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Assessment Project

ELD 308

11/1/14

1. **Introduction**
   1. Home Life

Jim is 10 years old and is a fourth grader at Millstone River Elementary School in Plainsboro, New Jersey. He lives at home with his mother, father, and three other siblings. Jim is the youngest child and is happy to say that he is fortunate enough to have his own room. His mother works as an actress and his father works for a computer company. Jim sometimes helps his parents out at home by washing the dishes and cleaning his room. He receives a monthly allowance of $50. After school Jim enjoys going to dance class, acrobatics class, or playing video games to relax. Jim also enjoys reading and says that his favorite genre to read is fantasy fiction. He does not have a television in his room and reports that he does not watch that much television anyway. On weeknights, Jim is in bed by 9:30 but enjoys staying up later on the weekends.

* 1. School Environment

Jim reports that he enjoys coming to school. He claims writing is his favorite subject and Social Studies is his least favorite. Jim likes to study at home on his parent’s bed or under his brother’s bed where it is quiet. He says that he receives a good amount of homework each night and spends about 30 minutes completing it. He says his nanny will help him if he needs it. Jim reports that he considers himself a good reader. If Jim was given the choice of choosing a book of any topic to read, he would choose fantasy. Jim claims that in order to make him an even better reader he would need to read for longer periods everyday. Jim enjoys writing more than anything. He likes to write fairytales and mythology. Jim was asked what he would want teachers to know about him if he were to go to a new school and replied that he would want the teachers to know that he dances. Jim also believes that using post-its to write down your thoughts and questions while reading is a great strategy for someone to use when they are learning to read. Jim claims that knowing how to read will help him in the future to read the newspaper, to get a job, and to read anything he wishes to read.

1. **Independent Reading Conference**

On October 14, 2014, Jim was asked to read aloud from the novel *NERDS: Attack of the Bullies* by Michael Buckley. The reading level of this book is O, which is leveled at the beginning of fourth grade. At this time, a running record of his oral reading miscues were recorded and a brief comprehension check was taken. In terms of comprehension, Jim was able to give a very detailed summary of the book up to the point he read so far. He gave a very detailed sequence of events up to the point to where he currently was in the book. Jim was even able to go back to the cover of the book, which contained a group picture of all the characters, and explain in detail who each character was and what their role was in the book. While giving the summary, Jim was able to reference the cover to show whom he was talking about. In terms of word recognition, Jim made no miscues.

Overall, Jim read the passage fluently and used good intonation. At some parts Jim read very spacy with longer than normal pauses between words, or would pause when there was no comma. Jim paused appropriately at end punctuation and read with enthusiasm. He also emphasized the sentences that ended with exclamation marks.

1. **Directed Reading Assessment: Fountas and Pinnell**

On September 22, 2014, Jim was given a Directed Reading Assessment (Fountas and Pinnell). The assessment was on level P, which is a fourth grade level. At this time, Jim read independently on a 4th grade level. This means that Jim should be able to read grade level materials. In terms of comprehension, Jim scored a 7/10, which put him under satisfactory comprehension. This means Jim included important information and ideas but neglects other key understandings when answering the comprehension questions.

In terms of word recognition, Jim made one reading error where he replaced the word that was meant to be read, with a word that does not exist, resulting in the sentence not making sense. He repeated two words that were followed by self-corrections, had teacher help on one word, and missed reading one word. In total Jim made three errors, which put him at 99% accuracy.

In terms of fluency, Jim scored a 2. This means he reads primarily in three or four word phrase groups. He demonstrated some smooth, expressive interpretation and pausing guided by the author’s meaning and punctuation. Jim read with mostly appropriate stress and rate with some slowdowns.

1. **Writing Sample**

On September 8, 2014, Jim was asked to write a personal narrative on a topic of his choice. Jim decided to write a narrative about riding a roller coaster. Jim was enthusiastic about writing and after a discussion about how him and roller coasters he was eager to begin writing.

In terms of content, Jim had a strong lead where he wrote a beginning in which he showed what was happening and where, getting readers into the world of the story. He used proper transitions and showed how much time went by using transition phrases such as “all of a sudden”. Jim ended his writing with an ending that connected to the beginning of the story and used dialogue to bring his story to a close. In terms of organization, Jim used paragraphs to separate the different parts or times of the story or to show when a new character was speaking. In terms of word choice, Jim showed why characters did what they did by including their thinking, included precise and sometimes sensory details and used figurative language to bring his story to life, and conveyed the emotion or tone of his story through description, phrases, dialogue, and thoughts.

In terms of mechanics, Jim could use some help on spelling. If he needed to know how to spell a word, he would use a dictionary for help. Jim punctuated dialogue correctly with commas and quotation marks when needed. He also used punctuation at the end of every sentence and wrote in ways that helped readers read with expression. Overall, Jim scored as a fourth grade writer.

Jim appears to be in the syllable junction stage of writing. This means that Jim has difficulty with doubling and dropping the “e” with “ed” and “ing”, other syllable juncture doubling, long vowel patterns, R-controlled vowels, and unstressed syllable vowel patterns. Jim has little difficulty with long vowels (-VCe), complex consonants, and abstract vowels. These results transfer over to Jim’s narrative writing as well.

1. **Summary**

After conducting several formative assessments, I have concluded that Jim’s strengths as a reader are comprehension and word recognition. He has the most difficulty in reading with fluency. To further develop his skills as a reader, Jim should be encouraged to read independently for, at least, 30 minutes a day. As Donalyn Miller states in her book *The Book Whisperer*, “No matter how long students spend engaged in direct reading instruction, without time to apply what they learn in the context of real reading events, students will never build capacity as readers. Without spending increasingly longer periods of time reading, they wont build endurance as readers, either. Students need time to read and time to be readers.” This being said, if Jim read everyday his fluency would increase since he will have the time to practice reading, making him more fluent.

Jim should also be encouraged to continue to read books that are just right for him as well so practice repeated reading in order to strengthen his fluency skills. “Research over the past two decades has identified repeated reading as the key strategy for improving students' fluency skills (NICHD, 2000). Repeated reading has two essential elements: 1) Giving students the opportunity to read and then re-read the same text, and 2) having students practice their reading orally with an opportunity to receive corrections and guidance (if necessary)” states Jan Hasbrouck who is an educational consultant, researcher, trainer, and author in the field of reading*fluency, coaching* and consultation, and *assessing* and teaching struggling readers (Hasbrouck, 2014). Reader’s theatre is a great strategy that Jim could participate in. "If you're searching for a way to get your children reading aloud with comprehension, expression, fluency, and joy, reader's theater is a miracle. Hand out a photocopied play script, assign a part to each child, and have them simply read the script aloud and act it out. That's it. And then magic happens,” said Judy Freeman, a children's literature consultant (Bafile, 2014). Jim would be so enthusiastic about reader’s theater, especially since he enjoys performing. With this strategy, Jim could be strengthening his fluency and have fun while doing it.

Jim’s strengths as a writer are leads, transitions, endings, dialogue, and punctuation. He has the most difficulty in writing with spelling. To further develop his skills as a writer, Jim should be encouraged to participate in word studies that are appropriate for his learning level. Marcia A. Invernizzi, Mary P. Abouzeid, and Janet W. Bloodgood, authors of the article *Integrated Word Study: Spelling Grammar, and Meaning in the Language Arts Classroom,* state, “Syllable Juncture students build awareness of spelling-meaning and spelling-grammar connections through the study of homophones of more than one syllable, homographs, and the role of unaccented syllables in signaling parts of speech. Homophones are one example of how spelling patterns indicate differences in meaning, although sound does not change. Spelling-meaning connections are explicit in upper level word study of this kind” (Invernizzi, Abouzeid, & Bloodgood, 2004).

Some activities recommended by Invernizzi, Abouzeid, and Bloodgood are:

* Word Trivia: e.g., What is a two-syllable noun with the double letters "ll" in the middle?
* Comparisons of base word with inflected spellings: e.g. pop, popping.
* Sorting words by features such as patterns or grammatical usage: e.g. apply, certify, occupy, and rely all end with the same sound, and they are all verbs.

If Jim uses these strategies then he would continue to grow as both a reader and a writer. His weaknesses will begin to become his strengths allowing him to advance to the next level of reader and writer.

References

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