Student Literacy Case Study

By Nicole Campbell

The definition for differentiated instruction “is a framework or philosophy for effective teaching that involves providing [students](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Student) with different avenues to acquiring content; to processing, constructing, or making sense of [ideas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idea); and to developing [teaching](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teaching) [materials](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textbook) and assessment measures so that all students within a [classroom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classroom) can [learn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learn) effectively, regardless of differences in ability.” (Wikipedia, 2013) The theory behind this philosophy is that every child has the right to an education adapted for their strengths and needs. This is especially true for students who struggle or are gifted in one area or another. In this case study, you will see how I differentiated my instruction to support a student with speech issues in literacy. This one on one support helped my evaluate the student’s ability to understand the instruction and allowed the student to receive support in an area that could possibly be of concern later on in his school career. This project connects to whole classroom instruction by introducing the process of evaluating independent student data and then aligning the results with lesson plans of individual conferences, small groups, and large group instruction.

I will be focusing my project on Hunter. Hunter is 5 years old and going into kindergarten. Hunter is reading at a basic level A, with support. Hunter has had speech therapy through the local school district since he was almost 3 years old. Hunter’s parents both graduated from High School but have limited college education. Literacy is very important in Hunter’s home and has been a daily part of life since he was born. Hunter participates in daily activities to work on rhyming, letter recognition, and letter sounds. Hunter is read to at least once a day for 10-20 minutes and is given time to read to himself. Hunter’s parents make a daily effort to read a variety of texts to Hunter and discuss literacy with him as it pertains to his world.

Hunter, being only 5 years old, does have little attention for reading. He enjoys reading at night before bed or in a large group at school. He does not like reading independently outside of these times. He would rather play literacy games or participate in reading/word recognition games then sit a read a book. He does get frustrated if he is not successful the first time and struggles with being wrong or incorrect in anything. Once frustrated, Hunter often wants to quit but after a short break with try again. He loves to be rewarded and will do more work for longer periods of time even if frustrated if he knows that there is something in it for him at the end. He also responds to verbal encouragement while working on activities and wants to be challenged as well as his accomplishments acknowledged.

At home, Hunter was introduced to reading since birth. His parents read to him often and also work with him on pre-reading skills throughout the day during normal conversations. Hunter’s grandmother and aunt are both teachers and often send home books, reading activities and games, and writing practice books with Hunter. Hunter has been assessed in literacy (Orhent-Gillingham, Gazelle, and MLPP) every 6 months since he was 3 years old. Hunter has been introduced to some literacy in a school setting. Hunter has had two years of preschool; first a two hour-two day co-op program when he was 3 and then a 4.5 hour everyday program when he was 4. In his school program, they focused on writing his name, letter name recognition, rhyming, and beginning sounds.

I will be working with Hunter on letter sound recognition and final (ending) phoneme awareness. I administered the Observation Survey letter sound recognition assessment and FCRR isolating sound assessment as the pre and post assessments. I chose these two assessments because I felt they would be the next steps for a pre-reader going into Kindergarten should work on after knowing rhyming and letter names. He also seemed to have a basic understanding of letter-sound recognition and knowledge of beginning sound isolation. I pre-assessed Hunter on July 9th and then began lessons that afternoon. He knew 15 out of 26 letter sounds. I chose to work on the other 11 over the next 2 weeks. At first I administered the initial sound assessment, Hunter received 11/13 score so I then administered the ending sound assessment. He received 1 out of 12 correct. I chose to focus on ending phoneme sounds due to his assessment scores. I also chose to practice this verbally due to his ability to do it well with pictures but get frustrated and confused when asked to do it purely by sound. I believe this may be due to speech activities that focus on repeating the whole word and isolating sounds and then blending them together all at one time. He seemed to struggle understanding to just say one sound. On July 23rd, 2013, I assessed Hunter on letter sound recognition and final (ending) phoneme awareness. His post assessment scores showed great improvement. He was able to recognize 25/26 letter sounds and was able to isolate 9/12 ending phonemes. It should be noted that 2 of the phonemes were difficult for him to say with his speech impediment. He still struggled to break the habit of saying all the sounds but with a few practice examples and reminders he was able to receive the above score. Hunter was able to show he had the knowledge and ability to isolate an ending sound in a word.

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| **Lesson Foci/Date**  **July 9th, 2013** | **Objectives**   * Student will become aware of different sounds in a word focusing on the ending phoneme. * Student will “read” picture cards out loud to practice hearing ending sound. Then will place a plastic chip on the letter that is associated with that sound. * CCSS-[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.2d](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/2/d/) Isolate and pronounce the initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in three-phoneme (consonant-vowel-consonant, or CVC) words.1 (This does not include CVCs ending with /l/, /r/, or /x/.) | **Instructional materials**   * Picture cards * Paper with 6-8 letters * Plastic chips | **On-going assessment**  Later in day have student play game independently while observing silently.  Plan to use new picture cards next lesson day but same letters for review. |
| July 11th, 2013 | * Student will work on letter-sound recognition by providing primary sounds of each letter of the alphabet and associating it with sounds in words they know. * Have student walk around rooms with a paper bag and find objects that begin with the letter pre-chosen. (These letters will be taken from the pre-assessment letter). * CCSS-[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.3a](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/3/a/) Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary sound or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant. | * Paper Bag * List of unknown letters * Letter cards | Show letter cards to student and have them say the sound associated with letter. |
| Lesson Foci/Date  July 17th, 2013 | Objectives   * Review with game from July 9th. Using a different board of letters and picture cards and practice ending phonemes. * Student will then practice isolating initial and ending sounds and words and corresponding them with the letter that makes that sound. * Student will be given a letter card (concentrating on the letters missed in assessments) and asked to find an object that has the same sound (first initial and then ending after some practice). Once found student will place both card and object on the table for later review assessment. (If no object can be found, student can draw a picture.) * CCSS-[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.3a](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/3/a/) Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary sound or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant. * CCSS-[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.2d](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/2/d/) Isolate and pronounce the initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in three-phoneme (consonant-vowel-consonant, or CVC) words.1 (This does not include CVCs ending with /l/, /r/, or /x/.) | Instructional materials   * Picture cards * Paper with 6-8 letters * Plastic chips * Letter cards | On-going assessment  Student will be asked to tell the teacher what each letter’s sound is following the activity and what object they found to go with it and what sound (initial or ending) they hear. |

I had three lessons with Hunter over the two weeks I worked with him. The first lesson we did was working with ending phonemes. On a triangle game board were 6 random letters with 6 cut out picture cards. First I had Hunter name each letter on the board and pronounce the sound that corresponded with that letter. Then I asked Hunter what was on each picture. Once he said the word out loud twice, I asked him to tell me what sound he heard at the end. He then put a bingo chip on the letter that corresponded with that sound. Hunter did need support the first two picture cards. Hunter struggled with not just repeating the whole word or isolating the initial sound, which makes sense since this is what is asked of him in speech therapy. However, each time we played this game over the next two weeks, he was able to correctly match each picture card with the letter matching its ending sound after receiving support in remembering to just pronounce the last sound. However, when assessed later without letters in front of him, Hunter struggled to not isolate the initial sound or repeat the word broken up by syllables. We worked on this by practicing saying the whole word and then pronouncing the last word “our ears hear.” Hunter seems to respond to positive reinforcement the best so I was sure when he did get an answer correctly to praise him on the accurate answer and make a game out of getting the challenging ones right. The last issue with the first few activities was attention span and seriousness. I found with Hunter his average attention span was about 5-8 mins. If the activity was going to take longer than that I tried to break it up into small pieces and use incentives to encourage him to stay focused and try hard (such as stickers and bounce balls.) The next lesson I performed with Hunter was practicing letter-sound correspondences of the 11 letters he did not know on the pre-assessment. Hunter was instructed to walk around the room and find words that started with the sound of the letter I gave him. First, we practiced what sound each letter made. Then I showed him a card and asked him what sound that letter made, once he told me the correct sound he then had to quickly find 2-5 objects that began with that sound. We did this with each letter. Once finished, I showed Hunter each letter card and asked for the sound and one thing he had picked. I instructed Hunter to use his objects he picked to help him remember the sound of the letters he found difficult. He seemed like this game and worked hard during the entire lesson period. In the ongoing assessment of this task, he came to only struggle on 5-6 letters. The last lesson I taught Hunter was combining the two objectives together. This time when given a letter card, Hunter had to find an object that ended with that sound and place them together on the table. After he had found an object for each letter (some support given if the sound was difficult to find an object to match), Hunter was asked to go over each card and tell me the letter name and sound , name of the object and isolate the ending sound. This seemed to be his favorite activity and asked to play it again. I was even told he taught the game to his parents and grandparents and plays it often now at home. I believe that the repletion of this game at home helped with the growth in letter-sound recognition and phoneme isolation in such a short period of time. Hunter did make growth in both areas. In letter-sound correspondence, Hunter grew from 15/26 to 25/26 known sounds. He still struggles with sounds that do not make a sound similar to its name. In ending phoneme isolation, Hunter grew from 1/12 to 9/12 sound isolations. He still struggles with some words or understanding the difference between first sound and last sound. Once told “not first sound but last”, he was able to self-correct quickly. If I was doing this teach these lessons again, there are a few things I would have done differently. First, I may have picked a student who was a little older and had more standards to assess and choose from to teach. Second, I realized after the post-assessments that I never practiced isolating ending sounds only verbally with no picture cards or letter cards for support. The last change I would make is finding a place outside of home for a more serious, focused environment.

Dear Classroom Teacher,

I assessed Hunter on July 9th in letter-sound correspondence and initial and ending sound isolation. Hunter was able to pronounce 15 out of 26 letters with their basic sound, isolate 10 out of 13 initial sounds, and isolate 1 out of 12 ending sounds. Due to these results, I decided to work with Hunter on the 11 unknown letter sounds and focus on isolating ending phonemes. After two weeks, Hunter showed sufficient growth. In his post assessment given on July 23rd, Hunter was able to give 25 of 26 letter-sound correspondences and isolate 9 out of 13 ending sounds. Hunter seems to understand that each letter has a sound and those sounds are combined to form a word. Hunter did struggle in two areas on the final assessments. One area Hunter still struggles with is letter sounds that are similar. Although he did perform well on the post-assessment, he second guessed himself throughout the assessment and did make a few self-corrections. On two of the letters I did have to remind him to think of the letter name first and then tell me the sound. (see assessment for details) The other was more of a behavioral concern. Hunter is very capable however gets very frustrated if he is not able to answer correctly and quickly. If he feels he does not understand the directions or is not going to answer correctly the first time he becomes very frustrated and wants to quit. If given a break, some positive reinforcement (easy examples, etc), and an incentive to continue, Hunter will continue to work and seems to be able to learn quickly. Hunter has had a past of speech issues. He struggles with hearing and pronouncing some sounds which may affect his ability to isolate or pronounce certain sounds during assessments or activities. My recommendation is to continue review of letter-sounds and isolating ending sounds. Next I would begin having Hunter practice middle sound isolation and being to practice writing letter sounds he hears when he says a word out loud. Last I would recommend introducing Hunter to saying each sound in 3-4 letter words to begin the process of phonemic awareness in reading.

Dear Parents of Hunter ------,

I had the privilege of assessing Hunter on July 9th in letter-sound correspondence and initial and ending sound isolation. Hunter was able to pronounce 15 out of 26 letter sounds, tell me 10 out of 13 beginning sounds of words I gave him, and tell me 1 out of 12 ending sounds of the words given to him. Due to these results, I decided to work with Hunter on the 11 unknown letter sounds and focus on pronouncing ending sounds in basic words. After two weeks, Hunter showed sufficient growth. When I test him again on July 23rd, Hunter was able to give 25 of 26 letter-sounds and tell me 9 out of 13 ending sounds. Hunter seems to understand that each letter has a sound and those sounds are combined to form a word. Hunter did struggle in two areas on the final assessments. One area Hunter still struggles with is letter sounds that are similar. I would continue to work with him on this skill at home. One way you can do this is use ABC flashcards and have Hunter tell you the sound that goes with that letter. You may also want to challenge him as you go about your day by asking him what sounds he hears when he names an object (this can be beginning, middle, or ending sounds.) Sometimes Hunter does get frustrated if he does not know the answer right away however if given a break, some positive reinforcement (easy examples, etc), and an incentive to continue, Hunter will continue to work and seems to be able to learn quickly. Please continue to review letter-sounds and hearing and saying ending sounds in different words. Last as Hunter gets ready for Kindergarten I would continue to read with him and have him sound out certain words and point out letters or sounds he knows that are in the books you read together. Thank you for allowing me to work with your son these past few weeks. If you have any questions, please free to contact me using school email.

Sincerely,

Nicole Campbell

**Bibliography**

* 1. Kindergarten reading activities, www.fcrr.org, 2005
  2. Letter-Sound correspondence ID assessment, Observation Survey, 2001
  3. Kindergarten Phoneme assessment, [www.fcrr.org](http://www.fcrr.org), 2005