Intervention Final

Read 531 Improvement of Instruction in Reading

Dr. Robin Brierly

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 Over the semester, I got the pleasure to work with Harper. She is an amazing seven year old who is in the second grade and attends Blair community schools. I think this was a fun experience for both of us and we grew a lot closer. Harper is my younger cousin, so it was fun to see the growth she made over the last semester. We utilized zoom to meet very frequently and it was great because we got to spend so much time together. When it comes to school, Harper is one of the students that is just in the middle of the pack. Her schoolwork does not come easy for her; she has to really work hard to improve. With that being said, she is one that likes to consistently be busy. She much would rather be outside running around and playing sports than inside working on reading. This was one area that we had to work on. Understanding and comparing reading to sports was a great parallel, in the sense that we compared her love of soccer in which practicing soccer is why she is so good at, and that she has to practice reading so she can be good at that as well.

         At the beginning of this journey, Harper was huge on just giving up and not attempting to sound out a word. She was content just looking at me and expecting me to give her an answer. Building her confidence as a reader was one area I tried to bring out in her. Having her recognize that through her attempting to sound out words, she might stumble but that failure will make her a better reader. This is hard with her being so young to truly understand, but I did a lot of comparing to soccer because as I mentioned, that is one of her true passions in life.

Fluency is one area Harper struggles with. An area that is a strength for Harper is her comprehension. She is like a little sponge and can retell the story almost like we never put the book down; like she is reading right off the paper. Harper loves to draw, so I tried to use this in as many ways when we worked together. I tried to show her that reading can be fun, but she needs to have more positive interactions with reading.

Every time we met we started reading to each other and going over each other’s highs and lows for the day. Since we started working together, Harper has been working on a reading log. It’s called FRED: Family Reading Every Day. Her mom helped make sure to implement this every night as she read with her mom or dad for fifteen minutes. In week one and two, we worked on digging deeper into what she truly thinks about reading. With the interest survey, I learned that Harper likes to journal, so I had her start journaling about what she reads. Her journaling did not have to be a lot, I wanted her to jot down what is going on in the story and really digest what she is reading and feeling.

In week three and four, we worked on draw/write, pair, share. In this activity, we read two books about a dog: one was fiction and the other was nonfiction. After reading both books, I prompted her with the question “how was adopting a dog different in our story from what we know and learned?”. This was a great activity because she had to comprehend what was going on in the story and how the dog gets adopted and then we compared it to how she knows dogs actually get adopted. The next activity we worked on was a rhyming game on the computer. We also spent a lot of time talking about story structures: who, when, where, the problem, and the solution. Harper loves zombies so we did an activity of creating our own story containing all the story structures. It was a fun way for her to learn the structures and let her creative juices flow.

Harper and I got to read a ton of books together over weeks five and six. I introduced her to the Goosebumps series. I read her Diary of a Mad Mummy and she loved the idea of being in charge of where the book was going to go. The focus for these two weeks was on compound words. The first activity was One, Two, or Three. I had a stack of note cards that had three sentences on them. The goal of the activity was to read the three sentences and pick the one that contains a compound word. We played the game together and kept track of points. If the word was in the first sentence, you got one point, second sentence you got two points, and the third you got three points. The next activity we worked on was word prediction. This was a great activity for her because when she is reading, she has a tendency to go too fast and substitute words without thinking. Doing this activity made her more cautious of needing to know the content of the story to state the missing word.

For weeks seven and eight, we worked on a reader’s theater. If I could have changed one thing, I would have found one with less parts; the one I picked had five. We split the parts between the two of us and then practiced and performed the readers’ theater to her parents. She really got into her parts and used a lot of expression when reading. The next activity we did was working off of what we did the weeks before. I gave her sentences that were missing a word and she had to fill it in. In the passage, I would reveal one letter at a time of the missing word. This activity made her commit and attempt words and think through the passage. We talked through that when we come to a word, we know we cannot just give up. We need to attempt to figure it out using the first letter and remembering that re-reading the sentence can help us get through the words.

Over the next couple of weeks, we worked on learning new vocab. I chose to use four-square and this was a great activity for her to learn new words and she got to draw. The picture is a great way for her to make connections to the words. The next activity was working with compound words for more practice. Next, we did an interactive read-aloud in which I went through the story and picked words that we focused on for the week. As I read the story, I emphasized the vocab words then we read some sentences that contained the words. After that, we read the story again sentence by sentence.

The comprehension activity I loved using with Harper was as I read a story to her, she had to think of questions. With her being in first grade, we talked about how we can rely on pictures to help us through the story, but for chapter books, we will not be able to rely on pictures. This was a process to help her understand that you have to self-question while you are reading. When you are reading, you will not stop and write down questions, but if you are lost, you have to slow down and re-read part of the story from time to time. The next activity we did was read about Arbor Day. We worked on making inferences from pictures and chapter headings. The more prior knowledge we can use while reading will help us get the meaning of the story. We ended with talking about connecting multiple of the strategies together. Read, Stop, Think, Ask, and Connect as we read is not just to read to get done, we need to read for deeper meaning and find that why. Just like she has the why to playing soccer, when we read, we always have to have a why as well. In the last week, we reviewed the elements that make up a story. I combined two activities together. We talked about the fiction web and she made a bookmark that she can use and references back to remember setting, plot, theme, character, and point of view. Then we spent some extra time talking about What’s THE Message? We read Frog and Toad stories by Arnold Lobel. She had to think about the bigger picture of what the author is trying to say.

I knew I had already seen a lot of growth in Harper over the last couple weeks. After getting the data, it shows so much amazing growth. Just alone in her word list, she made crazy jumps. The first time her independent level was second grade and her frustration level was third grade. This time, second was still her independent level but third grade was her instructional level. She is so worried that she might mess up and it took weeks of building her confidence to try even though she might fail. When giving her the assessment, she was at the fifth grade level and came across the word mammoth; she was so worried because she could not think of the word. I told her that it is okay and I am going to judge you; sound it out the best you can. After the test, I told her the word and explained to her what the word meant. She is a kid that wants to know everything and when she does not know something, she is scared to fail. Some of the words she missed was a little decoding area that changed the meaning of the word but if she slowed down to look at it again, I think she would have gotten it correct. Overall, she made huge growth just alone in her confidence to try and not give up.

When it comes to the passages, Harper did better with passages she connected better with. I started her with the second grade passage that was about Bill at camp and she struggled on the comprehension questions. From the first assessment, she did improve as the third grade was her frustration level and this time her frustration level was fourth grade. Her fluency has improved with all the practice she has been putting in. The errors she makes while reading are so small as she will leave out very basic words that do not change the meaning to the passage. I am so proud of the growth she made over the last couple weeks.

If I was to do this project again, I would make sure to add more time with vocabulary. She struggled giving the definition of words when answering the comprehension questions. This is an area that as she grows, I know will continue to grow but to push her I think that would be a good area to work on. Something I would keep the same is finding the activities that allow her to be creative and see reading in another light. When she got to draw and answer comprehension questions or create her own story, she was having so much fun. With Harper, reading is all about how it is presented and that determines a lot on how much she will buy in. She does not love to read, and it will take time for her to find that love. The more positive experiences she has with reading she will grow to be a lifelong reader.

These activities were a little too advanced for Harper, but I think middle school students would enjoy participating in them. At the time, I thought they were too advanced for Harper but if I could go back and try these with her I would. They could have been a huge failure but it would have been a great learning experience for myself and Harper. An activity I will be using in my classroom is V-Tweets. I love bringing technology into the classroom because that is all around in the student’s world. This gives students the opportunity to find a words definition in three different locations. This made them slow down and actually look, not just take the first definition they find. Then, they have to tweet the word and the word’s meaning. Character interviews is another activity I will use in my classroom. Students have to comprehend the story to form questions and be able to respond to questions that are asked of their character.

From being a part of this class, I gained so many valuable resources to bring into my reading intervention class.  As an educator, making sure to bring new, fresh ideas to the classroom keeps the learning experience fun and exciting. Working with Harper, I had a lot of freedom of planning our lessons. Even in my everyday class, just because we have a reading intervention that is very scripted does not mean I cannot bring in new activities for students to use. This class has brought about more confidence in myself to mix it up and learn that not every lesson is going to go like we planned and that is totally okay. We have to fail to learn and grow in life. It is all about getting back up, brushing off the bad lesson, and learning and making adjustments to help students grow in the classroom.

Works Cited

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