

William Finds His Base

Student: Grade 2, age 7, July birthday

School: Hemenway Elementary School, Framingham, Massachusetts

Teacher: Stacey Soto

Class Size: 24 students

"I remember the first book we read, and William said, 'I can read this whole thing!' All of a sudden, a light bulb went on. His writing increased, his mechanics increased, his reading increased; his hand is up in the air. He feels like a new kid." —Stacey Soto, second-grade teacher, commenting on William's progress after moving to a new reading group.

Overview

Video Summary

When William, a friendly, outgoing boy, enters second grade, he is struggling to “keep up” with his reading group. William and his mother both report that in first grade he “hated to read” in school and at home. In this video, we follow William’s progress throughout the year. As he develops strong reading skills and strategies, his ambivalence about reading changes to genuine enthusiasm. His teacher, Stacey Soto, routinely uses running records to track his progress, to choose appropriate materials for both guided reading and independent reading, and to plan instruction tailored to his strengths and needs. By the end of second grade, William’s improved reading strategies for word identification and comprehension, and his new found confidence as a reader, motivate him to set goals for summer reading.

Factors that contribute to William’s literacy development:

- Ongoing assessments
- Opportunities to read and write every day
- Guided-reading groups using leveled books
- Independent reading program
- Parent involvement
- Self-confidence and motivation to read
- Reading at home

“His reading is amazing. I can’t believe his reading. I mean, the improvement has been huge. Huge. And he likes to read.” —William’s mother

William’s Progress at a Glance

- Word recognition strategies
- Oral reading fluency
- Comprehension
- Self-monitoring
- Confidence in his reading
- Motivation to read

Putting It in Context

The Student, Teacher, and Class

William is a second-grade student in a fully inclusive classroom at the Hemenway Elementary School in Framingham, Massachusetts. Of William's 23 classmates, 12 have special needs. The class has two full-time teachers—one general educator and one special education teacher—who share responsibility for teaching all students in the class.

An active, social boy, William loves to play sports, especially baseball. He is often critical of his performance. According to his mother, he expects to do the best all the time. After he experiences difficulty in an above-grade-level reading group in September, Ms. Soto, his teacher, regroups him so he can read books at his instructional reading level.

Ms. Soto assesses William throughout the year (as she does all students), using a running record to determine appropriate reading materials, and guided-reading groups, which change throughout the year. Ms. Soto makes it a point to review the running record with William and to share the indicators of his progress. She constructs an individual Browsing Box each week with each student to encourage independent reading.

As William's skills increase, he enjoys reading books from the *Magic Tree House* series and books about sports. He also enjoys reading at home to his sister and mother. By the end of the second grade William says, "I have a baseball collection and now I can read the cards better. I couldn't read them when I first got them, because I wasn't really that good. I'm going to read more books over the summer and get books out of the library about sports and baseball."

William's Literacy Program

Guided Reading (small group)

Shared Reading (whole class)

Independent Reading

Read-Aloud

Assessment (Running Records)

Home Reading

Writing Across the Curriculum

Analyzing the Video

Before Viewing

The following activities prepare you to observe this case study video, whether alone or with a group.

Prepare To Record Your Observations

Make a copy of the Literacy Development Chart (found in the Appendix) to record your observations, reactions, and further questions throughout your viewing. Pay particular attention to the strategies William demonstrates over the year in his oral reading, and to the factors that influence his independent reading behaviors and interests.

Review Important Terms

Review the definitions of important terms related to Literacy Teaching Practices (page 4): read-aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, independent writing, instructional reading level, and independent reading level.

Review the following definitions of the Essential Components of Literacy Development (page 2): oral language, word study (vocabulary/concepts and word identification/phonics), comprehension, composition, and fluency and automaticity.

First Impressions

Use the following activities to reflect on the case study video.

Watch the Video

On your first viewing, note how William's reading accuracy and fluency develop over the year during guided reading, shared reading, and independent reading. Note the strategies he uses to read unfamiliar words in context and how he monitors his reading. How do his perceptions of his reading abilities change over time?

Review What You Saw

Review your notes on William's Literacy Development Chart. Then consider the following questions:

William's Progress: How does William progress in reading during the year? What factors influence this progress? How does his reading development compare to your own students? What questions do you have about his literacy development?

Classroom Environment: What instructional practices in reading and writing promote William's literacy development? How does Ms. Soto support William's use of strategies to read and comprehend texts? How does the classroom environment encourage and support William, as he becomes an independent reader?

Home/School Connection: How do Ms. Soto, William's mother, and William collaborate to assess William's progress and determine goals for future learning? What does each know about William as a learner? How does William's mother support his reading development at home and at school?

Looking Closer

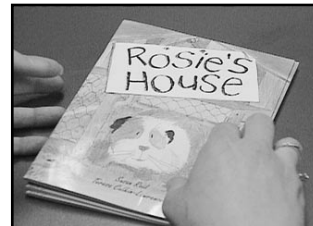
Take a second look at William's reading development to deepen your understanding of his changing strengths and needs over the course of the year. What do you see now that you didn't notice on your first viewing? Use the video images below to locate where to begin viewing.

Analyzing the Video, cont'd.

Developing Fluency and Accuracy: Video Segment

Find this segment 2 minutes and 58 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for 3 minutes and 24 seconds.

Throughout the year, William's teacher, Ms. Soto, takes running records of students reading classroom texts to determine reading achievement and progress. In this segment, in December of the school year, William's guided-reading group is beginning a new book. He reads it to Ms. Soto while she takes a Running Record and the other students read the book on their own. Add any new insights about William's strengths and needs to William's Literacy Development Chart.



- What are the characteristics of students reading at their instructional reading level?
- How would you characterize William's oral reading accuracy and fluency?
- What strategies for identifying new words does William demonstrate as he reads the book?
- Based on William's oral reading, what do you know about his word identification skills? His comprehension?
- What do we know about his comprehension based on his oral reading miscues?
- What instructional practices would you plan to improve William's reading in the coming months?

Independent Reading: Video Segment

Find the first segment 8 minutes and 4 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for 1 minute and 17 seconds. Find the second segment 18 minutes and 50 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for 2 minutes and 46 seconds.

As William progresses, he becomes more interested in independent reading, both at home and in school. In the first segment, in December, Ms. Soto describes her independent reading program and William discusses his favorite books. In the second segment, in April, William's mother discusses William's reading at home and William meets with Ms. Soto to choose new books for his Browsing Box.



- How does Ms. Soto structure independent reading?
- What do we know about William's independent reading interests and habits in December?
- Why does William choose *The Magic Tree House* books for independent reading even though Ms. Soto believes it is at a level that is too difficult for him?
- What factors other than text readability influence students' choice of books? How do these relate to William's comprehension?
- How does Ms. Soto check to see whether William comprehends what he reads?
- How does Ms. Soto use the results of the running record to promote William's reading development?
- What does William's choice of books for independent reading time reveal about his reading interests and beliefs in his ability to read?
- How does Ms. Soto support William in selecting books for his Browsing Box?
- What would you tell William's mother about his independent reading at home?

Analyzing the Video, cont'd.

Writing To Communicate: Video Segment

Find this segment 13 minutes and 31 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for 1 minute and 48 seconds.

William has many opportunities to write each day: for example, personal journal writing, written response to reading, and observations in science. In this segment, in January, William writes in his journal about his weekend and meets with Ms. Soto to review what he wrote.



- How would you describe William's writing in his journal entry? What strengths and needs are demonstrated in his writing?
- What does Ms. Soto do to help William enhance his writing?
- What questions would you ask William about his writing in a one-to-one conference?
- How would you describe William's reading of his own writing? How does this reading compare to his reading of books?
- What instruction would you plan to promote William's writing development?

Parents, Students, and Teachers Working Together: Video Segment

Find this segment 21 minutes and 38 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for 3 minutes and 54 seconds.

Parent/teacher conferences at William's school occur twice a year. In April, William's teachers—Ms. Soto and Ms. Watson—his mother, and William meet to discuss his literacy achievements and progress. William uses his notebook to describe his work and his growth in reading and writing. William, his mother, and his teachers all provide information on his reading progress and his goals for the summer.



- Why is it important to have William participate in this parent/teacher conference?
- What do we learn about William's achievement and progress in this conference?
 - How does William present himself as a reader and a writer?
 - How does Ms. Soto describe his achievement and growth in literacy development?
 - How does William's mother describe his achievement and growth in reading?
- What do William's summer reading goals reveal about his perceptions of his reading abilities?
- What reading materials and activities would you suggest to William and his mother for his summer reading?

Analyzing the Video, cont'd.

Summing Up

Wrap up your impressions of the video with a final reflection.

Reflecting on Your Viewing Experience

Review your notes on William's progress throughout the year. Consider the following questions for discussion:

- In what ways did William grow in his reading development over the year?
- How did Ms. Soto's instruction and assessment practices advance William's literacy development?
- What changes did William's mother note?
- How did William's self-perceptions about his reading performance change? What factors influenced these self-perceptions? How do his self-perceptions reflect his goals for summer reading?
- What questions do you still have about William's reading?
- How might this video influence your teaching practices? What segments affirmed what you already know and do? What will you do differently as a result of watching this video?

Making Connections

Apply and Extend

Here are some opportunities to apply and extend what you've seen.

Read This Article

Compare reading strategies described in this article with the strategies William used on the tape:

Askew, B. J., and I. C. Fountas. "Building an Early Reading Process: Active From the Start." *The Reading Teacher* 52 (1998): 126–134.

This reading is available as a downloadable PDF file on the *Teaching Reading* Web site. Go to www.learner.org/channel/libraries/readingk2/.

Watch These Videos

View the other second-grade videos in the *Teaching Reading* library, "Staying on Topic" and "100 Days of Reading." How would you compare the practices in instruction and assessment in these tapes with William's second-grade program? Did viewing this video enhance your understanding of William's literacy development?

For more information on these videos, see the chapters on "Staying on Topic" and "100 Days of Reading" in this guide.

Selected Resources

Resources Used by Ms. Soto

Fountas, I. C., and G. S. Pinnell. *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Children*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1996.

Henkes, Kevin. *Sheila Rae, the Brave*. New York, N.Y.: Greenwillow Books, 1987.

Reid, Susan. *Rosie's House*. Barrington, Ill.: Rigby Education, 1990.

Rule, Christine. *Shorty*. Barrington, Ill.: Rigby Education, 1992.

Rylant, Cynthia, and Sucie Stevenson. *Henry and Mudge: The First Book of Their Adventures*. New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster Children's, 1996.

Sharmat, Marjorie Weinmann. *Nate the Great Goes Down in the Dumps*. From the Nate the Great Series. New York, N.Y.: Young Yearling, 1991.

Resources Used by William

Barrett, Judith. *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs*. New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster Children's, 1982.

Berenstain, Stan, and Jan Berenstain. *Berenstain Bears Series*. New York, N.Y.: Random House, Inc.

Osborne, Mary Pope. *Dinosaurs Before Dark*. Magic Tree House Series, no. 1. New York, N.Y.: Random House, Inc., 1992.

Showers, Paul. *What Happens to a Hamburger?* New York, N.Y.: Harper Collins, 2001.

Additional Resources

Allington, R. *What Really Matters for Struggling Readers: Designing Research-Based Programs*. New York, N.Y.: Addison-Wesley-Longman, 2001.

Baker, L., M. J. Dreher, and J. T. Guthrie. *Engaging Young Readers: Promoting Achievement and Motivation*. New York, N.Y.: The Guilford Press, 2000.

Harp, B., and J. Brewer. "Assessing Reading and Writing in the Early Years." In Strickland, D., and L. Morrow. eds. *Beginning Reading and Writing*. New York, N.Y.: Teachers College Press, 2000.

Harvey, S., and A. Goudvis. *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding*. York, Maine: Stenhouse, 2000.

Hiebert, E. H. "Standards, Assessments, and Text Difficulty." In Farstrup, A. E., and S. J. Samuels. eds. *What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction*. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 2002.

Paratore, J. "Home and School Together: Helping Beginning Readers Succeed." In Farstrup, A. E., and S. J. Samuels. eds. *What Research Has To Say About Reading Instruction*. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 2002.

Samuels, S. J. "Reading Fluency: Its Development and Assessment." In Farstrup, A. E., and S. J. Samuels. eds. *What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction*. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 2002.

Winograd, P., and H. Arrington. "Best Practices in Literacy Assessment." In Gambell, L., et al. eds. *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction*. New York, N.Y.: Guilford Press, 1999.

For more resources on literacy, see the General Resources section of the Appendix.

Notes
