

GO STRAIGHT to the SOURCE

By Jennifer McDonough

Student Reflections from Jennifer's Classroom Work

Enhance Your Reading Strategies with Student Reflections

NOTE: These reflections are additional resources to accompany Jennifer's main PD Catalog-Journal article "Go Straight to the Source: Enhance Your Reading Strategies with Student Reflections." To view Jennifer's article [click here](#) or go to www.heinemann.com/pd/journal.

Name Aadi Date 11/14

What I do really well as a reader?
 I read the whole time.
 I check up words.

What I am working on as a reader?
 I work on reading with the punctuation.

AADI

When I look at this reflection sheet, the first thing I ask myself is, "What does Aadi seem to know about himself as a reader?" He knows that reading the whole time during reading workshop is very important to becoming a better reader. I know, as his teacher, that Aadi has great reading stamina, which could be one reason he is such an accomplished reader.

Then I ask myself, "What does he know about reading strategies?" From his reflection, I see that Aadi understands that one way to figure out a word he doesn't know is to "chunk it" into parts. So, at this point, I wonder if when he chunks the words, he looks for word families and small "words within words" he already knows to help him decode. I tuck that thought away as I read on.

When he writes, I am working on reading with the punctuation, he is telling me that as a reader he is noticing the marks authors put in their books. So the next step is to see what he really knows about punctuation in text and what he should be doing when he sees these different marks. This is where it is important to not assume Aadi knows about this strategy but to have him explain it to make sure there are no misconceptions.

As you can see, Aadi knows that good readers change their voices in some way for different types of punctuation. I think to myself some things I can do to help "nudge" him forward as a reader. It is important to look at my conferring notes and see how my notes line up with what Aadi is trying to work on as a reader.

When I put my conferring notes next to Aadi's reflection sheet, I consider whether my thinking is aligned with Aadi's and I make sure that what I think Aadi needs is not too big of a gap from what he has internalized as a reader. My notes remind me that Aadi has been reading quickly with little intonation. I clued Aadi into the idea of using punctuation to change his voice to start him toward not only expression, but comprehension of text as well. When I think

about the way Aadi describes changing his voice for the different types of punctuation, maybe my gap is a bit too wide. He responds that his voice gets high and then really high, so I am definitely going to want to explore that more with him the next time we meet to have him show me what he means. I want to clear up any confusion before I move on—this is a subtle gap but could affect him later on as a reader if I let it go. I also think that I may be moving too fast, expecting Aadi to change his voice for every type of punctuation right from the beginning. It would be better to have him really practice one mark at a time and be able not only to understand how punctuation cues readers to change their voices a bit but to understand why. Once again, a subtle gap but something I may have missed if I had not really looked at what Aadi had internalized as a reader through his reflection. With all this in mind, I move forward with breaking down how readers respond to each type of punctuation separately. What might you do if Aadi was yours?

When its a ? mark I make my voice higher and when its a ! mark I make my voice really high and when its a . my voice stays the same.

Reading Conferences With: <u>Aadi (I/J)</u>		
Goal: Fluency/Expression		
Strategies:		Strengths:
1. change voice for punctuation		1. Knows a lot of words
2. phrasing		2. retells w/ details
Date	Observations and Instruction	Next Steps to Meet Goal
9/16	Book: <i>Did Running</i> Notes: needs said words Teacher: these too easy	Teacher's Job: Moved to I/J When to meet next
11/3	Book: <i>The Three Little Pigs</i> Notes: working on changing voice Teacher: slow down	Teacher's Job: slow down pay attention to phrasing When to meet next
11/10	Book: <i>Hoppy</i> Notes: Midge in the... Teacher: Reading well, needs to slow down a little for accuracy. Asked Aadi to continue working on punctuation.	Teacher's Job: when you are reading change your voice for the different kinds of punctuation! When to meet next
11/28	Book: <i>The Elephant</i> Notes: signed down... Teacher: changing voice, read slower	Teacher's Job: slow down - what need to repeat to... When to meet next
12/15	Book: <i>Treks in T.A.W.</i> Notes: used post-it to read thinking Teacher: recommend to really recommend what you like	Teacher's Job: slow down what you have learned When to meet next
1/15	Book: <i>Wanda Gág</i> Notes: wanted to move to... Teacher: checked off 5 things... Teacher: read big to end	Teacher's Job: Read a comprehension to you... When to meet next

JOHN

Reflections of a Third-Grade Reader

Upper primary students are even better at reflecting on themselves as readers. The maturity helps them more succinctly articulate what they are trying to do and what they are doing well. Take John, a third grader who is working on reading fluency.

John reflects that he is feeling good about what he comprehends and is expanding his vocabulary as he reads and learns new words. He is working on fluency and states that reading aloud a few minutes every day, as opposed to only reading silently, may help him. When I look at my reflections, I notice right away that John is remembering the suggestion I made previously and utilizing it.

I might wonder, "Will that be enough?" I think about what I, as a fluent reader, do naturally and how to break it down for a reader who lacks fluency. Though it is good practice to read aloud every once in a while to hone an expressive voice, I'm not sure that will be enough to improve John's fluency issues. I wonder if I broke down the strategies a fluent reader uses into small enough chunks for John to be able to utilize them as a reader. I note that his reading rate is within that of normal readers, so I think about things I do, like phrasing and using punctuation to help chunk words together. I decide it is going to be important to keep an eye on whether he makes improvement with his fluency just by reading aloud, or if more explicit instruction would be necessary.

After a couple of conferences, I realize that teaching John to use punctuation as a guide for helping to phrase sentences made a big difference. By thinking about my own reading life, looking at John's reflections, and checking if I modeled explicitly enough, it all started to come together for John. By using his reflection, I knew he was ready to grow in this area of reading and that he would be open to new suggestions for how to improve.

Name John Date 3-8

Reading Reflection

What do I do really well as a reader?

I think I do comprehensions and expanded vocab.

What am I working on as a reader?

I am working on fluency as a reader.

Explain what that looks or sounds like?

I would read aloud for 5 or 10 minutes every time I get a chance.

Reading Conferences With: John

Goal: Fluency

Strategies:

- Voracious Reading
- Read out loud

Strengths:

Date	Observations and Instruction	Next Steps to Meet Goal
<u>2/21</u>	Book: <u>A to Z</u> Notice: <u>Reading rate, is not low but does not sound as fluent</u> Teach: <u>Practice reading out loud 5min in class 5 min at home</u> Child's Progress:	Reader's Job: <u>Keep reading out loud 5min in class & 5min at home</u>
	Book: _____ Level: _____ Notice: _____ Teach: _____ Child's Progress: _____	Reader's Job: _____
	Book: _____ Level: _____ Notice: _____ Teach: _____ Child's Progress: _____	Reader's Job: _____
	Book: _____ Level: _____ Notice: _____ Teach: _____ Child's Progress: _____	Reader's Job: _____
	Book: _____ Level: _____ Notice: _____ Teach: _____ Child's Progress: _____	Reader's Job: _____

JUSTIN

Justin is just beginning to think of himself as a “reader.” He received extra help with reading in kindergarten and came into first grade reading below grade-level expectations. Justin kicked into gear around mid-October. He started asking to take books home, built up his reading stamina at school, and found some books that really hooked him into reading. Justin ended up jumping a few reading levels as a result of this voracious reading. His reading is just reaching grade level at this time, and he continues to build confidence in himself as a reader.

So when I look at Justin’s reflections of himself as a reader, he seems to know that part of reading is understanding that letters make sounds and these sounds create words with meaning. He also seems to know that it is important to check that the sounds make up a word that you have heard before when he writes: mackin shor the wors are crect (making sure the words are correct).

When I ask Justin to explain what it means when you make sure words are correct, he writes that readers take words “chunk by chunk.” From this, I can see that he has a sense of word attack when he gets to an unknown word.

This is the point where I ask myself what might be next for Justin. I need to keep in mind what he knows as a reader and what I think he may need to move forward. So I notice that he has a sense of how to decode from all the mention of using letter sounds to make words and that he wants to make sure the word is correct. This is a reference to making meaning, which is so important for him at this stage of his reading life. From the reflection, I decide to work on noticing the context of what he is reading to have him focus on what word might make sense instead of using only letter-by-letter decoding. Then I look at my conferring sheet to see what I have been working on with him, making sure I don’t have any big gaps in my teaching now that I know what Justin has really internalized as a reader.

It looks like I am on the right track. I have started working on the strategy of having Justin ask himself, “What would make sense?” I will model this strategy a few times with him and have him try it out as he reads with me. A next possible nudge may be to

skip the unknown word and finish the sentence to see if the context clues in the sentence can help him as well. It is exciting to see that Justin and

I seem to be working together toward the same goal!

Using the reflection sheets to help guide instruction won’t always show you what you might be missing, but many times it will give you confidence that you are moving in the right direction with that reader.

Name Justin Date 11/14

What I do really well as a reader?
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 out the
 wris

What I am working on as a reader?
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 gnou
 the
 wots
 are
 crect

It is like
 you take
 chunk by
 chunk

Reading Conferences With: Justin (G)

Goal: Accuracy/Fluency

Strategies:
 1. Does it look right?
 2. Read to be fluent

Strengths:
 1. stretching out words
 2. using pictures to help you

Date	Observations and Instruction	Next Steps to Meet Goal
9/16	Book: <i>What's the Weather</i> Notice: <i>what's today</i> Teach: <i>not getting contractions right</i>	Reader's Job: <i>does it look right?</i> When do we meet next?
10/24	Book: <i>The Sun</i> Notice: <i>Read through - was able to talk about the book</i> Teach: <i>had him grab an "E" book</i>	Reader's Job: When do we meet next?
10/27	Book: <i>Seven Big Buttes</i> Notice: <i>adding endings "float-tag"</i> Teach: <i>Read what is on the page - Does it look right?</i>	Reader's Job: <i>check word - to make sure you don't add endings</i> When do we meet next?
11/3	Book: <i>On The Go</i> Notice: <i>Read story w no problem. Used expression</i> Teach: <i>Had him read an E book. Did great!</i>	Reader's Job: <i>Challenge yourself w next level.</i> When do we meet next?
11/4	Book: <i>Seven Big Buttes</i> Notice: <i>word "sky" stuck with it - figured out what word made sense</i> Teach: <i>gone for they need had him to picture make sense</i>	Reader's Job: <i>Ask - what would make sense?</i> When do we meet next?
11/9	Book: <i>3 Billy Goats Gruff</i> Notice: <i>stuck on bridge -</i> Teach: <i>what would make sense?</i>	Reader's Job: <i>use pictures/sentence to ask - what would make sense?</i> When do we meet next?

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