

Literacy Learner Project

TE 846

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**Literacy Learner Project****TE 846****Section I: Brief Background and Reason for Project Focus**

Zeke (a pseudonym) is currently a 12 year old, sixth grade Mexican-American male attending West Iron County Middle School in Iron River, Michigan. The school houses grades six through eight and is attached to the high school containing grades nine through twelve. Zeke's daily routine is divided up among core instruction including science, math, language arts, reading, and social studies from three different teachers and a 50-minute physical education class instructed by me, as well as a computer class.

I have come to know Zeke over the past few years. I first met him while he was an elementary student interested in hanging out with older kids. He often visited the middle and high school buildings to see his idols. Before having him in class this year, I was able to meet him through various youth sports that he participated. I currently coach high school football and basketball, so I have witnessed and worked with Zeke in the athletic realm, although not directly as his coach. Zeke is involved in many community sport organizations and enjoys being physically active and involved in the sporting world. He currently helps the junior varsity and varsity boys' basketball teams as a water boy at home events. His passion and enthusiasm allow him to be well liked and enjoyable to be around by his peers. However, his excessive amounts of energy oftentimes lead him to trouble. He often finds himself sitting in the in-school suspension room or the principal's office due to a lack of control over his energy level. Some examples of problem behavior include excessive talking out of turn, lacking self-focus, being overly competitive, and frequently moving around the classroom. Many of these factors seem like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder which plays a major part in his inability to focus for long

periods of time. Zeke's major problem area is a lack of focus and motivation which does not allow him to spend quality time learning material. He demonstrated this while fitness testing in physical education. He was making up a test while his classmates were playing a different game. Instead of performing as many completed laps as possible during the PACER cardiovascular endurance test, he stopped early in order to play the game the other students were playing. He was more interested in the end result than putting the effort into meeting the end result.

I see Zeke most days in physical education. The problem behavior trend continues in physical education on most days, however, the physical activity performed in class is seen as a reward by Zeke and is often a strategy to burn off excess energy. Zeke struggles to complete classwork on time, whether it is in class or at home. If Zeke does not complete all work, he will not be allowed to come to physical education. This is being used as a strategy to reward him for completing all school work as he views physical activity so highly. This strategy has just been implemented so results are not yet available. Due to this strategy being implemented, I have chosen Zeke for this literacy learner project. I would like to work with him to help him understand the importance of completing work by instructing him using literacy strategies and connecting them to an interest of his – physical activity and sport.

During the normal literacy instruction period, Zeke is pulled from his normal class to work in an individualized group. He has completed AIMSweb testing twice this school year within his normal language arts and reading class. AIMSweb testing allows for universal screening as well as progress monitoring. Zeke's AIMSweb results can be found in the summary of test results section. Considering this testing is only done at prearranged times throughout the year, I will use a different pre and post-assessment to measure Zeke's current reading and comprehension level. Based on the pre-assessment results, I will use various one on one

instructional techniques to help Zeke understand the importance of literacy and how to focus in order to improve his ability. These instructional meetings will occur weekly outside of physical education class during the school's current events seminar time or during Zeke's homeroom period if I am not teaching another class. They will be short and to the point in order to keep his attention. These meetings will include both reading and writing strategies. After multiple periods of instruction, I will assess Zeke's overall improvement. To do this, I will use a post-assessment that is the same or very similar to the pre-assessment. I will continue to use physical education class as a motivating factor for Zeke to complete his school work and also any extra literacy "work" I may assign him. Throughout this period, it is my vision to help Zeke become engaged in literacy work by helping him learn how to comprehend and understand materials. This will allow him to have self-confidence to perform work and hopefully offset some of the focusing issues that have plagued him. With the added attention and instruction, I hope that Zeke will become a self-sufficient learner.

### **Section II: Home and Family**

Zeke, a 12 year old, sixth grade boy at West Iron County Middle School, reads at a fourth grade level. Personal characteristics for Zeke include a Mexican-American cultural heritage, but uses English as his primary language at school, with friends, and at home. He knows very little of the Spanish language and does not use it while communicating. Zeke lives at home with his mother in Iron River. His father currently lives in Pembine, Wisconsin. He visits his father very infrequently, but does enjoy the time he is able to spend with him.

He currently is enrolled in a reading intervention class during the school day to help with reading comprehension and fluency. As part of an agreement between his mother and the school at-risk supervisors, Zeke takes part in an after school homework club to provide support to finish

homework at an acceptable level. He is also required to finish all homework before being able to participate in physical education.

### **Section III: Emotional Climate**

Zeke works with four different teachers throughout the day. One teacher is considered his homeroom teacher. She is in her first year of teaching, although she has been a long term substitute multiple times, and has a background in science. One of the other two teachers besides me that work with Zeke has a background in social studies and English, while the second is primarily a math teacher. The sixth grade curriculum focuses on reading and writing, but not to the extent that our elementary school emphasizes improved reading and writing.

Zeke does not like to read or write for leisure. When Zeke performs writing for me in physical education, he rushes through the assignment without focusing that much on his work. He would rather write to finish the work than write for quality. Zeke has not read a book for leisure in the time that I have known him. I would like for him to enjoy reading in order to offer extra reading practice without a structured plan.

### **Section IV: Literacy History**

Throughout Zeke's schooling, he has been labeled as hyperactive and a troublemaker. I tend to disagree with the troublemaker label. He is a very hyperactive young man, but if his energy is used for positive outcomes, he could be a very reliable learner. This is part of the reason why I am using physical activity to connect an interest to Zeke's literacy learning. If Zeke trusts someone, he will give his all to that person. All he needs is someone to believe in him and his abilities.

His family literacy history is not strong. His family does not promote literacy or reading and writing for leisure. At home, Zeke is required to be very independent. He is responsible for

finishing all school work and any additional learning that will be achieved on his own. Very rarely will he be encouraged to read for enjoyment while at home. Due to the lack of family involvement, Zeke is required to motivate and regulate himself as far as learning outside of the classroom with minimal help from his mother. This is not necessarily a negative aspect as Zeke is very capable to learn on his own. He possesses quite a large quantity of “street smarts” that he connects to his everyday habits. Connecting literacy learning to his use of “street smarts” will hopefully allow him to become a more natural reader and writer.

### **Section V: Tests Given and Summary of Test Results**

Throughout the school year, our district has adopted the use of AIMSweb testing in order to assess each individual student’s reading level as far as comprehension and fluency. Each student is tested three times throughout the school year – in the fall, winter, and spring. Using these results, students are placed into tiers which allow each teacher to see what type of, if any, intervention is needed to increase reading fluency and comprehension. The testing is done through a computer based program that the student navigates. Zeke’s AIMSweb scores will be used as a baseline to assess his current reading level. His most recent AIMSweb scores can be found in the following table:

<b>AIMSweb Reading Testing Results:</b>	<b>Goal:</b>	
Fluency	111	161
Comprehension	25	27

As you can see, Zeke’s comprehension is much better than his fluency. According to Rasinski and Samuels (2011), increased fluency would lead to increased comprehension, or in other words, would bridge the gap (p. 94). Considering this theory, Zeke’s comprehension should be nearly spotless once his fluency improves.

In addition to the AIMSweb testing, Zeke will be pre and post-tested using Jerry L. Johns’ *Basic Reading Inventory*. Zeke will be given a word list to assess his knowledge of each

word and also a reading passage that he will read aloud to assess for fluency and comprehension. He will be given the same list and passage during both the pre and post-test. In addition to the word lists and reading passages, a scoring rubric will be used that includes fluency guidelines and also suggested comprehension questions for each passage. Using the rubrics will allow for a uniform way to compile the data collected. Johns' has broken down individual sections based on a given school grade which allows for proper use among students. The assessment is broken down into parts, with the first being the word list followed by the reading passage. The student is given the word list and he will verbally say the word and try to define it. A plus will be marked on the assessment rubric if the word is spoken correctly and also defined properly. The reading passage is to be read aloud in a span of one minute. If the student cannot finish the passage in the allotted time, he is to finish the passage on his own. The number of correct words read in that minute is scored as well as any misspoken or student corrected words. To finish the assessment, the student is asked questions based upon the reading passage to judge his comprehension. The student's answers are jotted down as well as a plus if he is correct. All sections of the test categorize the results into the following: Independent, Independent/Instructional, Instructional, Instructional/Frustrated, and Frustration. These categories are chosen based upon the amount of miscues the student commits. These tests will be done before and after all intervention lessons to help assess Zeke's progress between AIMSweb testing and also the effectiveness of the intervention.

Because the final AIMSweb testing will not be completed until May, the *Basic Reading Inventory* tests will be used to judge Zeke's progress over the course of the instruction. It is the goal of the instruction that Zeke will continue to make steady progress throughout the period of

instructional strategies. Zeke's results from the Basic Reading Inventory pre and post-tests can be found in the following table:

<b>Basic Reading Inventory Assessment</b>				
	<b>Pre-Test</b>		<b>Post-Test</b>	
<u>Vocabulary</u>	<i>Sight:</i> 18/20 Correct (2 Student Corrected)	<i>Analysis:</i> 19/20 Correct	<i>Sight:</i> 20/20 Correct (1 Student Corrected)	<i>Analysis:</i> 20/20 Correct
<u>Reading Fluency</u>	94 Correct WPM 6 Total Miscues		100 Correct WPM 2 Student Corrected Miscues	
<u>Comprehension</u>	9/10 Correct		10/10 Correct	

Based on the above pre-test results, Zeke displays independence with vocabulary when it comes to both sight and analysis. His reading fluency is at an instructional/frustration level. However, his comprehension is at a very high level and is again considered independent. His post-test results demonstrate that his vocabulary is still at an independent level, fluency has improved to an independent/instructional level, and comprehension is also independent. Zeke improved in all areas of the test. Reminder, this was the second time performing this assessment which may account for some of the improvement. Zeke's response to the activating prior knowledge question resembled knowledge that was gained during the pre-test.

### **Section VI: Lesson Plans**

The following table summarizes the lesson plans that were used as interventional strategies between the initial pre and final post-test:

<b>Lesson Foci/Date</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Instructional Materials</b>	<b>On-Going Assessment</b>
Pre-Test – 2/4/13	Student will demonstrate prior ability of grade specific vocabulary, reading fluency, and comprehension. <i>CCSS:</i> <i>Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</i> <i>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they</i>	Basic Reading Inventory B6867	Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension Pre-Test



	<i>are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.</i>		
Journal 1 – 2/4/13	<p>Student will connect what he feels he would like to accomplish in class while writing a grade appropriate paragraph.</p> <p>CCSS: <i>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</i></li> <li>b. <i>Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</i></li> <li>c. <i>Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</i></li> <li>d. <i>Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</i></li> <li>e. <i>Establish and maintain a formal style.</i></li> <li>f. <i>Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</i> <i>(Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)</i> <i>Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.</i></p>	Writing	PE Goals Paragraph
Journal 2 – 2/11/13	<p>Student will describe items learned in class in a grade appropriate paragraph.</p> <p>CCSS: <i>Same as Journal 1</i></p>	Writing	Badminton Strategies Paragraph
Informational Read – 2/19/13	<p>Student will read an informational packet that will connect his interests to literacy. The student will engage prior knowledge with new knowledge gained from the reading. His comprehension of the reading will be assessed.</p> <p>CCSS: <i>Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</i> <i>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative,</i></p>	PE Learning Packet - Basketball	Informal vocabulary assessment, reading comprehension questions.

	<i>and technical meanings. Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.</i>		
Journal 3 – 2/19/13	Student will explain an outside interest to a unit taught in class in a grade appropriate paragraph. <i>CCSS: Same as Journal 1</i>	Writing	Favorite Basketball Team Paragraph
Journal 4 – 2/25/13	Student will describe items learned in class in a grade appropriate paragraph. <i>CCSS: Same as Journal 1</i>	Writing	Basketball Strategies Paragraph
Journal 5 – 3/11/13	Student will describe items learned in class in a grade appropriate paragraph. <i>CCSS: Same as Journal 1</i>	Writing	Volleyball Hits Paragraph
Alternating Read – 3/18/13	Student will alternate reading with the instructor to learn new ways to structure physical activity. The reading will connect his existing knowledge to the new knowledge gained. His comprehension will be assessed. <i>CCSS: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.</i>	The FITT Plan for Physical Activity Article	Informal vocabulary assessment, reading comprehension questions.
Journal 6 – 3/18/13	Student will compare/contrast different forms of volleyball by connecting outside ideas to those learned in class in a grade appropriate paragraph. <i>CCSS: Same as Journal 1</i>	Writing	Volleyball Compare/ Contrast Paragraph
Journal 7 – 4/7/13	Student will demonstrate knowledge of physical activity and sport through writing a grade appropriate paragraph. <i>CCSS: Same as Journal 1</i>	Writing	PE Free Write Paragraph
Journal 8 – 4/15/13	Student will describe items learned in class in a grade appropriate paragraph. <i>CCSS: Same as Journal 1</i>	Writing	Soccer Skill Paragraph
Post-Test – 4/15/13	Student will demonstrate results of previous intervention strategies while engaging in a post-test. <i>CCSS: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</i>	Basic Reading Inventory B6867	Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension Post-test

	<i>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.</i>		
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### **Section VII: Reflections of Lesson Plans**

While working with Zeke over the course of a few months, I was able to learn a great amount about literacy strategies and also was able to help a student improve his fluency and comprehension. Before working individually with Zeke, he struggled quite a bit with his fluency, but was able to comprehend very well. This phenomenon contrasts with many of the authors whose literature supports that greater fluency leads to greater comprehension. Rasinski and Samuels (2011) believe that fluency is the bridge from phonics to comprehension (p. 94). Although Zeke's pre-assessments indicate a great comprehension score, he was still able to achieve a greater comprehension score on his post-assessment (see Section V: Tests Given and Summary of Test Results). Even while working with Zeke, I was able to see his confidence grow as he understood what he was reading. Throughout many discussions about readings, Zeke was spot on about the meaning of the literature. This oftentimes surprised me because of his fluency being so low compared to his initial comprehension score. I do believe that much of Zeke's superb comprehension had to do with using literature that connected to his interests.

One of my major goals was to connect my instructional intervention to Zeke's personal interests. Duke, Pearson, Strachan, and Billman (2011) discuss how motivation for student reading is directly related to a student's interests. The "students' motivation to read is also enhanced by providing contexts, materials, or tasks that catch students' spontaneous attention or situational interest" in order to help build greater comprehension (p. 60). With this in mind, I chose articles related to his favorite sport, basketball, and also to physical activity in general. I hoped that Zeke's background knowledge would activate as Fisher and Frey (2011) argue of the

importance of understanding a subject's vocabulary in order to help comprehend content-area subjects (p. 347). I knew that Zeke understood most, if not all, of the words he would encounter that were related to sport and physical activity, so this made each piece he read during the lessons that much more relevant to his learning pattern. It seemed as if Zeke was able to spark prior knowledge related to the article in order to help his comprehension levels once he finished the reading.

In order to supplement his reading work, he also wrote an informal journal about sport and physical activity that were being performed in class. As Bromley (2011) states, students need to have choices in their writing (p. 301). I want Zeke to be able to choose something he is interested to write about. Although Bromley supports an environment that supports writing in multiple facets, I did not assess these writings to the degree that I assessed his reading ability. To this extent, his writing stayed virtually the same throughout the time frame that I worked with him. I think part of this is a lack of self-motivation towards writing and also the fact that he may not understand the importance of writing at his age. I did not focus much attention on his writing, because my goal was simply for him to transfer his thoughts to a piece of paper in order to practice sentence structure and word use, not to have exceptional spelling and grammar. I wanted him to visualize and then compose his thoughts related to what he physically performed in physical education. One moment that is necessary to discuss happened when Zeke came to my physical education class without a completed journal related to basketball strategies. I would not let him participate until the journal was complete. His response was, "How do I write about strategies?" To me, this represents his inability to transfer his exact thoughts to paper. He is very much aware physically of the strategies he performs during class or in a competitive setting, but he struggles to write what he performs. His writing response did not include much detail

about specific strategies, rather a general overview of the game of basketball. After the fact, I wish I would have spent more time on writing instruction with Zeke instead of simply focusing on his reading ability.

In order to support Zeke's success during each lesson, I used positive reinforcement to keep him upbeat and interested in learning. Considering Zeke's misunderstanding and lack of motivation towards literacy topics, I wanted to keep the lesson light and to the point. I did not want to instruct strictly or in a way that may turn him off to performing leisurely reading and writing activities. Some instructional strategies for fluency and comprehension that I used include activating background knowledge by asking what Zeke already knew about each topic and writing to learn in order to activate knowledge Zeke possessed with the journal lesson (Fisher & Frey, 2011, p. 347-354). Vocabulary strategies used include wide reading by having a conversation about each article after reading, modeling phonetic sounds and punctuation when we performed the alternating read and the context of sport or physical activity also played a role (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2011, p. 228-231).

I found that modeling was a very effective method to use with Zeke. He is a very observant young man who is able to construct positive actions based on what he sees others performing. I was able to model phoneme breakdown and voice inflection in order to demonstrate word recognition and also to emphasize important words or phrases within the literature. Rasinski and Samuels (2011) explain that prosody or "the ability to use melodic features of oral language, is the part of fluency that completes the metaphorical bridge" between phonics and comprehension (p. 96). Zeke was very much able to use prosody once our intervention period concluded.

The use of cues was also effective as it helped engage Zeke's prior knowledge related to the articles read. Again, this helped improve his comprehension, but most importantly, it improved his word recognition. It seemed like Zeke would remember the cue each subsequent time a difficult word appeared which allowed for proper pronunciation and comprehension. To understand this, we need to remember how various words are learned. According to Adams (2011), "the process of decoding words couples the spellings of words with their pronunciations, it pressures alignment between the word's graphemes and its phonemes. Thus, for example, as children learn to decode words that are in their oral vocabularies, the phonemic significance of the words' letters serves to refine their diction." This then helps children "access and refine their understanding of the word's meaning (p. 11). Activating a cue for Zeke to remember would allow that access for his understanding of multiple words associated with our lessons.

To help Zeke transfer what was learned from lesson to lesson and ultimately to his everyday abilities, I would ask Zeke to explain how and why he was able to perform the way he did. For example, the most common generalization technique was when Zeke would come across a phrase he did not understand. To help him, I would ask him what he could do to help his understanding. He would then break the phrase into smaller parts or read each word individually and construct the overall meaning. I would then use a quick cue – break it down – to help him in future sessions. This helped him understand that most larger phrases or sentences are all made up of words that he most likely understands singularly and just needs to focus on the smaller aspects of a large set of words.

My efforts were beneficial during each lesson, but I do not feel that Zeke will engage in any extra reading or writing not assigned to him for a specific purpose. During each lesson, Zeke was very enthusiastic and willing to do the required assignments. He would lose focus if

distractions occurred, such as another student entering the room or the phone ringing. This is more along the lines of his ADHD than a lack of literacy ability. With the extra attention, Zeke was able to improve his ability, but I can only hope he will continue the strategies we worked on independently in the future.

Each lesson was impacted based on how Zeke would respond to how I taught. If I felt like I was ineffective, I would change pace and use a different technique. This usually occurred between lessons as each lesson was rather short and to the point. For example, one lesson I focused on Zeke reading silently to himself and answering comprehension questions. The next lesson, I wanted to know if Zeke's fluency was efficient so he and I alternated reading aloud to each other. This also allowed me to emphasize different things with my voice in order to model proper ways to read. I knew that if I allowed Zeke to read silently, he may not be reaching proper fluency levels and that may affect his comprehension. Listening to his reading allowed me to see where he may have misinterpreted something that led to miscomprehension. I tried to follow the MAPPS guidelines to work with Zeke's fluency. MAPPS stands for modeling fluent reading, assisted reading for support, practice reading, phrasing of words in meaningful groups, and synergy (Rasinski & Samuels, 2011, p. 100-108). I modeled the type of reading that Zeke should recreate during our alternating read. It was his job to focus on my tone and phonemic awareness and put it to use when it was his turn to read. As he read, it was my responsibility to assist him. This obviously worked much better when he read aloud. I gave him opportunities to practice reading, although I wish I would have given him more reading outside of our lessons. The phrasing of words in meaningful groups was difficult for me and I did not do a very good job of this. I should have been ready to phrase groups of words from the readings throughout our discussions. This could have helped Zeke's fluency through exposure as well as having better

comprehension. Finally, both lessons and the journal assignment should have been synergistic in that they all should have been related and connected.

Based on Zeke's pre- and post-assessment results, he has met my instructional goals of improving his fluency and comprehension abilities. As an informal assessment, I would like to see Zeke take more of an interest in reading and writing independently, but that has not been seen at the conclusion of this project. It is my hope that with additional help and structured guidance, Zeke will eventually understand the intrinsic values of reading for pleasure or simply for information. At this point in his life, Zeke is more concerned about participating in physical activity than sitting down to read a book.

Focusing more on his measurable results, Zeke's vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension have all improved. He was able to recognize and analyze all 20 of the words used for the assessment as well as increase his correct words read per minute by six. While reading, Zeke only had two mistakes during his post-assessment compared to six in his pre-assessment. Both mistakes were quickly corrected on his own. His comprehension improved by one more correct answer as well. Strategies we discussed during our lessons, for example word context and background knowledge activation were extremely helpful during the post-assessment. I activated these strategies before that post-test began by asking him what he thought the reading would be about and also asking him what he thought was the context of the reading.

Once Zeke and I completed all of our work, we discussed the best things we talked about during the lessons. He replied with how I modeled the reading process. It helped him when independently reading a passage recognizing words and ultimately constructing meaning of the passage. Part of his improvement may have been because the post-assessment was the same as



the pre-assessment, but I do not feel that this would have a great impact on the results. If he did remember everything from the pre-assessment, it would represent his ability to recall given events from passages and could be a strategy to use with him in the future when continuing instruction in later grade levels.

I would make quite a few changes to my lesson plans if I were able to teach Zeke again. I feel that I was too laid back and that Zeke felt as if the work we did was more practice than learning. I would definitely use multiple teaching strategies as far as reading instruction and also vary my writing instruction techniques. Although Zeke's scores indicate improvement, I would have liked to see him take more pride in doing the work independently.

I wanted to meet with Zeke at least once a week for the duration of the project. Many times Zeke would forget to meet with me because we mainly worked before or after school. Zeke was consistently reminded to finish homework for other classes, which then took precedence over working extra with me. Next time, I would place more emphasis on the work we were doing and create a more purposeful atmosphere. In order to create more purpose, I could have used many different reading techniques so the lessons would not become stale and repetitive. I would also create a shorter instructional period to emphasize the importance of literacy. I would have more frequent meetings, maybe two or three meetings per week instead of just one. Reutzel (2011) describes that all students need instruction in oral language, print concepts, phonological and phonemic awareness, alphabetic principles, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing and spelling daily in order to make satisfactory progress (p. 414). Although, I would not be able to work daily, I would like to increase the frequency that Zeke was exposed to each of this instruction. Using a greater frequency of instruction would not allow for

as long of a period without instruction for information to escape Zeke's mind. Instead, I would give him more instruction while the previously learned material is still fresh.

I used physical activity as a motivational factor. When Zeke completed a lesson with me, he was allowed to play basketball in the gym. At times, I felt like he rushed to complete the lesson just to have more time to play. I do not feel I would use this strategy again for two reasons. One reason being that this creates an extrinsic motivation for Zeke to read and write, which may be a major factor in his lack of interest to read for pleasure. The second reason I would not use this strategy is because the lesson was not as effective because Zeke's focus was on shooting the basketball instead of improving his literacy. Effective motivation stems from the student being interested in what he/she is reading or focusing on an intrinsic motivation to read. The student must also possess confidence in order to continue reading for pleasure. Struggling readers do not always feel the need to continue with pleasurable reading. Dedication stems from the student believing that reading is important. The student should stay persistent in his/her reading adventures in order to continue growth. One major aspect that is not always understood by children is the fact that they can value the knowledge gained from reading. Many books can teach the reader something new and should be appreciated. Finally, the student should value reading for the future in order to help advance their quality of living (Guthrie, 2011, p. 179-180). Instead of providing an extrinsic reward in basketball, I should have offered the previous six characteristics in order to help Zeke see the importance of literacy for his own future.

To promote reading for pleasure, I could have assigned a sport related novel or biography that Zeke would complete on his own time. I would not assess this part of the lesson, but I would monitor his progress throughout the book. This would signal the importance of reading at

home and also signify that reading for pleasure does not always have to be the same reading that is done for a class that is often thought of as boring for young males.

In order to combat Zeke's writing staying virtually at the same level, I could have created an environment that supports individual, physical, and social aspects of writing instruction and also create a self-evaluative process using critical analysis of Zeke's own writing. Zeke could consider what he does well as a writer, what he has recently learned as a writer, and also what he still needs to learn (Bromley, 2011, p. 301-302).

A comprehension strategy I could have used that combines personal interests and reading comprehension is the concept-orientated reading instruction (CORI) method discussed by Duke, Peterson, Strachan, and Billman (2011) where Zeke could "collaborate, make choices, and set goals for learning and sharing learning" which would be related to the conceptual theme of sport and physical activity (p. 62). The downfall of this method, however, is that it seems to take a large amount of time. Within the structure I chose of using a straight to the point method, this could have easily lost Zeke's attention quickly. I could have used a shortened version of this method that I feel could have been very successful if performed properly. I think having Zeke take ownership in his learning may have helped improve his interest in reading for leisure.

A major weakness during the instructional period was that I did not use the collected data effectively. Using a common response to intervention (RTI) approach, my assessment should have begun with a screening, which was conducted with the pre-test, then followed up with diagnostic and progress monitoring, then finally assessing the outcomes, which I did with a post-test (Reutzel, 2011, p. 415). The diagnostic and progress monitoring stages were the weakest components throughout my lessons. From the pre-test and AIMSweb results, I knew that Zeke's comprehension was much greater than his fluency. I should have focused more on phonetic

learning and reading rate than comprehension. I feel that I was too concerned over Zeke remembering what he read than actually teaching him vocabulary tactics. I could have focused on wordplay by using a word multiple ways like meanings, functions, phonemes, and phrases. A graphic organizer would have also been a tremendous help to improving vocabulary and phonemic awareness. Zeke could have created a graphic organizer based on the topic of the article and discovered his own background knowledge by adding new terms. He would need to pronounce and define those terms as he added them (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2011, p. 229-233). Next time, I would like to begin with some vocabulary and phonetic awareness and then connect those techniques into a larger reading piece. I still would require that Zeke comprehend the material, but I would like to focus more on those strategies to increase his fluency.

As I have stated, I could have altered many aspects of my instructing process and my lesson plan foci. I would like to work with another student in order to see if I can be a more effective teacher in reading and writing instruction. I do feel with the experience I have gained, although it could have been more effective, I am better prepared to help increase students' literacy capabilities in the future.

To fulfill the developmental needs of Zeke, I should have used grade appropriate materials for my lessons. I took sport and physical activity articles that were above Zeke's grade and reading level. I did not feel that the level of reading would alter the outcome of instruction a great deal. However, I think grade appropriate material may have sparked more interest during each lesson. I would have especially liked to have an age appropriate book for him to read at home in order for him to have success independently.

What could be the best way to combine fluency and comprehension is to have instructed more in fluency and have him focus more on comprehension on his own. To do this, I would

have used my lesson plans to focus on vocabulary and phonetic awareness associated with age appropriate articles. The articles would be of various types. Some could be informal while others could be fiction or expository. Zeke would then complete his reading outside of class and be able to respond to comprehension cues that I provide. I would also emphasize his writing and assess it at his grade level. I might also allow for rewrites so he would have an opportunity to fully understand where he can improve.

My lessons demonstrate newly learned literacy strategies by implementing multiple reading, vocabulary, and writing techniques. Many of the strategies discussed were implemented through the timeframe that I worked with Zeke. Each lesson that I taught was based on an aspect from class. I chose different methods that Zeke would read, for example, aloud, silently, and alternating with me in order for modeling to occur. Zeke engaged in activating background knowledge and also was able to focus on cues to activate connections when learning vocabulary. I used the MAPPS technique in order to help effectively guide Zeke's progress in fluency and comprehension. I connected the readings we used during our lessons to his interest in sport and physical activity. Although I feel that I was successful, I could have emphasized many other techniques that I have discussed in order to be more effective overall.

### **Section VIII: Recommendations to Teachers and Parents/Caregivers**

Based on the time period that I was able to work with Zeke, I have come to a few conclusions. Zeke fulfills comprehension requirements very well; however, he struggles with fluency. His vocabulary needs to improve, but he is very talented at pronouncing various words. Zeke can improve his overall writing ability quite a bit. For the most part, Zeke is capable of learning and improving his literacy skills, but he will need more attention and interventions throughout his school day.

In order for Zeke to continue his high comprehension level, he needs to improve his fluency. He is capable of reading at a high correct word per minute status, but he should be held accountable for completely understanding all vocabulary and definitions. Longer, multiple syllable words seem to cause confusion for Zeke, but with extra help, he will be able to integrate larger words into his own vernacular and reading use. If I were to work with Zeke, I would recommend that he is guided through phonemic and vocabulary instruction while connecting both aspects to his overall comprehension of reading. Guided reading and concept mapping are two strategies that may help Zeke overcome some of his fluency difficulties.

Zeke's writing is basic without great detail. He should be guided to describe what he is writing. Just stating a basic fact will not be enough as Zeke gets older and is required to write using in-depth approaches. Using a guided approach by cueing his thoughts and writing will allow Zeke to activate more knowledge that he possesses but struggles to write on paper. Connecting his writing to what he reads may also be an effective strategy to improve the quality of his writing.

I recommend having Zeke read for pleasure in order to help him understand that reading does not only have to be done for schoolwork, but also for informational and pleasurable satisfaction. I believe Zeke would be more motivated to read about something that interests him like sport or physical activity, but increasing the range of his reading would not be a negative aspect. Building an intrinsic motivation to read would benefit Zeke tremendously as he is able to improve his literacy ability.

**Section IX: Appendices of Work**

Appendix A  
Lesson Plans

***Journal Assignment***

**Date:** 2/4/13 – 4/15/13

**Objective(s) for today’s lesson:** *Student will write a paragraph based upon a given topic related to sport and physical activity. The student will connect prior knowledge with what has been learned in class and create a formal writing sample.*

**Rationale:** *The student will practice proper writing techniques in order to expand vocabulary and increase literacy. While writing, it is the goal to help the student understand and enhance his own abilities. After practicing writing, the student should be able to increase his own vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension while reading.*

**Materials & supplies needed:** *Writing utensil, Paper*

<p><b>Procedures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Introduction to the lesson:</u></b> Writing a journal will help you jot down thoughts while creating a sample piece of writing. While writing the journal, you will think about skills and ideas learned in class, what you can connect from your own life events, and also what you can learn about sport and physical activity. The journal will be a written copy of all of this information.</li> <li>• <b><u>OUTLINE of key events during the lesson:</u></b> The following topics will be written about during the course of the assignment:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write about your goals for physical education class.</li> <li>2. Discuss strategies you have used while playing badminton.</li> <li>3. Write about your favorite basketball team.</li> <li>4. Describe strategies you have used while playing basketball.</li> <li>5. Explain each of the volleyball hits you were taught during class.</li> <li>6. Compare and contrast indoor and beach volleyball.</li> <li>7. Write about an aspect of sport or physical activity that interests you.</li> <li>8. Describe the skills used to play soccer.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b><u>Closing summary for the lesson:</u></b> When each journal assignment is completed, I will discuss what was written with the student. I will ask questions as to his motivation. I will also help guide him to be more effective by asking guiding questions so he can find the solution.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Academic, Social, and Linguistic Support during assessment:</b></p> <p><b><i>Explain and guide proper writing techniques.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Ask student what other details may provide a clearer picture.</i></b></p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b> <i>Student directed and written paragraph.</i></p>	<p><b>Academic, Social, and Linguistic Support during assessment:</b></p> <p><b><i>Same as above.</i></b></p>

**Informational Read**

**Date:** 2/19/13

**Objective(s) for today’s lesson:** Student will read an informational packet’s passage aloud and another passage silently. The student will comprehend what is read and answer follow up questions.

**Rationale:** The student will read the passage and exhibit the ability to comprehend what is read. He will demonstrate his ability to fluently read and comprehend the informational text.

**Materials & supplies needed:** Informational Basketball Packet

<p><b>Procedures and approximate time allocated for each event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Introduction to the lesson:</u></b> Today, you will read about the game of basketball. I want you to connect your prior knowledge of the game to what is read in this packet. Think about the things you knew already that are correct and then add new things you will learn while reading.</li> <li>• <b><u>OUTLINE of key events during the lesson:</u></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you think this packet is about?</li> <li>2. Read the first section aloud (Introduction &amp; History). What was the passage about?</li> <li>3. Read the next section to yourself (Playing Rules). What was this passage about?</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b><u>Closing summary for the lesson:</u></b> Today, you demonstrated the ability to read fluently aloud and by yourself while remembering what you have read. I want you to use this the next time you read on your own time.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Academic, Social and Linguistic Support during each event:</b></p> <p><b>Guide some of his comprehension by asking certain questions.</b></p> <p><b>Connect new material to prior knowledge by asking for similarities.</b></p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b> <i>Informal questioning about comprehension.</i></p>	<p><b>Academic, Social, and Linguistic Support during assessment:</b></p>

**Alternating Read**

**Date:** 3/18/13

**Objective(s) for today’s lesson:** Student will understand how to read a passage



<p><i>using different voice techniques to emphasized different areas of a text.</i></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> <i>The student will come to use different tones and volumes while reading in order to emphasize key areas of a text. This may also be used in everyday interactions with peers.</i></p> <p><b>Materials &amp; supplies needed:</b> <i>FITT Article</i></p>	
<p><b>Procedures and approximate time allocated for each event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Introduction to the lesson:</u></b>                      Today is about reading a packet and learning how to use voice inflection. Do you know what that means? No? Well, you're soon to find out, follow me.</li> <li>• <b><u>OUTLINE of key events during the lesson:</u></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is this article about based on the title?</li> <li>2. Read aloud for a section.</li> <li>3. I will read the next section. Continue alternating.</li> <li>4. What was the article about?</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b><u>Closing summary for the lesson</u></b>                      Did you see how I made important areas of the text seem more important with the way I highlighted them using my voice? Those words are the ideas that I want you to comprehend from this text. Try doing this whenever you read on your own time.</li> <li>• <b><u>Transition to next learning activity</u></b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Academic, Social and Linguistic Support during each event:</b></p> <p><i>Provide guidance while student is reading. Help pronounce and define unfamiliar words.</i></p> <p><i>Use MAPPS strategy</i></p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b>                      Informal comprehension questions.</p>	<p><b>Academic, Social, and Linguistic Support during assessment</b></p>

Appendix B  
Basketball Article

Please see separate file labeled "Basketball Article."

Appendix C  
FITT Article

Please see separate file labeled "FITT Article."

Appendix D  
Pre and Post-Assessments

Please see separate file labeled "Pre and Post Assessments."

Appendix E  
Journal Writings

Please see separate file labeled "Journal Writings."

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