Literacy Portfolio of Three Kindergarten Students

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**Introduction**

Through my time in my internship classroom, I have been exposed to the learning styles of various achievement-level kindergartners. Each of the kindergartners are unique in their learning preferences, strengths and areas for improvement. For the purposes of my literacy case study, I have selected three students. The literacy development and assessment levels of each of these students varies. I selected my above, on and below level learners by considering their scores on the Primary Spelling Inventory (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, Johnston, 2012), observations I have made in class and test data.

My above level learner, Paris\*, is an African-American female who lives with her mother, father and older sister. She enjoys reading, hands-on activities and is an extremely independent student. Paris placed in the late letter name-alphabetic spelling stage, according to her Primary Spelling Inventory results (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, Johnston, 2012). Paris reads at a level eight, which is two levels higher than what is expected of kindergarteners by the end of the year. Paris is in the high-level enrichment group for Response to Intervention.

The on level learner I have selected for my case study, Caleb\*, is a male student of Spanish descent who also scored in the late letter name-alphabetic stage (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, Johnston, 2012), but whose test results in various class subjects remain on level for kindergarten. Caleb strives to maintain excellent behavior, enjoys playing soccer and does not like to play or work alone. Caleb’s mother is highly involved in the school, and his father also helps him. He receives low-level enrichment as part of Response to Intervention. Caleb reads at a level 3, making steady progress toward meeting the kindergarten reading standard.

The below level learner I have selected, Jose\*, is a male student who is classified as an English language learner; his parents only speak Spanish at home. Jose is a high-energy student who has problems focusing, but shows enthusiasm for learning. He scored in the middle letter name-alphabetic stage of the PSI (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, Johnston, 2012) and receives tier 3 intervention, including working with a tutor twice a week. He is only reading at a level one, but making progress toward level two.

(\* = pseudonym, used throughout the study)

# Running Records

The Running Records assessment measures literacy and language ability relative to fluency and comprehension. During oral reading, an examiner records the types of errors students make while reading leveled passages. The running record tests contextual reading accuracy and student strategy use. Running records identify reading behaviors of young children, as well as guide the selection of appropriate instructional interventions. (Fawson, Ludlow, Reutzel, Sudweeks & Smith, 2006). Running records guide instruction, assess text difficulty to provide appropriate levels for students and capture progress and patterns over time. Prior to beginning the assessment, students are made to feel comfortable and the title of the text is read to them. While students read a developmentally-appropriate or on-level text, the examiner records their reading habits above their own copy of the text. Coding conventions were utilized for accurate readings, substitutions, omissions, insertions, self-corrections, repetitions, appeals and hesitations.

**Fluency.** Fluency in reading involves ease and speed of reading as well as accuracy. Qualitative analysis through running records allows educators to assess student accuracy and automaticity (Ferguson, 2014). Fluent readers are able to recognize words automatically, therefore they do not sound out or chunk words as frequently (Allington & Cunningham, 2015). Automaticity is necessary, as more fluent readers spend less time processing the individual words in front of them. Fluency allows for students to obtain an increased focus on meaning. Also, fluency is a reflection of decoding, strategies, comprehension and self-monitoring skills (Allington & Cunningham, 2015). Through coding conventions utilized in running records, student fluency can be measured by considering the amount of repetitions, substitutions, omissions and insertions during text reading. Students who read with a high percentage of accuracy are considered to be reading independently. The scale of fluency can be considered from emerging, developing, independent to advanced.

Comprehension. Accuracy rate analysis allows the examiner to determine the texts’ level for the readers’ ease: easy, instructional or hard. From these levels, comprehension is determined and reading with or without support can be suggested (Allington & Cunningham, 2015). Miscue analysis is utilized to define why readers make mistakes. Cueing systems, like meaning, syntactic and visual, are sources of information that help the reader understand or comprehend the text. Meaning miscues are based in semantic, knowledge or experience errors. Syntactic cues are gained from structure or grammar. Visual cues are derived from letters and sounds or graphophonics. Comprehension can be inferred by learner’s ability to answer on-level questions relative to the text (Allington & Cuningham, 2015). Also, comprehension can be determined by accuracy students’ retelling of the story without prompting. By combining running records, miscue analysis and comprehension, effective instructional decisions are made by an informed educator to develop strategies that promote student understanding.

**Administration and Results**

**Below-level Learner.** Jose’s running record was done in the privacy and quiet atmosphere of the media center at his elementary school. The student chose to read *Bath Time* by Peggy DeLapp (2005) for the cold read, which is a level 2 benchmark assessment book. During the oral reading, the student exhibited a few visual miscues. From Jose’s sight word memorization, he mistakenly said “purple” instead of “pink,” but quickly self-corrected. The student utilized his reading strategy of considering the illustration, which caused a miscue for the word “bubbles,” substituted by “kids.” Jose demonstrated mastery of a kindergarten reading skill, which was to look at the illustration when unsure of a word. Jose had one insertion, a syntactic miscue in the context. From this assessment, it was determined the learner was able to read this text independently with significant accuracy. Jose self-corrected at least one miscue, but neglected to self-correct all. However, the learner is able to utilize illustrations and recognize sentence patterns most of the time. The student has a strong printed language conceptual understanding, as well as comprehension. Jose was able to answer simple questions about the text. From the data provided by the running record, it can be inferred that Jose was able to read a level 2 text independently with high comprehension.

**On-level Learner.** I administered the running record with Caleb in the comfort of his school library, which provided solitude and an appropriately low level of distractions or interruptions. Caleb chose to read *Sam Likes School* by Callie Jones (n.d.). The student has been reading at a level 3 in the classroom, so the cold read of this book was appropriate. The learner appealed for help when encountering the word “classroom,” which he had visually mistaken as “color” with hesitation. This probably a result of sight word confusion and unfamiliarity. Caleb encountered another sight word confusion with the word “sat,” but he was able to self-correct accordingly. His final visual miscue occurred as he reversed the final portion of the sentence “said Sam.” The learner had no insertions and one omission. Caleb was able to answer questions about the text accurately. From Caleb’s miscues and running record results, it can be determined that he read this text with minimal mistakes, consistent fluency and general comprehension.

**Above-level Learner.** The running record was administered to Paris in her elementary school’s media center, in a secluded pair of chairs devoid of distractions or noisy interruptions. The learner chose to read *Grandma’s Surprise* by Vivian Cuesta (2006), which is a level 10 benchmark assessment book. The learner made repetitive visual miscues when reading the word “kittens” in the text. The word was mistaken as “kitties” twice on the same page, which is visually similar and makes sense in the context. The miscues did not interfere with the meaning of the text and were substituted by visually-similar words. Two other miscues were visual in nature, based on illustrations or familiar words, but both were self-corrected accurately. For example, “surprise” was originally misspoken as “soup,” based on the illustration. The above level student read with fluency (accurately with few miscues), placing her at an independent and advanced level. Paris was able to retell the story accurately, with consideration for beginning, middle and end, through minimal prompting. Though Paris was able to include most important events, refer to characters by name and use language from the text in her retelling, the student is still developing further comprehension skills to consider each event without prompting and make a deeper connection to the story.

**Informing Instruction**

**Below-level Learner**

**Comprehension.** To promote comprehension, Jose would benefit from explicit instruction in reading strategies. Proficient readers of the Elementary age are able to distinguish main ideas, monitor and regulate understanding and adjust their reading behavior to the type of text. (Van Keer & Vanderlinde, 2013). By explicitly teaching Jose these strategies, he will be oriented toward planning, monitoring and reflecting on his reading behavior. By modeling strategic reasoning through think-alouds, Jose will be exposed to the strategies necessary to support comprehension in various situations. (Van Keer & Vanderlinde, 2013). During Daily 5 instruction involving word work, Jose consistently chooses to do the computer based activity available. Jose has a preference for learning with technology, as computers offer engaging formats for young learners. Research indicates that the instructional effectiveness of a computer-supported program for teaching reading comprehension strategies has particularly strong effects for lower-achieving students. (Ponce, Lopez & Mayer, 2012). Jose’s comprehension strategies could be further improved with the inclusion of technology based activities that encourage the student to paraphrase, summarize and self-question while distinguishing main ideas and monitoring his reading comprehension. Research supports the efficacy of direct instruction in specific learning strategies within a computer-based environment. (Ponce, Lopez & Mayer, 2012).

Think alouds that include modeling, as well as student participation are especially beneficial for scaffolding instruction for helping English language learners identify main ideas in text. (Kim, 2009). The teacher should model how, why and when they determined the main ideas in the text. The student should be encouraged to explain why they chose the main idea. By promoting awareness of reading behavior through explicit instruction, incorporating technology and including scaffolding through think alouds to endorse the identification of main ideas in text, Jose will be able to further his reading comprehension.

**Fluency.** Jose’s enthusiasm for learning is coupled with an inability to remain still. His excited disposition leads to a lack of focus and behavioral issues. To accommodate his preference for movement, an efficient strategy would incorporate movement into fluency instruction including repeated reading, which enhances the brain’s capacity to learn as well as increases motivation. (Peebles, 2007). Rhythm Walks are an effective activity to help struggling learners better decode isolated words and chunk sentences into meaningful phrases. When students are able to decode text automatically they have are able to pay attention to interpret the text. (Samuels, 1997). In Rhythm Walks, chunks of text are written on strips that are placed one step apart on the floor in a pathway. As students walk the pathway, they read the corresponding strip. “Movement through a Rhythm Walk focuses on the fluidity, appropriate speed, and natural phrasing of fluent reading.” (Peebles, 2007, p. 580). Expression and articulation can be developed through creativity, including tiptoeing, whispering or stomping for emphasis. This strategy is a whole class activity, which will correspond to Jose’s preference to work and learn in groups. The students are able to learn from each other as they listen to their peers reading along the walk way. Auditory learners, like Jose, will benefit further from the inclusion of classical music to support appropriate pacing. Supporting Jose’s fluency with consideration for his learning needs will promote the development of accurate and appropriate reading speeds.

**On-level Learner**

**Comprehension.** Caleb is a personable young learner who gets along well with his peers. His intrapersonal intelligence is already notable at such a young age. When surveyed, Caleb claims to prefer working with peers or in a group to working alone. Therefore, his learning preferences should be considered in planning instruction to promote comprehension. Reading with an older student as a tutor will increase individualization, time on task, immediate and specific feedback, reinforcement and error correction. (Van Keer & Vanderlinde, 2013). Benefits of peer tutoring for both the tutor and tutee include cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social aspects. Students better monitor comprehension, perform better and show increased levels of motivation. For Caleb, reading with a peer about a common interest, like soccer, will promote the development of further positive social relations. After explicit instruction on a reading strategy, Caleb should work with a peer in a tutoring session on the strategy. Afterward, the teacher and Caleb should reflect on the session and discuss the student’s experience and learning. Studies have found significant positive effects from cross-age peer tutoring for student awareness of reading strategies, use and reading comprehension for average achievers. (Van Keer & Vanderlinde, 2013). Through meeting Caleb’s learning preferences by peer tutoring, his reading comprehension will benefit.

**Fluency.** Fluency development can be promoted through modeling of fluent reading. Fluency is not only reading quickly and accurately, but reading with expression plays a critical part in fluency. (Allington & Cunningham, 2015). When reading to students, teachers should read as meaningfully as possible. Echo reading is an effective strategy as students mimic the instructor’s voice with plenty of opportunities to incorporate expression. Echo reading is done one sentence at a time. Learners like Caleb will enjoy echo reading a fun text with lots of character voices that relate to the students. For examples, the fun story *There’s an Alligator Under My Bed* by Mercer Mayer (1987) is told from the perspective of a young boy. As the students mimic the teacher’s modeling, they are building fluency skills.

 Engaging rereading opportunities should also be provided as students process through identifying the words, create meaningful units of phrases and rapid reading with expression over reading the same text several times. (Allington & Cunningham, 2015). Recorded readings offer modeling of fluent and expressive reading. Caleb will be able to utilize his auditory learning skills while practicing reading with the recording. Then, he can read the book to as many people who will listen! Caleb has a strong support system at home for his education, so challenging him to read the book to as many people as possible will promote further school/home relationship connections. Giving the student an “I Can Read This Book” card and having him collect signatures from friends, peers and relatives he’s read to will promote motivation for developing fluency.

**Above-level Learner**

**Comprehension.** As indicated by Paris’ running record, she is still developing the skill of making connections with text. According to *Strategies That Work,* “making connections to personal experiences facilitates understanding.” (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 92). To promote comprehension, the student should be encouraged to make personal connections to the text. By relating the text to her own prior experiences and cultural and background knowledge, the student will comprehend and evaluate new information by relating it to her own stories (Kim, 2009.) The teacher should model how to relate cultural and background experiences to what is being read. The teacher can promote this kind of thought by asking questions such as, “Does this story remind you of something in your own life? Or something that has happened to you?” (Kim, 2009, p. 112). As Paris is reading independently, she should be stimulated to remember prior experiences and background knowledge to comprehend what she is reading. Providing sentence stems to provoke connections like “It reminds me of…” and “I can think of when…” will develop Paris’ reflective thoughts and embolden making connections to the text. By making text-to-self connections with characters, problems and events in a story, children will gain insight to the story as a whole (Harvey, Goudvis, 2007). When Paris associates the text to her own life, she will be able to use her personal experience to construct meaning and enhance understanding.

 **Fluency.** To help students transition from decoding of words to fluent word identification, repeated readings through Readers Theater offers engaging activities that integrates reading while providing motivation to read. (Mraz, Nichols, Caldwell, Beisley, Sargent & Rupley, 2013). Readers Theater involves texts with multiple characters and a narrator, reformatted into a script. Students are assigned various roles, and practice reading the text multiple times. Paris is a highly expressive and confident learner, who would enjoy portraying a character during reading and would be comfortable performing in front of her peers. Readers Theater encourages students to view reading as rehearsal, which makes repeated reading purposeful and fun. Readers Theater has led to increased oral reading fluency and reading achievement. (Mraz, Nichols, Caldwell, Beisley, Sargent & Rupley, 2013). For learners like Paris, Readers Theater offers a creative outlet that will assist student’s development of accurate, quick and expressive reading.

**Reflection**

Running records are an excellent indication of student’s literacy skills involving fluency. Students’ retelling of the text and ability to answer appropriate questions provides sufficient suggestions of learner’s comprehension. Through repeated assessment through Running Records and miscue analysis with my students of varying achievement levels, I have recognized the call for differentiating instruction according to learning preferences in the development of comprehension and fluency skills. In studies performed in Elementary classrooms, only 25% of instructional time was allotted for reading comprehension instruction (Ness, 2011). Explicit comprehension strategy instruction through read alouds, peer tutoring and making personal connections will promote the students’ understanding of texts. Fluency instruction should consider student’s accuracy, speed and expression while reading. Fluency is developed through modeling during read alouds and student repeated readings of instructional and independent level materials. Rhythm walks, echo reading, recorded readings and Reader’s Theater are engaging strategies that will assist students in the development of fluency. Instruction for accuracy that teaches sight words, phonics and word analysis will increase student fluency. However, fluency instruction must be coupled with comprehension instruction in order to be effective and support literacy skill development. Fluency builds the bridge between word recognition and comprehension as students are more able to identify words and increase their focus on constructing meaning (Ferguson, 2014). Literacy instruction to build proficient readers must include comprehension, as well as fluency development.

As an educator, I plan to address student’s individual needs during literacy instruction. Differentiation according to achievement level, as well as learning preferences, is a significant component for effective instruction. I have recognized the importance of repeated assessments of literacy skills to provide comparable data over time to track student’s progress. Explicit reading comprehension instruction in the classroom will present and practice strategies students can apply to their reading skills. The potential for arts integration with Reader’s Theater is especially important to me as an educator. I strive to provide students with a comprehensive education that allows for cross-content connections, especially with concern for the freedom of expression available through the arts. In elementary settings, it is vital that students are led to developing appropriate fluency to reach their reading comprehension goals.

**Research**

A synthesis of data collected from all assessments administered to each student was analyzed for observed patterns and the individual’s strengths and weaknesses. A goal and corresponding objective have been established for word study, fluency and strategic comprehension, with consideration for the correlating Common Core State Standard. Strategies for each student who displays varying levels of achievement have been developed to support differentiation for diverse students with correspondence to each aspect of literacy development.

# Holistic Interpretation

With consideration for Paris’ various literacy assessments, she is performing above the Kindergarten required level. On the Primary Spelling Inventory (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton & Johnston, 2012) given earlier this year, Paris exceeded expectations by scoring in the Late Letter Name-Alphabetic category. The kindergartner showed mastery of initial and ending consonant sounds, as well as short vowels. Additionally, she was able to identify a few consonant digraphs and blends. On the Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver & Celebration, 2002), Paris was able to accurately connect to the text and answer comprehension questions. For Paris’ low number of miscues throughout the DRA, she scored in the advanced range for oral reading with 98% accuracy. The reader is still developing her monitoring or self-correction skills, as well as her ability to preview the text. Paris identifies and comments briefly about each event or action with some prompting while previewing text, however she should be identifying three key events without prompting, using relevant vocabulary. Paris is currently reading on a level 8, well above the level 6 requirement for the end of kindergarten. On unit tests for math and science, Paris performs consistently above level or demonstrates adequate understanding. For example, while sorting shapes, Paris received a perfect score on the unit 5 test, as well as a perfect score on the unit 3 test involving counting. The unit 3 test only required a passing score of 11, but Paris achieved a full 16 points. The same performance was given on the unit 2 test of comparing sets. While writing, Paris’ work displays an ability to write with proper conventions (spacing, capitalization, punctuation) and utilizes sight words appropriately and accurately. Paris is currently on list 5 of sight words. Paris receives high-level enrichment during schoolwide designated Response to Intervention. Paris is clearly a strong learner, but would be able to further her literacy development through practice previewing the text.

After an analysis of various test scores and student work, Caleb demonstrates learning consistently on level for Kindergarten. On the student’s progress alert, his classroom teacher reported his performance as satisfactory and on level. On the Primary Spelling Inventory (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton & Johnston, 2012), Caleb’s score ranged him in the Middle Letter Name-Alphabetic stage of spelling acquisition. The learner could consistently identify beginning and ending consonant sounds and most of the short vowels, but Caleb did not demonstrate knowledge of any consonant digraphs or blends. For Response to Intervention at Caleb’s school, he benefits from a small group focusing on low-level enrichment. Caleb has obtained passing scores on unit tests involving comparing sets, counting, the five senses, the nature of science and identifying numbers. During the student’s Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver & Celebration, 2002), Caleb demonstrated proficiency in reading engagement and printed language concepts, but obtained a 7/9 score for oral reading. The student made two miscues, but read with 96% accuracy which placed him in the independent reading level for the level 3 text. Caleb is currently reading at a level 3 during guided reading time. Caleb masters sight word lists after an average of two weeks of studying and is currently on list five. Caleb’s oral reading fluency could be improved, which will promote his recognition of miscues and further his literacy abilities.

With consideration for Jose’s running record, Primary Spelling Inventory and Developmental Reading Assessment scores, various patterns emerged that are indicative of his literacy skills. Jose has been identified as performing below level or needing improvement for his lack of phonemic awareness. According to Jose’s performance on the Primary Spelling Inventory (Bear, Invernizzi, Johnston & Templeton, 2012), he has recently emerged to the Middle Letter Name-Alphabetic stage. He was unable to spell any words correctly, but could recognize most beginning consonants, a few final consonants and a single short vowel sound. The PSI results imply Jose still needs practice on letter identification and letter sounds. On the DRA, Jose acts as an emergent reader who self-corrects at least 1 miscue, but neglects to self-correct all. Jose read a level 2 during the DRA and read at a low independent level, demonstrating an ability to read with 94% accuracy. Earlier in the year, Jose received progress monitoring as part of his Tier 2 Response to Intervention for letter sounds. After two weeks of interventions, the student made minimal gains. The English language learner needs practice manipulating the sounds in words. Considering the learner’s reading abilities during the beginning of the year, Jose has shown growth in reading and enjoys guided reading time. Now, Jose receives Tier 3 intervention and works with a Language Master to help him recognize sight words. Jose has an ESOL specialist who acts as an aide throughout the week. Also, Jose works with a tutor and a small group twice a week. Additionally, Jose’s writing indicates that he needs to utilize proper punctuation and spacing and use multiple sounds to represent words. Through daily observation of student work, use of screening assessments, placement tests and other measures of academic achievement, Jose’s classroom teacher has recognized that he has a deficiency in reading. The county mandates that his parents are notified, so they are aware that Jose shows weakness in: phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension and phonics. Jose’s literacy development will benefit greatly from a focus on phonemic awareness, which will improve his fluency and comprehension skills.

**Differentiation for Diverse Students**

**Goal 1: Word Study** Focus students will know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills by reading common high-frequency words by sight.

Objective: When encountering sight words on the individual student’s level, students will be able to accurately read and spell the words.

Standard: LAFS.K.RF.3.3.c. Read common high-frequency words by sight (e.g., the, of, to, you, she, my, is, are, do, does).

**Strategies** Paris: When encountering unfamiliar words that the student has not yet mastered by sight, she should infer meaning from all aspects of the picture book including the cover and illustrations (Goudvis & Harvey, 2007, p. 140).

 Caleb: Copying familiar rhymes, jingles, group or individual dictations or selected passages from books into a personal reader will promote repeated readings and familiarization of sight words (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton & Johnston, 2012, p. 164).

 Jose: By contributing to a word bank during picture sorts, predictable books, leveled readers or other word study activities and regularly reviewing these words while he encounters them during reading, the student will look more thoroughly at words and note individual letter-sound correspondences. Word banks promote sight word development and growing word knowledge (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton & Johnston, 2012, p. 163-164).

**Goal 2: Fluency** Focus students will read most words in context quickly and accurately and with appropriate expression, demonstrating fluency (Allington & Cunningham, 2016, p. 46).

Objective: While reading appropriately leveled texts, students will read with speed and expression (fluency), with no errors.

Standard: Fluency: [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/4/) Read emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding.

**Strategies** Paris: Rereading by reading texts that were originally read in class to Paris’ family or support network will allow the student to read more rapidly with improved expression in an effortless way (Allington & Cunningham, 2016, p. 51-52).

Caleb: Chanting and rewriting of frequently encountered words in texts will build the student’s fluency with an auditory/rhythmic route to remembering the words (Allington & Cunningham, 2016, p. 56).

Jose: After listening to recorded readings of books, the student should record himself while reading to evaluate the recordings and judge his own fluency while offering the benefits of rereading to promote fluency (Allington & Cunningham, 2016, p. 52).

**Goal 3: Strategic Comprehension** Students will monitor their comprehension by utilizing appropriate strategies to make and demonstrate understood meaning from the text they read.

 Objective: Focus students will be able to identify and accurately answer questions about key details during their leveled readings.

Standard: LAFS.K.RI.1.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

 **Strategies** Paris: By listening to her inner voice, metacognition while reading, Paris will leave tracks of thinking and consideration of importance in the text on sticky notes in the text to follow her own understanding and refer to while answering questions (Goudvis, Harvey, 2007, p. 78). Additionally, the student should understand that there are several important ideas in a piece of text rather than a single main idea by utilizing 3 sticky notes coded with a star for identification of important ideas (Goudvis, Harvey, 2007, p. 166).

 Caleb: The young learner should recognize the difference between what is important to him and what the author intends to be most important through a response notebook while reading to write down what he has learned (Goudvis, Harvey, 2007, p. 167).

 Jose: When the student gets confused or has a question while reading, he will place a sticky note marked “Huh?” in the text. Later, when the student clarifies his confusion at some point within the text, Jose will put the sticky note by the text that answers his question and sketch or write the answer (Goudvis, Harvey, 2007, p. 81). By utilizing this coding technique, Jose will monitor his comprehension and stay on track while reading (Goudvis, Harvey, 2007, p. 81). The young learner should discriminate between key topics and supporting details by maintaining a chart while reading titled Topic and Details with words and illustrations (Goudvis, Harvey, 2007, p. 167).

**Reflection**

Through constructing this literacy portfolio, I was introduced to the recognition of patterns in data collection. By considering observations, student work, assessment scores and the academic achievement of students with varying levels, trends in data became obvious. Also, this process increased my awareness of considering and building upon student strengths to target growth in their areas of weakness. It is important to be mindful of what students are excelling at in order to direct instruction accordingly. Analysis of the data collected heightened my perceptions of student’s attainment of knowledge, as there are multiple selections of formative and summative assessments for deliberation of scores.

Additionally, through this experience I have gained the practice of bearing in mind data analysis when developing instructional strategies. Basing instructional decisions upon a reflective process involving assessment, observation and research yields effective results in the classroom. When strategies, instead of activities, are developed through research-based methods that consider the needs of the students, the potential for academic achievement is increased as students develop meaningful connections in their learning process.

As a pre-service teacher, this experience confirmed my belief that each student benefits most from differentiation and an individualized approach to their education. Composing this portfolio enlightened me to the importance of data analysis in the classroom. As a professional, I plan to utilize the research strategies and analysis skills I have established to benefit the learning needs of my students. I will differentiate instruction according to a holistic interpretation of individual student’s strengths and weaknesses, while developing strategies students can implement to further their academic progress.

Finally, I believe the students that were the core of this portfolio deserve recognition. In pursuing my own educational and professional development, I was able to witness the learning process and growth of three unique, bright children. They introduced to me the importance of the reciprocal relationship in teaching. As much as I am able to teach these young learners, they are naïve to the influence they have had on my own learning. Their smiles, curiosity and process of academic development has offered me insight that I will carry through the rest of my experiences as an educator. I look forward to witnessing the personal and academic progression of each of the unique children that touched my professional development.

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