assessments and activities I plan to sit with our backs to the hallway and faces to the wall, something that I should have done for the past assessments but had not even considered. When we sat down, I told Ariana that she was going to be reading for me, and she quickly interjected with a nod and a smile and told me she had “done this lots of times.” I was using a Rigby Benchmark Reading Record assessment, per my mentor teacher’s request, and I administered and scored the assessment using my mentor teacher’s routine. My mentor teacher has the student read the passage once to themselves and then read it aloud, followed by the teacher asking comprehension questions. Ariana whisper reads to herself when she reads independently, which is how she read this passage the first time so I tried to listen as closely as possible just for the sake of observation, but I could not hear all of it and still had her read aloud a second time with a louder voice and greater awareness of her audience.

Ariana read this level 22 passage, *Tricks with a Kite*, with 93% accuracy and she acceptably answered 2.5 out of 5 comprehension questions. She used her finger to follow along during parts of the passage but not all of it. Ariana’s reading was fairly fluid with only occasional choppiness, but she did not read with a great deal of expression. I shared these results and observations with my mentor teacher, and she guided me in analyzing and interpreting them. Looking at both Ariana’s accuracy score and comprehension, my mentor teacher said that she

would consider this reading to be at an instructional level for Ariana. She informed me that Level 22 is an average for second grade, so Ariana is on target in terms of accuracy. She also shared that she had actually been expecting Ariana to struggle with the comprehension and understanding portion of this reading. The majority of Ariana's errors are due to visual miscues, and word replacements due to visual miscues often alter the meaning of a sentence more drastically than "M" (meaning) or "S" (syntactic) miscues in which the replacement word chosen is chosen because it fits into the structure of the story. Therefore, Ariana's errors reasonably render the story more incomprehensible. The lack of expression in her reading might be connected to this limited comprehension and understanding. To increase self-correction and improve comprehension, Ariana should be encouraged to self-monitor by asking herself, "Does that make sense?" at the end of sentences or groups of sentences. This will help her catch visual mistakes that affect the meaning of a passage. This reading record also informs teaching decisions by showing that Ariana's instructional reading level remains a 22 (this is the level in which she is currently placed), so she should continue reading books down one level (level 21) for independent and take-home reading, and she should continue receiving instruction and guided practice at a level 22.

Choice #1: Story Retelling
LLED3425 Assessment Portfolio

Student: Ariana

Date: 10/3 [REDACTED]

Time: 7:45 A.M.

STORY RETELLING

OVERVIEW	Retellings can provide a great deal of information about a child's comprehension of a story. Retelling is a learned task; therefore, you are encouraged to use some of the instructional strategies for retelling (see Section 6.1) prior to using retelling as an assessment.
MATERIALS NEEDED	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A story that is new to the child2. Story Retelling Record Sheet (page 346)
PROCEDURES	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Choose a short book that is new to the child. The book should have a clear plot with named characters. You may choose to use props or puppets with the story if you think these visual aids will support the child's retelling.2. Before reading the book say, "I'm going to read a story to you. After I'm finished reading, I will ask you to tell me the story as if you were telling it to someone who has not read the story. As you listen, try to remember as much of the story as you can."3. Read the book aloud to the child.4. After you have read the book say, "Now tell me about the story as if you were telling it to someone who has not read the story."5. If the child has difficulty getting started or adding information to the retelling, use the following prompts.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the story about?• Who was in the story?• Where did the story take place?• What happened next?• Can you tell me anything else about the story?6. Use the Story Retelling Record Sheet (p. 346) to record the child's performance on the retelling. You may want to tape-record the retelling so you can analyze it more thoroughly at a later time.

Name Ariana

Date 10/3

Story The dog from outer space.

RETELLING ELEMENT	CHILD'S RESPONSE	SCORE 0-3
Beginning/Setting (How and where does the story begin?)	- They were going to Earth - Planet Groop	3
Characters (Who are the main characters?)	His dog, Veeb, Speezy	3
Sequence of Major Events (What are the important things that happen in the story?)	Then Speezy ran away + played with the Earth boy. The dog was playing ball with the Earth boy.	3
Problem (What was the problem in the story?)	Veeb had a problem because he thought Speezy was going to stay with the Earth boy.	3
Solution (How was the problem solved? How did the story end?)	But then they just played together. He found the spaceship and said "play with Earth boys like to play with dogs". Then they went home.	3

Scoring: 0 = omitted or inaccurate
 1 = fragmented
 2 = partial
 3 = complete/detailed

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Reflection:

The environment in which I administered this assessment was slightly different from the settings in which I have conducted past assessments. I pulled Ariana into the hallway around 7:45 in the morning after she arrived at school but before morning meeting. Due to the traffic we encountered outside the classroom in past assessments, this time I took her down the hall to a table that is more tucked away, and I had her sit so that her back was to the hallway. This really seemed to work, as I did not notice her direct her attention elsewhere at all during the assessment. When we sat down, I read Ariana the script that was included with this assessment: "I'm going to read a story to you. After I'm finished reading, I will ask you to tell me the story as if you were telling it to someone who has not read the story. As you listen, try to remember as much of the story as you can." I chose this story retelling assessment because Ariana's running record revealed that her decoding fluency was strong, but her reading comprehension and understanding was weak. I wanted to look more closely at the things that might influence Ariana's comprehension, and story retelling is a good comprehension indicator. Because this assessment involves the administrator reading the book to the child, I wondered if this would improve Ariana's comprehension by relieving her of the need to attend to the decoding process.

Ariana's high score reveals that she was able to retell this story in a complete and detailed manner. There are several possible explanations for this. On the one hand, having the story read to her might have taken her focus off decoding and reading for herself, so she was able to better attend to the details of the story. Additionally, my expression and voice in reading the passage might have given more context clues for her to guess the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary that she would likely just pass over when reading on her own, something that I feel is the primary cause for Ariana's low comprehension on other assessments. When reading with Ariana during

her independent reading, she has replied, "I don't know" to questions about the meaning of words that she has correctly decoded and moved past. This assessment shows me that Ariana is capable of comprehension but needs to be encouraged to use context such as pictures and surrounding text to learn the meanings of words, as well as self-monitor by asking herself, "Does that make sense?" at the end of sentences or groups of sentences.

My teacher was not surprised to hear that Ariana performed well on this assessment, especially when I shared my conjectures regarding her use of my verbal expression and context. My teacher describes Ariana as attentive and focused, and she feels that there are rarely times in the classroom in which Ariana is unaware of what is happening, but she has also noticed that she watches the teacher very intently. She feels that this is likely Ariana attending to voice, modeling, and physical gesturing as much as the actual words that she is speaking. My teacher finds the results of this assessment promising, as vocabulary knowledge and knowing the meanings of words is something that develops through practice and the use of context, so even if Ariana's vocabulary knowledge has room to grow, she is on track for this to happen.

Choice #2: Vocabulary Self-Assessment
LLED3425 Assessment Portfolio

Student: "Ariana"

Date: 10/14

Time: 7:45 A.M.

Scrap

- 1 I have never heard this word before.
- ☒ 2 I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.
- 3 I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.
- 4 I can tell you what this word means.

selfish
"when you're angry
or a bully"

- 1 I have never heard this word before.
- 2 I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.
- 3 I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.
- ☒ 4 I can tell you what this word means.

*mistook for
stuffing at first

Stuffy

- ☒ 1 I have never heard this word before.
- 2 I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.
- 3 I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.
- 4 I can tell you what this word means.

skipped

1

I have never heard this word before.

2

I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.

3

I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.

4

I can tell you what this word means.

whistle

"A whistle is like a little something you can blow"

1

I have never heard this word before.

2

I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.

3

I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.

4

I can tell you what this word means.

visitor

"A person who comes in your house is a visitor"

1

I have never heard this word before.

2

I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.

3

I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.

4

I can tell you what this word means.

*thought it said "tissue" at first

treasure
"like gold"

- 1 I have never heard this word before.
 - 2 I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.
 - 3 I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.
 - 4 I can tell you what this word means.
-

weed

- 1 I have never heard this word before.
 - 2 I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.
 - 3 I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.
 - 4 I can tell you what this word means.
-

ripe

- 1 I have never heard this word before.
- 2 I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.
- 3 I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.
- 4 I can tell you what this word means.

peacock

- 1 I have never heard this word before.
 - 2 I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.
 - 3 I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.
 - 4 I can tell you what this word means.
-

grumpy -
"like when you're
angry"

- 1 I have never heard this word before.
 - 2 I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.
 - 3 I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.
 - 4 I can tell you what this word means.
-

throne

- 1 I have never heard this word before.
- 2 I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.
- 3 I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.
- 4 I can tell you what this word means.

*mistook for "place"
at first

palace

- 1 I have never heard this word before.
 - 2 I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.
 - 3 I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.
 - 4 I can tell you what this word means.
-

Crown-

"the king wears a
crown on his
head"

- 1 I have never heard this word before.
 - 2 I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.
 - 3 I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.
 - 4 I can tell you what this word means.
-

stitch

- 1 I have never heard this word before.
- 2 I have heard this word, but I don't know what it means.
- 3 I think I know what this word means, but I can't tell you about it.
- 4 I can tell you what this word means.

Reflection:

I conducted this assessment with Ariana in the same setting as the last assessment. I pulled Ariana into the hallway around 7:45 in the morning after she arrived at school but before morning meeting. We went down the hall to a minimally trafficked area and sat at the table so that her back was to the hallway. The only interruption that occurred was the morning announcements coming through the overhead speakers, but Ariana was not distracted by any passersby or other action in the hallway. When we sat down, I told Ariana that I have enjoyed reading with her and learning about the ways she is learning to read, which received a smile. I explained that I had a list of words that I wanted to read with her and that she had several choices for telling me about how much she knew about each word. We went over the 4 choices (see assessment) before we began, but I read through them with each word, as well. We went through each word, and I asked, "Have you heard this word before...do you know what it means...can you tell me what it means?" and allowed her to circle the appropriate description. She would attempt to read each word first, but I supplied the correct pronunciation if she was unsuccessful, as I was assessing her knowledge of word meaning, not word recognition (I did make note, however, of her mispronunciations on the assessment). If she circled 4, I asked her to actually tell me what the word means and recorded her definition as she did so (also recorded on the assessment).

I chose this assessment, which I actually developed on my own based upon a description of a similar form of vocabulary self-assessment described in Tompkins (2010), because I have conjectured that Ariana's demonstration of low comprehension in past assessments is linked to low vocabulary knowledge. Her ability to decode a word does not necessarily correlate to understanding of that word. When reading with Ariana during her independent reading, she has

replied, "I don't know" to questions about the meaning of words that she has correctly decoded and moved past. When reading on her own, I believe she simply reads and passes over words she does not know, which contributes to her difficulty comprehending passages. Out of curiosity, I chose a leveled reader out of her book box that is, according to the results of her running records, on her independent reading level. The 15 words on this assessment were taken from this book.

Out of a maximum of 60 (being able to successfully tell what every word means), Ariana's familiarity and understanding of these words can be given a score of 35, or 58%. She knew the meaning and provided a definition for 6 out of 15 words, 5 of which were logical definitions (her definition for the word "selfish" did not indicate full understanding of the word). She did not know the meaning (gave scores of a 1 or 2) of 9 out of the 15 words. What I found most interesting was that of these 9, she was able to accurately decode and read 7 without assistance. Had she been reading this book aloud, she would have been able to read it fluently, but without understanding what she was reading.

My teacher had never seen or used one of these assessments, and she found it very helpful and interesting. She agreed that assuming a correlation between decoding and understanding is dangerous, and she recognized that running records primarily inform decoding ability, which means their scores and levels do not fully take into consideration vocabulary knowledge. She shared that the ESOL teacher has actually told her that understanding the meanings behind words is the biggest struggle for her ESOL students, which Ariana exemplifies. My teacher was not discouraged by these results, however, as even isolated decoding ability provides confidence to young readers, which is why she would not alter Ariana's reading level. Vocabulary knowledge can develop through practice and the encouraged use of context, so even if Ariana's vocabulary knowledge is limited, she is on track for it to grow.

References

Tompkins, G. E. (2010). *Literacy for the 21st Century: A balanced approach* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Choice #3: Context Clues Assessment
LLED3425 Assessment Portfolio

Student: "Ariana"

Date: 10/21 [REDACTED]

Time: 7:45 A.M.

Context Clues Assessment: "Ariana's Definitions"

When the farmer has extra food, he feeds the scraps to the pigs.

Ariana's definition for scraps: "A kind of food."

My mom said the room was too stuffy, so she opened the windows to let in some fresh air.

Ariana's definition for stuffy: "Maybe your room is a little bit messy."

We skipped specials because we did not have time for them.

*** Ariana gave no definition for skipped, saying "I still don't think I know what it means;" We moved on.*

There was a weed growing in the grass.

Ariana's definition for weed: "Like a seed."

The ripe fruit was ready to eat.

Ariana's definition for ripe: "Like when something is ready to eat."

I love the beautiful blue and green feathers of a peacock.

Ariana's definition for peacock: "A type of bird."

The king and queen sat on their thrones.

Ariana's definition for throne: "A type of chair."

The princess lived in the big palace at the top of the hill.

Ariana's definition for palace: "Like a castle."

I had a hole in my shirt, so I had to stitch it back together.

Ariana's definition for stitch: "Maybe like to sew it."

****I used a paper copy of this assessment with Ariana and handwrote her responses;
this typed version is a transcription of my notes**

Reflection:

I created this assessment as a follow-up to the vocabulary self-assessment Ariana completed last week. Having realized that Ariana's decoding skills are strong but her word knowledge is limited, and knowing that use of context is one of the primary tools used to gain understanding of unfamiliar words, I decided to assess Ariana's ability to use context. I returned to the list of 15 words taken from her leveled reader that I used for the vocabulary self-assessment, and I identified the 9 words for which she did not know the meaning. In order to provide context, I wrote a sentence using each of the words (see assessment above). Something I might do differently next time is develop a single story or paragraph in which all the words are embedded, as this simulates a real reading environment much more accurately than isolated sentences. Even with the individual sentences, however, Ariana performed very well on the assessment.

We completed this assessment at the same time and in the same setting as previous assessments. After Ariana arrived at school in the morning and unpacked, I asked her if she would work with me again on some reading activities (I have refrained from calling any of the activities "tests" or "assessments" when speaking with her). We walked down to the table at the end of our hallway around 7:45, and we sat with her back to the traffic. Our only interruption was the announcements on the overhead speakers, which were particularly loud and gave us a chuckle because we were both startled, but Ariana tuned them out and kept reading and talking with me anyway. To introduce the assessment, I said, "Last week, remember how we looked at some words from your book, and you told me which ones you knew and which ones you weren't sure about? Well, today, I found sentences with the words you told me you weren't so sure about, and I want to see if having the WHOLE sentence might help you understand what the word

means. So. I want you to read the sentence, and I will read it back to you, and then I want you to tell me your *best* idea, *your* definition, for the underlined word. I'm going to write it down, and, see, these are even called 'Ariana's definitions!'" I repeated this explanation several times to make sure she understood, as well as throughout the assessment by prompting her with, "Now what do you think that word means in this sentence." after each sentence. Ariana's responses for the assessment are transcribed in the assessment above.

Ariana was able to formulate at least a "working definition" for 8 of the 9 words. Even though some of her definitions did not match the formal definitions of the words, for example, her definitions of *scraps* as a type of food and *stuffy* as a little bit messy, the meanings she developed were still reasonable in the context of the sentence and contributed greater meaning to the sentence as a whole. This is promising, as the ability to make sense of a word in context is more meaningful towards overall reading comprehension than being able to recite an accurate formal definition. And through repeated exposure to these words, Ariana will refine her definitions and develop more concrete understandings of their meanings. Ariana's performance on this assessment was very encouraging, and I am now more comfortable with her use of leveled readers that match her fluency level even if they contain unfamiliar vocabulary. She seems to have the skills necessary to make meaning of unfamiliar words, and if she is not frustrated by an inability to decode the words (during this assessment, she was able to fluently read every word in every sentence with the exception of *palace*), then her leveled readers are a great opportunity to gain confidence in her fluency and increase her word knowledge. As a follow-up to this activity, I would continue to model using context for unfamiliar words when reading to Ariana, as well as read with her and make sure she is actually doing it on her own, asking her to "think out loud" for me every time she gets to an unfamiliar word. The hope is that

this becomes normal for her so that she is not just breezing past unfamiliar words but actually using context to make meaning of them; as this assessment shows, she is capable!

After the activity, I asked Ariana if she had learned about using “context clues” with her teacher, and she said she had not. I have seen her teacher model the thought process that goes with encountering unfamiliar words, however, so I know Ariana has been exposed to it, she just has not learned the specific term, “context.” I talked with my mentor teacher later in the day, and she confirmed that they have demonstrated the use of context but not introduced the terminology. Other than periodically modeling the process during readalouds, though, they have not explicitly taught it or focused on it during a mini-lesson, so my mentor teacher was glad to hear that Ariana demonstrated the ability to use context to develop meaning. “That’s what she needs to be able to do to read well, so that’s a great sign! We just need to help her practice doing it on her own.” This is the direction I would go with Ariana. She needs further practice with comprehension strategies such as using context, making connections, and retelling and summarizing. It will be extremely important to maintain the positive attitude she has towards reading by allowing her plenty of opportunities to read, read, read, and to do so within a variety of genres. Based upon her performance on these assessments and my interactions with her throughout the semester in formal guided reading settings and informal environments, I am confident in her success as a reader.