

Final Case Study

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EDUTL 5468: Reading Foundations

TR 11:10- 12:30

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December 5th 2017

Abstract

This paper is about a case study performed with a seven-year-old second grader named Sofia. The case study begins with an introduction to Sofia, my relationship with her, some background knowledge on her reading level and how the observation process began. This is followed by an informal analysis of Sofia's literacy and how my observations connect to the research and knowledge obtained from this class on reading foundations. After this, there is an analysis of Sofia's attitudes toward reading and a running record to provide a more formal assessment of Sofia's literacy skills. To conclude this case study, I provide a summary of the experience and recommendations for further instruction with Sofia.

Introduction to the Child

For my midterm case study I read with a seven-year-old second grader named Sofia. I met Sofia when she was born through our parents and from this point on I became one her family's main babysitters. As I sat down with Sofia, she immediately pulled out a book that she was working on for homework that she wanted to read to me. The book was a Magic Tree House book titled, *The Day of the Dragon King*. Sofia explained to me that her class was divided up into three groups and her group was reading *The Day of the Dragon King*. Sofia did not state which level this reading group was, but her mother shared with me that she is reading at a 2.7-3.8 according to the STAR assessment their class uses to determine reading levels. This ranking shows that Sofia is reading more at the third-grade level, rather than at her current second-grade level. As Sofia began to flip to Chapter 3, where she had left off, I asked her what she thought of the book. She went on to tell me that she really likes it and that reading is her second favorite subject with her first favorite subject being lunch. I then proceeded to ask her what kind of reader she thinks she is. Sofia told me that she considers herself a "pretty good reader" and loves to read for fun.

The Reading Experience

The reading experience went very well. Sofia was focused on the reading the entire time and each time she turned the page she was excited to find out what was to happen next. She seemed calm and content the entire reading experience and it seemed like she genuinely enjoys reading. She even expressed to me when counting the amount of pages left in the chapter we were reading that she wished there were more! Her body language was slouched over and she was very focused on the text, only looking over to me for reassurance on a difficult word.

Literacy Analysis

One of the aspects of Sofia's reading that I noticed immediately was her confidence. When Sofia was reading confidently, she would add intonation and expression to go along with the punctuation present. She would also read louder and even a little faster. When she was feeling uneasy about a part, however, she would begin to get quieter and you could sense her lack of confidence in the way she read the passage. When she reached one passage in particular, though, you could see her eyes light up with excitement, as this appeared to be a special, bolded part of the story. She exuded confidence when processing this passage and read with great fluency. She even recalled an exact statistic from this section after we finished. The connection between Sofia's fluent reading and her comprehension is due to the fact that fluency, as described by Graves, Juel, Graves and Dewitz (2011), "requires the ability to read with proper phrasing, intonation and stress. Taken together these features are attributes of prosody, a characteristic of fluency that is linked to comprehension" (p. 225). This explains why the passage Sofia read the best was the one she comprehended the most.

This concept also goes hand and hand with the fact that the text Sofia appeared to not comprehend as well was the text she lacked intonation reading. She struggled with periods and commas in other parts of the chapter, neglecting to pause at these forms of punctuation and sometimes running multiple sentences together. She did, though, always show a great understanding of question marks, as she consistently raised her voice at the end of each sentence she saw one. Knowing all of this and the fact that Sofia's fluency and comprehension abilities increase as she gets excited about a passage can be used to help her improve in other areas by helping her find excitement in other parts of the reading as well.

A third theme I came across was how Sofia approached a word she found difficult. Sofia is very good at sounding out words letter by letter, but did not appear to be at the blending stage

just yet. Successive blending is when “students say the first two sounds in a word and immediately blend those two sounds together” (Graves, et al., 2011, p. 209). When sounding out each vowel, she would fixate on one specific sound the vowel made. As I sounded out a part of the word with her, however, she was able to remember that letters can sometimes make different sounds when placed next to other letters in different words. This is congruent with what Graves, et al. (2011) explains stating, “that vowels are challenging for children because they make so many different sounds” (p. 205).

The fact that she first read “already” as “alright” was also another common theme that came about during our time together. Sofia would often jump to reading words that were in the text as other common words she knew instead of trying to sound them out in attempt to read faster and finish the sentence without having to stumble. She did this a few other times by reading “pounded” as “pumped” and “headed” and “handed.” This showed me that Sofia might be in the partial alphabetic stage. “In this stage, children are learning letter-sound correspondences and use what they know to form partial connections between letters and sounds in words and word meanings” (Graves, et al., 2011, p. 194). “A problem for children in this phase is misidentifications that result when words have similar letters.” (Graves, et al., 2011, p.194), as seen with these examples from Sofia above.

One of the times specifically when Sofia was unsure of the word “Imperial,” she shared with me that she recognized it because it was part of her word wall in class, but she needed my help reminding her how to pronounce it. Graves, et al. (2011), explains that, “learning the full meaning of words [that are in neither their oral nor reading vocabularies for which they do not have an available concept] is likely to require most elementary students to develop new concepts” (p. 258). Sofia’s teachers seem to be aware of this notion because Sofia explained to

me that she is reading this novel in congruence with their Asia unit in class. To help the students understand the culturally unfamiliar words in the book, they have a word wall in class with words from the unit to help them when reading the text at home. The word wall appears to be working because Sofia immediately was able to recognize that “Imperial” was a concept associated with her class’s current unit.

Overall, it was a good experience for both of us. I asked Sofia at the end how she thought the reading went and she described the difficulty as “medium level.” She also said she thought it was interesting and that her favorite part was learning that the Great Wall of China is 3,700 miles long, proving that she was comprehending.

Analysis of Reading Attitudes Survey

During my second meeting with Sofia, I had her complete the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS). It is important to administer these types of tests because “the student’s attitude toward reading is a central factor affecting reading performance” (McKenna & Kear, 1990, p. 1). This survey consists of 20 questions with the first 10 asking about recreational reading preferences and the second 10 asking about academic reading preferences. On each of the questions there are four different Garfield characters representing emotions from the “Happiest Garfield” to the “Very upset Garfield” for Sofia to select (McKenna & Kear, 1990). Overall, Sofia had very favorable opinions toward reading in all settings. According to the “Technical Aspects of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey,” Sofia scored in the 57th percentile for second graders (McKenna & Kear, 1990, p. 13). She particularly loves reading a book during free time at school. She also loves getting a book as a present and going to the bookstore. A general theme I saw with all of the things Sofia loves is that they all involve very explicit choices where Sofia can select any book without restriction. This makes sense since,

“allowing students some choice often helps motivate them to spend time reading” (Graves et al., 2011, p.56). Sofia circled the second Garfield, representing the “Slightly smiling Garfield” (McKenna & Kear, 1990) in almost all of the other questions including spending free time reading, starting a new book, reading during the summer and reading instead of playing. It appeared to me that she selected liking all of these statements because I can tell that Sofia is very proud of her reading abilities. Sofia seems to be just mastering the stage of reading alone and really understanding what she is reading. This is congruent with the fact that, “by the end of the second grade [students] ... are well on their way to becoming successful readers” (Graves et al., 2011, p. 236). She often brings up to her little brother that she can read and how much she loves her special privilege of having a later bedtime to be able to read before she falls asleep.

There were only a few things Sofia disliked, by selecting the “Mildly upset Garfield” (McKenna & Kear, 1990), with those being doing a reading workbook and reading out loud in class. When I asked Sofia why she does not like these things, she said it is because she does not want to be embarrassed in front of the class if she messes up during reading out loud and that she’s worried she won’t remember things for the comprehension questions in her workbooks. Sofia did; however, express that she remembers the most from the books they read in class that they do projects on. This exchange showed me how self-reflective Sofia is of her learning. She told me about how her class just finished a project on the book we first read together during the midterm. For the project each student had to make a shirt for a character and fill the shirt pocket with things that represent that character. This activity coincides with the push for performance-based assessment. Graves et al. (2011), states, “Student production is more important than recognition. Students must show that they can do more than pick the right answer. They have to construct something on their own” (p. 80). Graves et al. (2011) also says, “Projects are more

important than items. The preference is for depth over breadth” (p. 80). This is shown in the fact that Sofia learns best from projects.

Analysis of Running Record

During this second meeting, Sofia and I read a book of her choice that she selected from her school library titled, *Clementine, Friend of the Week* by Sara Pennypacker. The book is stated for ages 7-10, which is right at her reading level. One of the first major themes I noticed when completing my running record was that Sofia is very good at self-correcting. According to Clay (2013), “A Running Record needs to capture all the behavior that helps us to interpret what the child was probably doing” (p. 55). Without the detail that a Running Record provides, I would not have been able to pick up on this pattern, since she technically did not have any errors. Sofia was able to self-correct almost 50% of the errors she had, especially toward the beginning of the text. For example, on the first page of the text Sofia struggled with four different words, but ended up self-correcting all of them, leading to no errors during the first page of the chapter. I also noticed that even if Sofia read the beginning of a phrase perfectly, she would go back and repeat the same few words to double check that she was correct if she was not feeling fully confident. According to Clay (2013), “It is useful to record this behavior [repetition] as it often indicates how much sorting out the child is doing” (p. 61).

As the text went on, however, I began to notice a second pattern. As Sofia approached words that appeared more difficult, she would make up a word that sounded similar to put in its place. Sofia struggled with words like “shrugged,” “admiring” and “apartment,” by replacing them with “shuttled,” “adir” and “appav” respectively. This makes sense since “words used in spoken English are typically more common than those used in written English” (Graves et al., 2011, p. 187). It was also good that Sofia still struggled with some words, though, because

“although we stress the importance of success, providing appropriate challenges for children is equally essential...In order to develop as readers, children need to be given some challenges (Graves et al., 2011, p. 61). This practice, however, did not affect Sofia’s overall fluency or comprehension. According to Graves et al. (2011), “If too much of our limited processing capacity is taken up with decoding individual words, we are left with no resources to comprehend what we are reading” (p. 224). It appears that Sofia is subconsciously aware of this and is using her brainpower efficiently to make sure she continues reading at a fluid pace to not disrupt her comprehension, which was very interesting to observe.

To finish up our time together, I asked Sofia some explicit questions about the story along with some inferential ones as well to see how the story connects to Sofia’s daily life. According to Clay (2013), “Conversation with a child about the story after taking Running Records adds to the teacher’s understanding of the reader in useful ways” (p. 63). I definitely agree with this because by analyzing Sofia’s answers, I was able to make connections between Sofia’s reading habits and her comprehension. Sofia answered all of the comprehension questions with ease and great detail, which coincided with her very fluent and confident reading of the text.

Summation of Child’s Assessed Literacy and Recommendations

Overall Sofia is reading at a very impressive level with great confidence and excellent comprehension skills. Based on the fact that Sofia read with 97% accuracy shows that she is reading at the right level. If Sofia is challenged too much, she will become frustrated and less confident. Based on my observations, the more confidence Sofia has when reading, the more fluent the reading is, and therefore the more she comprehends. At this current reading level there are a few words per page that she is not positive of, but not enough that it inhibits her from

comprehending the text. Going off of this, Sofia is most confident when she is excited about what she is reading. I would encourage her teachers and parents to find books that really excite her to help improve her fluency.

My second recommendation is that when Sofia does not know a word, I would encourage her to slow down and dissect the word that is troubling her by sounding it out or breaking it up into familiar parts. Sofia's teachers should give her practice with rimes, affixes, root words, prefixes and suffixes. This will help her identify these smaller parts within larger, more complex words to make them easier to decode. Although she can usually comprehend the sentence by making up a word in its place, when she graduates to more difficult books with complex multi-syllable words, it may affect her understanding of the sentence. Due to this reality, she should begin to master them now. Also, from speaking with Sofia after her reading attitudes survey, she expressed to me her nervousness with reading out loud. I would recommend to Sofia participating in activities such as reader's theater to give Sofia more practice with reading in front of an audience with less pressure.

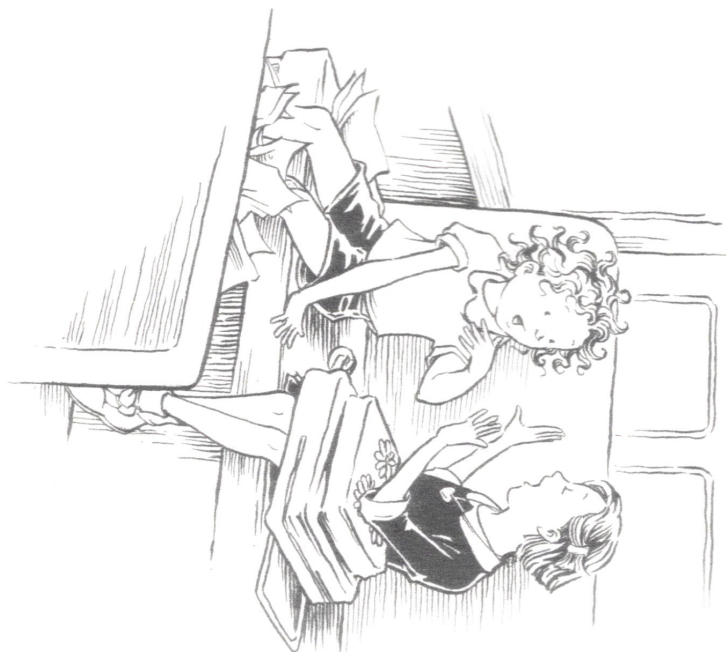
Lastly, I noticed that project based learning tends to be an effective assessment style for Sofia. Using projects to assess Sofia's comprehension will help her create a better understanding, while not instilling in her the same fear that workbooks do. For example, a project Sofia could complete to help her with her overall comprehension of *Clementine*, *Friend of the Week* could be to make her own Friend of the Week wall with pictures of all of her friends and their accomplishments. She could then come up with her own special activities for the Friend of the Week and make a certificate to be given to this person. If all of these recommendations are taken into account, Sofia will continue to improve and build upon her developing love of reading.

References

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Appendix:

Running Record



CHAPTER

I

I couldn't wait for Margaret to get on the bus Monday afternoon. "It was the best day!" I told her, "I got picked for Friend of the Week! I get to tell my autobiography, be line leader, collect the milk money, feed the fish—"

"Oh yeah, Clementine," Margaret interrupted, flapping her hands at me. "We did that when I was in third grade."

Margaret is only one year older than I am. But whenever she says "When I was in third grade," she makes it sound like "Way back when I was a little kid, which I'm not anymore, so that makes me

I

113 words

the boss of you. "I want to learn how to do that trick in case anyone ever lets my little brother into third grade."

"Your class did Friend of the Week, too? I didn't know that," I said. "How come you never told me?"

Margaret crossed her ankles and looked down to see that her sock cuffs were matched up. When she looked back at me, her mouth was pinched like a raisin and she had turned a little pink. She shrugged. "I guess I forgot," she said. "I guess it was just too boring to remember."

"Friend of the Week isn't boring! Especially the booklet. Did you save your booklet? Can I see it?" Margaret shrugged again. "My mother keeps it in the living



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room. It's very important to her because it's all about my valuableness. I think she likes to have it around whenever Mitchell drives her crazy. I think she likes to read it and go, 'Whew! Thank goodness I have one good kid.' You probably shouldn't touch it."

"I won't hurt it," I said. "I'll be careful. Let's read it when we get home."

Margaret looked worried—like she was trying to think up something and couldn't—but then she shrugged a third time and said, "Sure, okay, sure, I suppose."

So when we got home, we rode the elevator down to my apartment to say, "Hi-Mom-bye-Mom-I'm-going-to-Margaret's-okay?-okay," to my mother. Then we rode the elevator up to the fifth floor, where Margaret's apartment is.

Margaret went straight over to the shelves next to the fireplace. She clasped her hands in

3

237
words

386
words

2 errors

front of her, admiring the rows of trophies and awards she had won. Because we do this every time we're in her living room, I knew she wanted me to admire them, too. So I clasped my hands and we stood there having a moment of silence, staring at all the proof of how great Margaret was at everything.

There sure was a lot of it. Three whole shelves of "Best at This" and "Blue Ribbon for That" lined up all neat and tight like groceries in the supermarket.

I am really good at math and drawing. But nobody gives out trophies for those things, which is unfair. So all my parents have is a stack of math tests with stars on them, and some drawings taped up on the wall. They never put up a shelf in the living room for all my awards. Which is good, I guess, because it would be empty.

869

After I figured we were done with the admiring,

541 words total

529 words correct

9 SC + 12 errors

541 total words

= 97% accuracy

of misread spots corrected



Comprehension Questions with Sofia's answers

- What are a few of the things Clementine gets to do as Friend of the Week?
 - Line leader, feed the fish, make a friend of the week booklet
 - Forgot the milk money
- Is Margaret older or younger than Clementine?
 - Older
- Where did Margaret and Clementine go after the bus?
 - Clementine went home and then to Margaret's
- What are the things Clementine is really good at but never gets trophies for?
 - Math and drawing
- In your class do you have anything like Friend of the Week?
 - Not really, but we have brown bag items. We take an item from our brown bag and share about it and tape it to the bulletin board
- Do you have any friends in grades above or below you?
 - Friend in 8th grade- big sister buddy
 - Some older girls at lacrosse
 - Marcella - 3rd grade
 - Friend's sister
- Do you have any friends that like to tell you about the things they are good at? Do you like to tell your friends about the things you are good at?
 - Sofia doesn't like to brag
 - Isabel likes to brag all the time
 - How good she is, champion of recess games, pretends she wins at everything
- Do your parents like to hang up all of your work that you have done really well like Clementine's parents do?
 - Yes, they hang up drawings and stories

Reading Attitudes Survey

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Scoring SheetStudent Name SofiaTeacher Maddie BurnsGrade 2 Administration Date 11/10/17**Scoring Guide**

4 points	Happiest Garfield
3 points	Slightly smiling Garfield
2 points	Mildly upset Garfield
1 point	Very upset Garfield

Recreational reading

1. 3
2. 4
3. 3
4. 4
5. 3
6. 3
7. 3
8. 3
9. 4
10. 3

Raw Score: 33

Academic reading

1. 3
2. 2
3. 3
4. 3
5. 3
6. 3
7. 4
8. 2
9. 2
10. 3

Raw Score: 28Full scale raw score (Recreational + Academic): 61

Percentile ranks: Recreational

68th

. Academic

46th

. Full scale

57th

ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY

Name _____

Date _____







notes:





"likes
read to
at self"
school

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1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?





2. How do you feel when you read a book in a school during free time?

3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?

4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?

JIM DAVIS

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5. How do you feel about spending free time reading?

6. How do you feel about starting a new book?

7. How do you feel about reading during summer?

8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?





JIM DAVIS

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9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?

    JIM DAVIS





10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?

    JIM DAVIS

11. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?

    JIM DAVIS

12. How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages and worksheets?

    JIM DAVIS

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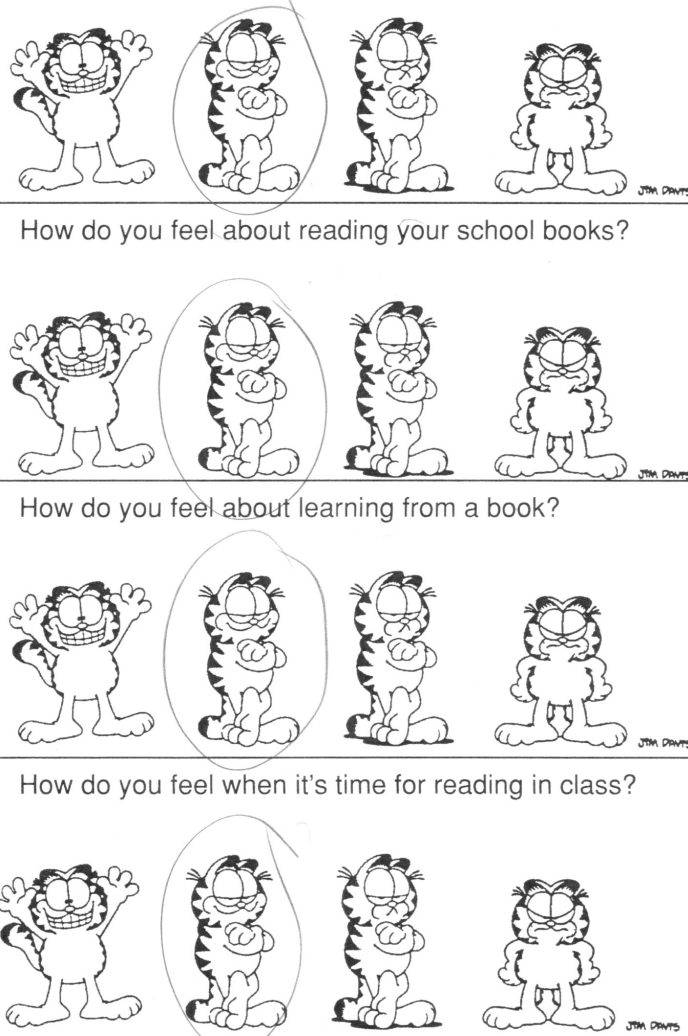
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13. How do you feel about reading in school?

14. How do you feel about reading your school books?

15. How do you feel about learning from a book?

16. How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?



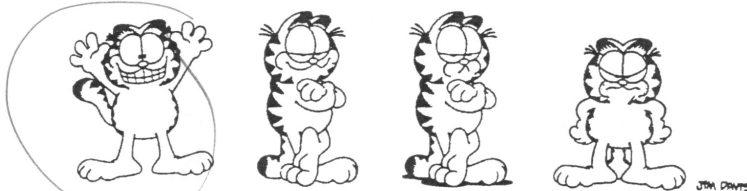
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17. How do you feel about the stories you read in reading class?

read aloud

18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?

*scared
because
shy
don't want
to mess up
or re-read*


19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?



20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?


*for tests
in general, never done a reading
test*

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