

Mary Wollin

Case Study

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My case study student is “Taylor,” a six-year-old first grader. Taylor is mixed-race and lives in a low-income household. On his IEP, he is categorized as Developmentally Delayed, and any further diagnosis will occur in third grade. Both parents participate in his life and live together off and on. Taylor has seven siblings and is the third youngest. Taylor has rough days at school when he wants to try and control his environment because he has no control at home. Taylor likes using technology and loves the game Teach My Monster To Read. He also loves to do physical activities, like push-ups. He does well in a small group of students, depending on his day. Taylor has a behavior plan in place as he is easily frustrated with academic work and tries to avoid it by running away or throwing a fit. His behavior is no longer improving as he is not in an afternoon program to help with his social skills. He only participates in class for fun activities, games, and movies. He learns best in a one-on-one setting or group of three or fewer students. He learns best kinetically.

Taylor has a goal to read a Fountas and Pinnell level D text at 90% accuracy, and currently reads a level B at 93% accuracy. He has a good comprehension of stories he reads but struggles with listening comprehension slightly. His reading ability is improving, but he still has trouble reading some sight words. He does well with sounding out words that follow the rules and needs to learn about more vowel teams and r-controlled vowels.

For phonemic awareness, I administered the DIBELS Phoneme Segmentation Fluency assessment. Taylor scored fifteen correct out of seventy-eight. He would repeat the word instead

of segmenting it or say only part of the word segmented (the onset or rime or the initial sound). He also would say rhyming or associating words, as when I said “grain” he said “brain” and when I said “rough” he said “rough housey.”

For phonics, I administered the DIBELS Nonsense Word Fluency assessment. My student scored 13 CLS out of 143 CLS on this assessment. Taylor also read six whole words out of fifty words. He made random errors, such as making short vowels long and long vowels short. He also tried to make the Nonsense words real words, saying “own” for “un” and “jeff” for “jaf.”

For fluency, I administered the DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency assessment to Taylor. Taylor read a total of twenty-two words. He read four of them correctly, all the remaining words were either given to him or read incorrectly. According to DIBELS 6th Edition Benchmark goals for first grade, in months 4-6, a student should read about twenty words correctly to not be at risk. Reading 0 to 7 words correctly puts a student at risk, where Taylor falls. According to DIBELS Next Benchmark Goal in months 4-6, a first-grader should read thirty-four words correct per minute and is at risk for reading less than 20 words. Following both DIBELS benchmarks, Taylor is at risk based on his oral reading fluency score.

For vocabulary, I administered the Fry first one hundred sight word list. Taylor struggles to read, he can only read at a kindergarten level. I knew the CORE Vocabulary assessment would be too difficult and too much for him with his behaviors. Taylor identified thirty-six words at the time of assessment, now he knows forty-three words. By the end of first grade, a child should be able to read one hundred words. With it being halfway through first grade, Taylor needs to know 7 more Fry sight words to not be at risk in the vocabulary side of reading.

For comprehension, I administered the Core Reading Maze Comprehension Assessment to Taylor as a listening task. I used the 2-A “A City Walk” story as this was the lowest possible option. Taylor scored at about 60%, getting twelve out of twenty-one choices right. He performed well, scoring above 50%, but for his grade level, he falls behind. This task was also difficult for him, as he needed to focus on listening to the story and not looking at something in front of him. For Taylor, I am proud of how he scored as he was able to stay mostly focused on this task. I did have to redirect him a few times as he is easily distracted, but he did not get frustrated and give up. I would be interested to give him this assessment again as a second grader to see how he improves and performs on grade level.

Out of the assessment results, Taylor performed the best in vocabulary and the worst in phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency. Based on these results, I want to focus on his word decoding skills (phonemic awareness and phonics). I will design instruction and use materials and resources that focus on building his understanding of letter and word rules and phonemes.

I will use programs that are within my school (Reading Mastery, CR Success) and one that is not at our school (Michael Heggerty’s Phonological Awareness). CR Success works on phonics, which is an area Taylor needs help in. Heggerty’s lessons work on phonological awareness, which umbrellas over phonemic awareness as well as syllables, on-set and rime, rhyming and alliteration, and words in sentences. Once Taylor has more of a foundation in phonics and phonological awareness, I will develop more instruction to work on fluency and then comprehension. I will also use Reading Mastery, which will build on all five reading domains in one program. By using all of these programs, I will provide extra focus to his target areas, and continue to build all five domains. Taylor did well in vocabulary because of our repetitiveness in going over these words in the special education and general education

classroom. By doing phonics and phonemic awareness as much as I have done vocabulary, Taylor should be able to develop better word decoding skills.

Overall, Taylor is a student who struggles with reading and needs targeted instruction to build his foundational reading skills. These assessments focused on the big five domains of reading: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension and give teachers a way to design instruction to best meet their students' needs. Based on Taylor's results, I will focus mostly on phonemic awareness and phonics to build to more fluency and comprehension instruction.