Case Study

CI 821

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**Background**

Student is a Caucasian 8-year-old student at a small, public elementary school in Oswego, Kansas. She is in the second grade. Student is a quiet, attentive student. She is sensitive and heartfelt, at home, she is spunky and loving.

Student is one of four children. She has one brother who has graduated high school. Her second brother is a junior at a high school in a different town, and she has a little brother, who is four. Student’s younger brother has an intellectual disability. Student’s mom is a single mom. Her children have three different dads, and none of them are involved with their children. Student’s mom is employed in housekeeping at a hotel and has changed her life drastically in the past three years. Student’s mom is dyslexic and only learned to read two years ago. She also obtained her GED two years ago.

Piper’s family are middle-class residents of the small close-knit community. Her father is a pastor and very involved in her academic process. He is available to help with homework, when she has it, and is very invested in the well-being of his family. Piper’s mom is an online ESL teacher and stay-at-home mom. She is very interested in Piper’s educational journey and works with her in the evenings. Piper is the second oldest of four children. Her family excels educationally – her two brothers are both in the gifted program, and her sister maintains all A’s. Piper’s dad has obtained his bachelor’s degree and her mom has her master’s in Education. English is the only language spoken in the home. The family, as a whole, enjoys reading and partakes in daily reading both before school and in the evening before bed.

At school, Piper attends a tier two MTSS group for fluency. Piper’s school has used AIMSweb for the past several years to assess students’ reading skills. Piper has always excelled in all areas of the assessment except fluency. In first grade, 2016, she was incorrectly placed in a tier 3 group, when she tested as a tier two student. In second and third grades, she was placed in tier 2 for fluency. Now, in grade four, Piper is still at a tier two level for fluency only. She has received interventions through her MTSS group using timed readings, poetry, plays, and book studies.

Piper’s parents have never been overly concerned with her lack of fluency skills since they do not seem to hinder her ability to perform well in other areas of education. Piper has always been a child who enjoys life, is thoughtful when speaking, and a perfectionist at heart. They do feel, however, that since fluency is being assessed more, and her slower reading could potentially cause her discomfort when reading out loud in class, efforts should be made to help her build her fluency so she can become a faster, stronger, more confident reader.

**Pre-Assessments**

In September of 2019, Piper was administered the AIMSweb plus reading assessment at her school. Fourth graders are tested on their vocabulary skills, silent reading fluency, reading comprehension skills, oral reading fluency, and are given an overall reading composite score. Piper’s vocabulary and reading comprehension scores were both above average. She received an above average rating on facts, literary text, and informational text. Her main idea and purpose and analysis and application scores were both average. Both Piper’s oral reading and silent reading fluency scores were below average.

Piper was also given the STAR reading test in September. Her grade equivalency was 3.8 and her independent reading level was 3.6.

To further assess her skill level, I gave her an informal one-minute oral reading fluency assessment. Because Piper’s independent reading level was 3.6, I chose a Level P reading passage. During the minute, Piper only misread 2 words, which brought her score to 90 words per minute. According to her grade level goals, she should be reading an average of 105 words per minute. Piper did well using correct phrasing and fluency. She used appropriate syntax but would read in phrases of three or four words. Piper did very well reading with inflection. She also did well answering three out of four comprehension questions.

To see where Piper was, personally, I also chose to do a Fluency Self-Assessment Checklist with her. Piper rated her speed/pacing, pausing, inflection/intonation, phrasing, expression, and integration. Piper rated herself on two levels – smiley face and sad face. I discussed each section with her to make sure she understood the questions, then she rated herself. Overall, she rated herself very well. She seems mostly confident in her reading abilities, but did mention that she did not always pause at the appropriate places.

After informally assessing her fluency, I assessed her high frequency word knowledge. I did this by asking her to read many high frequency word phrases in Levels D - P. Piper did an excellent job reading each phrase. She accurately read the words. She did not always, however, place the correct inflection on the last word, reflecting whether it was a statement, question, or exclamatory sentence.

**Strengths and Weaknesses**

Piper’s has many strengths in reading. Her understanding of the text is very high, as is her vocabulary. She has mastered a phonological/phonemic awareness and is able to easily read high frequency words. Piper is also able to use phonics to decode words she does not already know. She self-corrects when reading, and she reads accurately. Piper is able to identify the main idea and purpose of texts.

Piper’s main weakness in reading is her pacing. Piper is below average in both oral and silent reading. Because of this, her overall reading scores are lower than the average fourth grader.

**Instructional Program**

Piper’s mini-lessons will focus on rate, accuracy, and prosody. I will spend 10-15 minutes with her each weekday evening. We will hold our sessions in my online classroom so the area is free from distractions and noise. We will begin our sessions by a timed read-aloud. Piper will work each day to grow a little faster in her reading. She will read the same passage each day for four days. If she has made significant progress, we will begin a new passage on the fifth day.

We will also continue to work on appropriate expression when reading the high frequency word phrases. Piper will focus on her voice going up when asking a question, her voice going down when making a statement, and speaking in an excited tone when reading an exclamatory sentence.

To continue to help with reading fluency and increase her rate of reading, we will also do the following reading activities:

* Fast finger: Piper will follow along in a passage with her finger as I read. She will note how quickly her finger is moving. She will then practice reading the story at the same speed.
* Tracking with her eyes: Piper will do the same activity as above, but instead of using her finger, she will track the words with only her eyes. She will note how quickly her eyes were moving and practice reading the story at the same speed.
* Recorded reading: Piper will record herself reading a short passage. After she finishes, she will listen to her reading, assess her reading using a fluency self-assessment, talk about what she could do differently, reread, and re-evaluate.
* Punctuation: I will read a passage aloud and Piper will quietly point to each punctuation mark she sees as I read. She will then read out loud and point to the punctuation as she makes the appropriate pauses for each mark.
* Leveled Readers: Piper will be given leveled readers according to her interests. I will use both fiction and non-fiction texts.
* Repeated Reading: We will use our timed readings for this. As Piper reads, I will note miscues and keep track of her time. I will also ask her comprehension questions at the end of the passage. We will keep track of her progress and time throughout the week by using a bar graph to visibly chart her progress.
* Echo Reading: I will model fluent reading for Piper, then ask her to reread the same text. She will imitate my reading. If Piper does not accurately echo, we will reread the same text.
* Silent Reading: Piper will practice reading silently for one minute. We will count her words per minute and keep track of her daily progress.

Each of the above activities will be used to help build Piper’s reading fluency. I will also be working with Piper to maintain and build prosody. To do this, Piper will review the high frequency word phrases. She will focus on her voice and intonation while reading.

**Post-Assessment**

In the first week of December 2019, Piper was re-administered the AIMSweb plus reading assessment at her school. Fourth graders were tested on the same skills they were tested on in September (vocabulary, silent reading fluency, reading comprehension, oral reading fluency, and are given an overall reading composite score). Piper’s vocabulary score dropped into the average range. Her reading comprehension grew to be in the “well-above” average range, and her silent reading fluency moved from below average to average. Piper’s oral reading fluency remained in the below average range, but she did show improvement by moving from the 15% national percentile to the 24% national percentile. Piper’s reading composite score was above average. She also moved from the 60% to the 75% in her reading composite score.

Piper received an above average rating on facts, literary and informational texts. Her main idea and purpose and analysis application scores rose from average to above average. She also received an above average rating in word meaning and structure and form.

Piper’s individual goal for school was 95 WPM. She exceeded this goal with a final count of 102 WPM. Her rate of improvement was 1.75, while her goal was an average of 1.15.

Piper has not been administered the STAR reading test for this semester, so I am unable to report on her independent reading level growth.

In Piper’s informal post-assessment, she read 110 WPM, increasing her initial score by 20 words. You can see her progress monitoring report in the table below.

Piper’s intonation has improved throughout this month of practice. She did an excellent job pausing at the appropriate times, emphasizing words when needed, and adjusting the tone of her voice to match the text.

Piper’s rate of improvement in her oral reading fluency

**Summary**

I am very pleased with Piper’s progress in oral and silent reading fluency this semester! She was a willing participant in this project and worked hard to build her reading fluency and become a more expressive reader. One thing I did with Piper that I think was not previously discussed with her was to define reading fluency and why it is important. Piper fully understood the conversations as evidenced by her adaptive behavior and worked very hard to become a stronger reader. Piper was comfortable during our time together, and I believe knowing where she was at in her fluency abilities and what she needed to work on (and why) was beneficial in helping her achieve her fluency goals.

In the future, we will continue to practice reading out loud at home. Piper will be encouraged to maintain proper voice inflection and syntax when reading, and we will keep her cognizant of the importance of “reading how you talk.” Piper’s personality is one that strives to do her best at everything she does, so I know she will achieve her final goal in oral reading fluency soon!

**References**

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