

Observation and Reflection

On September 4, I began observing Zoe, one of eleven girls in our classroom (there are ten boys—a total of 21 students), at 9:55 and finished observing after 20 minutes at 10:15. Within those 20 minutes, I met my expectations for noticing some really interesting and telling things about my designated student. The first thing I noticed was her eagerness to ask (meaningful, intelligent) questions when given the opportunity. Twice, she more than willingly participated in class-wide conversation. She attempted to make a sentence with a vocab word, but didn't quite get the context right. She proceeded to rest her chin on her hands for a few minutes, possibly regrouping her thoughts and conceptualization of the word. She stretched and then looked at the words on the board again. I noticed her staring at me, smiling at her next-door-neighbor student (and whispering to him occasionally), and communicating with one or two other students when she was supposed to be doing her work individually. When she finally got to work, she mouthed some of the words she was writing as she wrote them. She would also whisper words to herself. She was a little confused about the directions--though they were explicitly stated at the onset of the assignment--and took the opportunity to clarify when given by the teacher.

Though she does tend to vie for attention more than others might, I believe Zoe asks questions and participates for far deeper (and happier!) reasons than simply seeking an audience. She is very much like myself in that she genuinely enjoys learning new things, and in the fact that her inquisitive and cheerfully curious nature is drawn into conversations about topics that interest her, which is, I am realizing, a primary mode of learning for her. I am confident in her ability to refocus herself, though she is sometimes too distracted to do so. She and a few other classmates, I think, struggle with being distracted by outside stimuli not related to the task at

hand. Perhaps it is the distractions, but she seems to have trouble getting comfortable and settling in. Without distractions, she is effective at applying herself. She seems very relationally-oriented, and so her relationships with other students or with teachers seem to be either exponentially beneficial or exponentially detrimental to her learning.

The mentor teacher declined to comment, as she is a very busy woman at this, the beginning of the school year. However, she did tell me at the beginning that Zoe will try any number of means to get the attention she seeks. I think this might just be that she learns better in a one-on-one, conversational setting. If given the opportunity, I would like to ask my mentor teacher if she notices this distraction more at different times of the day, and if it is common only in reading or in the other subjects as well.

Attitude About Reading Survey - Conducted on 09/11

1=Very Happy, 2=Somewhat Happy, 3=Not-Too-Happy, and 4=Grumpy Garfield.

Her responses:

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday? 4
2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time? 1
3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home? 3
4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present? 1
5. How do you feel about spending free time reading a book? 4
6. How do you feel about starting a new book? 1
7. How do you feel about reading during summer vacation? 4
8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing? 2
9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore? 2
10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books? 4
11. How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read? 3
12. How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets? 3
13. How do you feel about reading in school? 3
14. How do you feel about reading your school books? 2
15. How do you feel about learning from a book? 4
16. How do you feel when it's time for reading in class? 3
17. How do you feel about stories you read in reading class? 1
18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class? 3
19. How do you feel about using a dictionary? 4
20. How do you feel about taking a reading test? 4

Reflections:

I had to administer this test to Zoe in the office because she had to be sent home for a change of clothes when she wore a skirt that was too short to school (they wear uniforms and skirts have to be at the knee). I felt bad for her because she's just a kid and her clothes weren't distracting anyone (the skirt wasn't really all that short in the grand scheme of things, but rules ARE rules and they're there for a reason).

I have to say that there were several unexpected answers on here--ones that pleasantly surprised me, ones that made me sad, ones that made me curious and that I knew I would have to investigate further, and ones that gave me great ideas. I feel that I have a great relationship with

Zoe and that she trusts me, because I added a question to the end: How do you feel about spending time with Miss Smith and chatting about reading?, and she gave me an enthusiastic 1: Happy Garfield!

I think that her dislike for reading on a rainy Saturday is because it's raining and she can't play outside, which probably puts her in a bad mood. I also think that her dislike of reading during summer vacation is similar, and feels out of context. She just needs to learn that summer vacation is a great context for pleasure reading. Part of it is also that she needs a lot of guidance while reading. After observing her, and combining those experiences with the results of the survey, I'm starting to think that she simply doesn't like contexts in which she has to read by herself. She's very uncertain and out-of-practice. I loved that she really enjoys reading during free time during class, and that she is very happy to get books as presents. Maybe I can take advantage of her excitement to receive books and get her to read more by giving her a book or two (although this can get tricky, since I can't give a book to everyone). 35% of the student's answers (7 out of 20) were "grumpy," and 30% (6 out of 20) were "not-too-happy." However, the student answered "very happy" 20% of the time (4 out of 20) and "somewhat happy" 15% of the time (3 out of 20). The student felt positive about reading about 35% of the time, and negative about reading about 65% of the time.

I think my mentor teacher is a little overwhelmed with the start of the school year, so she really didn't have things to talk about with me. She seemed glad that I was able to do the survey and that Zoe had enjoyed cooperating with me on it. I think she needs a little more time to get to know her before she can comment. I think some of the lack of discussion between us is because I don't exactly have many questions yet.

Running Record

*Score sheet not included, because I used my own running record format. Teacher did not provide a specific one.

I used similar material to what I used when I performed running records for the students last semester: I selected a passage of 100 words from a book called *The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush* (according to the Scholastic reading levels, it is a 2nd grade reading level book).

Miscues were annotated as the following:	In the one hundred-word passage, the student had
SC (self-corrected)	-3 SC
SK (skipped a word)	-0 SK
M (mispronounced)	-0 M
O (omitted part of word)	-2 O
TA (teacher-assisted)	-0 TA
E (other error).	-8 E

Fluency/expression was sub-par. I would mark this as 10 errors (not including self-corrected), with a score of 90% correctly read. Answers to the comprehension questions were as follows:

-By looking at the cover, what do you think this story will be about?

"There's gonna be an artist."

"He has a paintbrush and he's painting with his hand."

-Who is the main character of this story?

"The little boy" (can't remember his name)

-What is the boy's problem?

"He couldn't keep up with all the little boys."

-What CAN the boy do?

"He liked to paint."

Reflection

The assessment was conducted on 10/09 from 10:00-10:30, in the hallway where it was quiet. "Zoe" was already not in a great frame of mind today, because she had her ankle in an ace bandage after developing some bad tendonitis. She does not understand how to walk on crutches, and so that is making it hurt worse. Therefore, I would guess that this may not be her absolute best work. However, I was, overall, pleased with the outcome.

Zoe had three self-corrected errors, but I was proud of her for fixing them on her own without my help. I made sure to use a running record method that provided for self-corrected errors to not be included in the overall total of errors. 90% of the text was read correctly, and there were only ten errors counted: two omissions, and eight miscues. She did not skip anything, mispronounce anything, or need teacher assistance. Her fluency and expression were not great, but she was trying. The answers to the comprehension questions aren't as good as I'd like them to be, but she understands that the main character is a little boy who is an artist, so she isn't completely lost. I would say that this is a good-fit book for her and she is not quite ready to read books outside of the second-grade level. Based on this, I would like to know where she is in terms of sight words for second, third, and fourth grade, and test to see which of those levels she achieves in reading sight words. Then I will be able to compare her running record analysis to her achievement in reading sight words.

Procedure for Assessment 2:

1. Ask student to look at cover of book and describe what she sees, what the Title is, and what she thinks the book (*The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush* by Tomie DePaola) will be about based on what she sees. Mark her response below.
2. Have student read the first 100 words of the book. Mark errors and miscues below according to this key: SC=self-corrected error, SK=skipped a word, M=mispronounced, O=omitted part of a word, TA=teacher assisted, E=other error.

SC=

SK=

M=

O=

TA=

E=

3. Finally, ask the student the following comprehension questions and record answers:
 - “By looking at the cover, what do you think the story will be about?”
 - “Who is the main character of this story?”
 - “What is the boy’s problem?”
 - “What CAN the boy do?”

Sight Word Assessment

I chose to use Fry's sight word lists of 100 sight words for 3 grades--second, third, and fourth--because my student is currently reading at around a second grade level, and I wanted to be able to predict how much of a fourth grade level book she could read. The link to where I found these lists is attached, and the lists used are labelled "2nd 100, 3rd 100, 4th 100": <http://www.k12reader.com/fry-word-list-1000-high-frequency-words/> . My student knew 91% of the sight words for 2nd grade, and it took her about 2 minutes and 20 seconds to finish them. She knew 88% of the 3rd grade words, but it took her 3 minutes to read them all. She knew only 78% of the 4th grade words, and it took her 3 minutes and 55 seconds to read through them.

The assessment was conducted on 10/14 from 12:00-12:15, in a corner of the classroom, while the rest of the class worked on other assignments. My student seemed to be pretty okay with doing the assessment, and she seemed to be looking to me for approval as she worked on reading the words. She seemed to get frustrated when I wanted her to do more than one set of words. The interesting thing about this assessment is that, several times, my student knew when she didn't know a word. This makes me think she understands that she is behind. However, she is curious to know what the words are, and with some repetition, she'll remember them. I worry that, if she is only reading fourth grade level text with 78% accuracy and a very slow pace, she is not understanding what is being taught at the fourth grade level, content-wise, particularly if the content is delivered--in part or in whole--through text.

I brought this up with my mentor teacher, who was not surprised by the results, but didn't have any suggestions on what to do with her. My mentor teacher is overwhelmed, this being her first year, and she also is unsure as to what this student needs in order to succeed. We talked about how she has very little sense of urgency about her education, or ownership of her learning. I hope I can help develop that. When I suggested that the next thing I should assess should be

reading comprehension, and asked my mentor teacher whether she thought it would be better, worse, or the same as her ability to read sight words, she replied that she thought those abilities are both at around the same level. I am curious as to whether that theory will prove correct.

Sight words read in assessment found on this page:

<http://www.k12reader.com/subject/sight-words/fry-words/>

Story Book Read-Aloud and Re-Telling

This assessment was conducted in the hallway at a round table, with myself and Zoe's reading tutor present, on 10/21, from about 1:45 to 2:15 in the afternoon. The assessment used was created by myself, to suit what I considered to be the biggest needs of my student. It was simply the questions listed in this document. There were occasional distractions in the hallway. For this assessment, my student listened to her reading tutor read a storybook aloud, and then answered some questions from me about the reading along the way. I chose to assess her comprehension in this way because I knew her fluency was quite below grade level, but I wanted to see if she was equally fluent in reading comprehension without the added complication of having to very slowly read something.

The book read was *Degas and the Little Dancer* by Laurence Anholt. Many websites site this book as being on a second grade level, but based on Fry's readability graph, I am convinced it was at least on a fourth grade level. That being said, my student is currently on a second grade level in terms of decoding and fluency, so this book was more challenging that what she is used to. She seemed to be really engrossed in the story, however, and got about 90% of the information I asked her to recall correct. She made intelligent inferences about the information from the book to answer my questions.

When I asked who everyone in the museum always asked about, Zoe answered "who the ballerina was," which essentially is correct, although leaving out the information that the ballerina is a statue. Zoe knew, when I asked what Marie wanted to be when she grew up, that the answer was "a ballerina." I asked why Marie was excited when she got into ballet school, Zoe answered "so that she could be the most famous girl." While she should have said "most famous ballerina," she had the general idea there. Next, I asked who everyone at the ballet school was so

afraid of, and she answered "the scary-looking man. He draws the ballet girls." She simply couldn't remember his name. The only question Zoe really struggled with was the next one, in which I asked why Degas began to sketch and paint Marie every afternoon. Eventually, after much prompting, she figured out it was because she needed money. I asked why Degas was sad, and she answered correctly that it's because he couldn't see very well. Finally, I asked why they called Marie the most famous dancer in the world. Zoe said it was because they made her out of clay, and with a little prompting, said she lived at an art museum.

I think Zoe is at about an 85-90% accurate level of reading comprehension for her grade level, which means that, given a book on a second grade level, she should be able to have both the reading fluency/decoding skills to effectively read to herself with one of those books and know exactly what is going on. However, by observing her, I could tell that she is HIGHLY distractible and will not focus on paying attention or doing her work with any outside stimuli. I might suggest she need time to work in silence for every subject.

I haven't gotten any feedback from my mentor teacher on this (once again, it is difficult to engage her in a conversation about this student, because she sees the student as very behind and does not seem to think that what I am doing will make much of a difference), but I want to broach this subject of working with her one-on-one in a quiet environment at least once a day, and perhaps, at some point, once in every subject.

Reading Comprehension Questions for Assessment 5:

Read the book *Degas and the Little Dancer*, and during the reading, ask the following comprehension questions:

- Who did everyone who came to the museum always ask about?
- What did Marie want to be when she grew up?

- Why was Marie so excited when she got into the ballet school?
- Who was everyone at the ballet school so afraid of?
- Why did Degas begin to paint and sketch Marie every day after ballet school?
- Why was Degas sad?
- Why did they call Marie the most famous dancer in the world?

Spell Check

Inspired by one of our recent readings, I decided to offer Zoe an opportunity to "show off" what she knows for our last official assessment together. This was done on 10/21, from 10:15-10:35. I set a stopwatch for 10 minutes and asked her to write as many words as she could think of within the given amount of time--words she knew for sure she knew how to spell correctly. As is the pattern in our other assessments, the student showed many signs of distraction and often had to be redirected. She spelled the following words correctly: next, meeting, love, kiss, and, see, need, somebody, something, stop, she, no, yes, can, his, how, girl, boy, why, reading, leapfrog, I, am, Miss Smith, Miss Shields, wall, ball, apple, school, homework, me, football, food, mom, dad, brother, sister, teacher, ok, ten, six, for, small, good, and morning. The other words she listed were spelled incorrectly: oynt (?), yoy (you?), stree (street?), diffrent (different).

I was surprised that all the words she could come up with barely even filled on notebook page, but then I realized that this is most likely due to her high level of distraction during the assessment, and not due to a lack of ability. On the other hand, she should not be having difficulty spelling words like "different" or "street" at this point in her schooling--no matter how tired or distracted she is. These should be automatic.

I discussed this with my mentor teacher, who seemed to agree with my observation that she has capability but that she is extremely distractible. I am not sure if there is any assessment I can do with her that assesses distractibility, but I'm sure that, if there was, she would be off the charts. We are both at a loss when it comes to what might be causing this distraction. My mentor teacher tells me she still needs lots of help in quite literally every academic area, but especially literacy. My mentor teacher has asked me to pick whatever I see fit (that aligns with the

standards) to teach a lesson to Zoe for the next component of this project. I therefore plan to address comprehension and recalling specific parts or characters of a story and summarizing them, as it aligns to a fourth grade standard.