**Term Project**

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**TE846**

**Classroom:**

I teach first grade in a low socioeconomic area of Colorado. There are 21 students in my classroom. I have 11 girls and 10 boys. Approximately 60% of my students have a family member in the military.

**Participant background information:**

The student that I chose to do my project on is named Devun\*. Devun is an African American boy that recently entered my class. His mother had him out of school from November 2010 to the day that I got him into my class, which was March 7, 2011. He was extremely below grade level, which can be expected with such a large gap in his educational history. Aside from this, he has a wonderful personality and a strong will to learn. Devun is a very smart little boy, he just has not had the exposure to help foster his intelligence. I am currently tutoring him afterschool twice a week for an hour, working with him during the day for 10-15 minutes in a guided reading group, and he goes to an intervention for 30 minutes with a reading teacher. When he came into my classroom, Steven knew 3/52 primer sight words, 0/41 first grade sight words, and his oral reading fluency based on a DIBELS assessment was 0 words per minute. He knew all of his letters and most of his letter sounds, which was apparent when he read nonsense words on the DIBELS assessment as well. He did struggle greatly with the short sound of the letters e and i. **(Standard I)**

**The entire project plan:**

Since Devun had such minimal reading abilities, I decided to start with focusing on the phonological awareness because he needed help in “blending sounds together, separating words into their constituent sounds, recombining sounds of words, and judging whether two words have sounds in common” (Anthony and Francis, 2005). I wanted to focus on vowel sounds because “good readers don’t skim a book…they process the letters of each word in detail” (Moats, 1999). I wanted to start by using cvc words within the same word family because he knew his letter sounds, and I wanted to get him familiar with chunking words by recognizing the same pair of letters that a word family has. If my student is able to display a strong understanding of this activity, and can apply it to his reading, I will move into the second set of lessons. Since my focus is going to be on short vowel sounds, and the first set of lessons are on word families, which obviously have the same vowel sound in them, I would like to see Steven decipher vowel sounds that are different from oral words that he hears. For example, I would like him to be able to recognize a difference between bag and bug. All of the lessons that I do with him will include both manipulatives with an activity, as well as an assessment afterwards. The first set of lessons will also have a book that goes along with each set of word families. I want to see that he is able to apply his new reading strategies of short vowel word families that he just became familiar with to new words he needs to decode. **(Standard II)**

**Description of short “a” vowel lesson:**

When we started doing this lesson (See artifact 1 for lesson description) Devun was very excited. From the day that he came into my classroom, he has been determined to learn and grasps anything he can hold onto that will help him succeed academically. This lesson took place at our first tutoring session, which happened one on one. I went over the alphabet strip with him (See artifact 2), and we talked about each letter and the sound that it made. We then had a discussion about vowels and consonants. On this strip, the vowels are already colored red and the consonants are black. I touched on the fact that vowels have both a long and a short sound, but that we were going to focus on the short sound for now. Since we were only going to be looking at word families with short “a” in them today, I had him look careful at “a”, say the short sound and a word that had that sound in it. This was a little difficult for him, but eventually he came up with the word cat. I was proud of him and let him know that cat was a great word and had the short “a” sound in it. I took that and we went into the –at word family since he opened the door to it with his initial word. (See artifact 3 for a picture of the set up.) We began pulling down letters together to make words in the –at word family. Then he would write them on the white board. Once we finished the activity, we practiced reviewing what the letters “a” and “t” said together. Then we reviewed what words belonged in that family. After that, I had him complete the –at portion of the assessment. I wanted him to give me 4 words that all belonged in the –at word family. I did allow him to use the –at index card as well as the letter tiles because I wanted him to have the concrete materials to help him if he needed.

When Devun finished the –at family we moved on to the –ap family. I reviewed what the short sound of the letter “a” was. We also reviewed that it is a vowel. Then we talked about how we put it together with the t and knew that they made the “at” sound. That way we don’t have to sound those two letters out, we can recognize the sound that they make together. I explained that we were going to apply this same concept to the letters “a” and “p”. I asked him if he knew what those letters would say together. He immediately was able to tell me the correct sound “ap”. I said we were going to make words that belonged in the –ap family by using the same technique we had done with the –at family. I gave him the index card with a blank space and the letter –ap on it. Without any further instructions he began pulling letter tiles down and making words. Steven then wrote the words down on the white board. I was very pleased with his ability to apply the new concept of chunking letter sounds, and recognizing the word family words. He was also becoming more confident with each word he was making. I listened as he read the words to himself without sounding out each letter sound. He would say, “(k)c…ap…cap” and then write it down on his board. When he finished, I had him read all of the words that he wrote down on the white board. He could read all of them without hesitating or sounding out each letter. After we reviewed those words, I gave him the –ap family assessment and he did amazing. He wrote the words, and then pulled the letter tiles down to show me which words he had chosen to write in the assessment.

Once Devun had finished both of the short “a” word families activities that I had for him, I explained that he was going to read a story to me. I didn’t tell him the title, but I said that it was a story that he was going to see words like those we had just learned. I asked him what –at said, and he told me, as well as –ap. Then I handed him the book. He looked at it and read the title to me with no problems. He read through the whole text all by himself. There were a few words that he struggled with, but as far as the words from the word families that we worked on, he did a wonderful job. After he finished reading to me. I gave him a crayon and had him go through the book and underline all of the words that were from the word families we worked on. That way he could take the book home and practice it, and if he got to one of those words and was stuck, he would remember from the underlining that it was one we worked on and hopefully that would remind him of the sounds that he learned today. He loved this idea, and was very happy that he got to take the book home and share it with his sister and mom.

**Description of short ”e” vowel lesson:**

Once we finished the short “a” word families, we moved on to the vowel “e”. I had Devun point it out to me on the alphabet strip, and then had him tell me if it was a vowel or consonant. He told me a vowel and we talked about how it would have a long sound and a short sound, but like the “a”, we were going to be looking at the short sound today. When I asked him if he knew what short “e” said, he gave me the short “i" sound. This was a mistake that he often made with this letter, and we worked hard to break him of that. I used the alphabet strip to have him look at the letter “e” and see the picture of an elephant to help remind him that the short “e” makes the sound as in elephant. “Young children may learn to recognize a limited vocabulary of words through incidental cues such as a picture, color, or shape” (Moats, 1998). I know he used this visual clue because I often saw him referring back to the picture on the strip while we worked on the short “e” word families. As we began, I gave him the –et word family first. We discussed how it was similar to the –at family except that it had short “e”. He was able to tell me what –et said, and we began to make words that belonged in the –et word family. He went through the entire alphabet, being sure to write down the words that he made onto the white board. The only problem word he had written down was fet. This fell back on his confusion between short “i" and short “e”. He thought he had written the word fit, but instead it was fet. I reminded him to use the alphabet strip to help him remember what short “e” says. He was able to tell me and then I asked him to read the word to me, and he gave me a big smile and said, that fet was not a real word so he erased it. After he read me all of the –et words he had come up with, he did the –et assessment. He was able to come up with two words on his own, and then used the index card and the letter tiles to help him come up with the other two. He didn’t put any accidental short “i" words on the assessment, which made me hopeful that perhaps he was beginning to understand what short “e” says. As I noticed towards the end of the short “a” activity, when he felt comfortable, his confidence in his own ability went up and I noticed a big improvement in the way he read the words. I saw this same confidence towards the end of this activity because he would smile when he got them correct and I could tell that he was very excited to be reading words**. (Standard IV)**

Once we finished the –et word family, I had Devun look at the index card with the –en family on it. After reviewing what short “e” says, I asked him what –en said. He struggled a bit at first, but then told me the correct sounds. He immediately began to put the letter tiles down on the index card and wrote the words on his white board. He didn’t even wait for my directions because I think that he was aware of the routine, and confident in himself to complete the task. Once he finished telling me the words that he had written down, I asked him what short “e” said again just to be sure that he was beginning to decipher between short “e” and short “i". He successfully told me the sound. I gave him the –en assessment and he did a very nice job filling it in with 4 words that were correct.

We reviewed both of the word families Devun had worked on today, and then I let him know that he would be reading me another story like he had the day before. He wasn’t as nervous this time I noticed. He did seem a little hesitant, but still not as fearful as he had been for the short “a” story. He was able to read the title to me and then opened it up. It had a few more words than the story from the short “a” word families, and he did struggle a little bit more, but overall, he was still reading the words and chunking the word families. He did a great job. Every once in a while I noticed him struggle with saying a short “i" sound for a short “e”, but I corrected him and I noticed when he was about to make a similar mistake, he would make a comment and correct himself. I had him read this story to me twice because he had struggled a little bit more, but the second time he made very few mistakes and was applying the word family reading concepts we had been going over. I again had him take the crayon and go through and underline the word families we had been focusing on. He got to take that book home as well and practice reading it.

**Description of short “i” vowel lesson:**

Before I went into the short “i" lesson, I took some time to continue reviewing the short “e” and short “i" sounds with him. We waited about a week before we had another chance to work on this lesson. In small group I continued having Devun focus on using the visual of an elephant by the “e”, and inch by the “i" to help him remember which letter says what. Once I was confident that he was close to being able to recognize the differences in the sounds and apply this to his reading we moved on to the short “i" lesson.

We went over and over what short “i" says and that the keyword for it was inch. Then I showed Devun the first short “i" word family we would be focusing on. We reviewed the short “i" sound once more and then I showed him the index card for the word family and asked him to read it to me. He said “it”. I gave him a high five and we went right to the activity that he was becoming confidently familiar with. He got right to work manipulating the letting tiles and creating words that belonged in the –it family. I only caught him using the short “e” sound once, but he was able to correct himself before I even had a chance to. He was also able to read them back to me without making a single mistake. He was aware of this and once again, it was apparent in his eyes and behind his ear to ear grin. Once he finished, I had him fill in the –it assessment. Even though he demonstrated such confidence with completing the activity, and reading the words back to me, he did use the letter tiles and the index card to come up with his 4 words. This was acceptable because he still did it on his own and was able to come up with 4 real –it family words, but I know he could have done it without the aid of the card since I had just seen him do it when he was reading me what he had written down on his white board.

After finishing the –it family, we moved on to the –in family. We reviewed the short “i" sound again to keep it fresh in his mind. I then placed the –in family index card in front of him and he didn’t hesitate to say “in”. This was the word family that he impressed me the most on. When Devun was done choosing letter tiles, and writing the words on his board, he began to read them back to me. He had written down the word grin. It was a vocabulary word that we had gone over as a class earlier in the week, and he remembered it. Gr was a blend, and he had used it correctly! I gave him quite a bit of praise for this one, and even made sure to recognize his ability to recall the information to his mother as well as in class the next day. Once he had finished reading the words to me he took the assessment. Grin was the only word he wrote down without using the aid of the index card. The other three words, he used the tiles and the card to come up with the words. In the end, he was still able to come up with 4 –in words that were all correct.

After he completed the word family activities, we went over what the two families we had worked on were. I also had Devun review quickly the short “a” and short “e” families we had done too because there were a few words in the story from those word families as well. Then I gave him the book and he began to read to me. He struggled a little in the beginning, but then his confidence began to get the better of him and he started reading quite fluently. All I could think about was how only a few short weeks earlier, he had read 0 wpm when I tested him on the DIBELS assessment. With the exception of a few tough words, he did a great job and I was beginning to notice a huge improvement.

**Description of short “o” vowel lesson:**

When we began working on the short “o” vowel sound, Devun showed a strong understanding of the sound. He displayed no confusion between this vowel and others we had worked on. We reviewed where to find it on the alphabet strip, that it was a vowel, and what the sound was. I gave him the –ot word family and we talked about how to say it. He was able to tell me and then he began pulling letter tiles to create words. As he wrote them down on his board, he also started saying them out loud as he wrote them down. I took this in two ways. First he didn’t want to spell them wrong, and second, he was beginning to gain more confidence and was displaying this by saying them out loud so that I could hear him. He seemed to fly through the activity, and asked me if he could read them back to me now. Once he had finished, I gave him the assessment and he wrote down these words without using the aid of the index card. I praised him for this when he had completed. I let him know that he was very smart and didn’t need to use the index card once he was comfortable with the word families. He told me, “ I know I just don’t want to make a mistake.” I thought that was interesting, but let him know that making mistakes helps us learn. I also told him that was a good tool to help make sure he didn’t make a mistake and he was more than welcome to continue using it if it made him feel better.

After that, we moved on to the second short “o” word family, which was –op. We went over what the word family was, and I asked Devun if he could give me a word in it. He immediately said mop, pulled the m down from the tiles, placed it on the index card and then wrote it down on his white board. Then he went through the whole alphabet and wrote down as many words as he could find that were part of the –op family. He read them to me and once again and I gave him the assessment. These seemed to be getting significantly easier as the lessons continued on. I think a big part had to do with his confidence, and the other part was the familiarity with the assessments and what the expectation was at the end of each activity. Once again, he was able to fill in the 4 words he needed without blinking an eye it seemed.

I gave him his target text and he began to get busy reading it aloud to me. He struggled with two words that both had the short “e” sound. I made sure to have the alphabet strip out for him to see the picture clue for the short “e” sound. I had him read the text to me again, and this time I watched him use the strip to double check the word he was reading and he read both of them correctly. The target vowel sound from this lesson was short “o”, and he demonstrated a strong understanding of it as well as applying it to his reading.

**Description of vowel lesson short “u”:**

The last lesson that I needed to do for the short vowel sounds was “u” of course. We went over what short “u” says and what the key word was. Devun was also able to tell me that his name had a “u” in it and it made the short “u” sound. He was correct. I gave him his first word family, which was –ug, and he started to pull the letter tiles down and place them on the index card. When he did this, he started to make little rhymes. One of them was “ I dug and found a bug.” I asked him what he was doing and he said that he didn’t realize that words that rhymed were all from the same word family. I didn’t want to confuse him, but I also didn’t want him having the wrong information so I let him know that he was partly correct. Most of the time, rhyming words are from the same word family, but sometimes they have letters that sound the same in them, but they are actually not in the same word family. He seemed to accept this answer, and didn’t look too confused. He continued working until he had filled up almost his whole white board. Then he carefully read them back to me. I gave him his assessment and once again, he didn’t use the index card to help him fill in the 4 –ug words.

When Devun had finished the –ug assessment, we moved right into the –un family. Right away he said “fun!” He wrote it down on his whiteboard and asked me if that was correct. I asked him if fun was a real word, and he said yes. So I told him that was his answer then, fun was a real word, and it was obviously part of the -un family so it worked. He went back to the beginning of the alphabet again and began pulling letter tiles onto his index card. He recorded his answers again on the white board, and then read them to me again. After he finished, I had him fill in the assessment again. He reverted back to his less confident self, and used the index card. For the last one, I asked him if he could try to come up with an –un word without using the index card and he realized he hadn’t used fun yet, so he used that one.

When it came time to read the book, he was very eager to see what the title was, and what the book looked like. I used a different color construction paper for each vowel, so he was curious to see what color the title of the book was going to be on. It ended up being orange, and he was quite happy with that. It is important to “include various incentives to help reinforce motivation” (L. Maheady et al., 2006). He did a very nice job reading to me and didn’t encounter any unfamiliar words so he was able to do a fantastic job. He also didn’t sound out any of the –ug or –un word family words. He would start with the initial sound or sounds, and then put the correct ending on there depending on the word. After he finished reading, he got an orange crayon (he always tried to match the crayon with the color book) to underline all of the –ug and –un words in the story to help him read it when he went home.

**Overall assessment and analysis of word family lessons:**

When Devun finished reading his final book, I reminded him of the DIBELS assessment that we had done when he first entered my classroom, and even got it out to show him that he had not been able to read any of it. Then I asked him if he felt like he had gotten better? He shook his head yes and gave me the smile I was beginning to see quite often. I agreed with him. We looked back at all of the books he had read over the course of the 5 mini lessons we had done on short vowel sounds. I tried to motivate him by showing him the types of books that I wanted him to start reading and he wanted to start reading as well. “Outstanding teachers invest substantial time and energy in supporting students’ motivation and engagement in reading…Engagement in reading refers to interaction with text that is simultaneously motivated and strategic”(Guthrie et. al, 2004). He still struggled on short “i" and short “e” so we spent a little bit more time on those before deciding to go ahead with the second set of lessons because “teachers must be willing to provide repeat instruction on target skills” (C-A-R-E-S approach, 1993). He did much better after we spent a little more time on those two short vowel sounds. Using the alphabet strip became one of the tools he referred back to when he got confused on a word. Every time he used the strip, he was able to figure out the word without asking me, or making a mistake. A small goal we set was that by the end of the short lessons, I wanted him to be able to recognize those letters by looking at the letters themselves, and memorizing their key word so that way when he was reading somewhere that didn’t have the alphabet strip for him to rely on, he would still be a successful reader.

**Description of sound manipulation lesson ap/ip:**

When we first began this lesson, I had to spend some time explaining the new activities because Devun had grown so accustomed to doing the same activities with the first set of lessons. I did inform him that the activity would be similar, but he was going to have to listen very carefully to make sure that he understood the directions, heard the word, and followed through with the expectations. **(Standard VI)** I had him lay out the letter tiles the same way he had done for the first set of lessons. He placed them in an arch, with the vowels flipped over so they were a different color. I then read him the word tap. He repeated it back to me and then pulled down the correct letter tiles on a blank index card in front of him. “children who perform well on sound awareness tasks often become successful readers” (Troia, 2004). When he completed that portion, I had him read the word back to me. I asked him what the medial sound was making and he gave me the short “a” sound. I then asked him to repeat the word “tip” to me. He did this, and I asked him to change whatever letters were necessary for him to make the new word from the word tap that he had already had on his index card. At first, he wanted to put tep. I had the alphabet strip out in front of him and I asked him to look at that if he needed a reminder. Once he looked at the alphabet strip and I had repeated the word “tip” again, he quickly switched the “e” for an “i". I asked him what the medial sound was and he gave me the short “i" sound. When I asked him why he had changed the letter from “e” to “i", he said it was because e says (short e sound) “e” and i says (short i sound) “i”. Since the word had the short “i" sound he knew it had to be the short “i". From there, I asked him to change tip to lip. I asked what sound changed and he told me the first sound. I asked if he would need to change the vowel i and he said no because the word lip had that same (short i) “i” sound. Next I asked him to change lip to lap. I asked where he noticed the word changed, “ in the beginning, the middle or the end”? He told me the middle. I had him change the word on his mat to the word he had just heard me say. He correctly identified that the medial sound had changed from short “i" to short “a”. I commended his correct answer, and asked him how he knew it was “a”. He was able to tell me because a makes the (short a sound) “a” which is the sound that he had heard in the middle. After the word lap, I had him change it to the word rap. He immediately changed the first letter from l to r. He then said rap out loud to me. The last word that I had him change was rap to rip. Again, he did a great job of changing only the middle sound from “a” to “i". He then read the word “rip” to me. I was very pleased with his ability to recall the short vowel sounds, as well as remember the difference between short “e” and short “i" after a friendly reminder. Overall, out of the 6 words, he was able to correctly spell 5 on the first try, and the 6th one after we discussed and reviewed the short “e” and short “i" sounds.

**Description of sound manipulation lesson en/un:**

After the first lesson we did on manipulating the sounds in words, I was eager to see how well Devun would do on the second set. Since I noticed that he still struggled with the short “e” and short “i" sounds, I was expecting him to have a little difficulty at first realizing that the letter e would be found in the –en word family words. I was pleasantly surprised to see him use his alphabet strip and correctly spell the word Ben when I gave it to him orally. I watched him pull down the letter b, and look at the strip before pulling down the e, and then quickly the n followed. I moved through the rest of the lesson and watched as he went between the –un word family words, and the –en word family words. He didn’t struggle the way that I thought he would and didn’t make the mistake of placing an “i" for an “e” on any of the words. He also started to show some confidence as he became more familiar with the activity, as well as the expectation for completing it. Since he had done so well with these two word families, I decided to have him review the -ap and -ip families he had done the previous day. He was able to demonstrate a strong understanding of them as well. He was successful in this lesson. On this lesson, out of the 6 words he spelled 6 correctly on the first try.

**Description of sound manipulation lesson ig/ug/og:**

Since Devun had done so well in the first two lessons, was becoming increasingly confident with each lesson, and displaying a strong understanding of manipulating the letter sounds, I was confident going into the third lesson in this set, that he would be able to recognize the three different vowels we were going to be focusing on. As we had done in the previous lessons, I had him set up his letter tiles, we reviewed the vowel sounds and then I orally gave him the first word, which was pig. This is a word that he knew right away because he had read a story about a pig for his book in a bag the night before. He pointed this out to me as he pulled down the correct letter tiles. Devun was beginning to realize the importance of print, and how it ties into many aspects of his life. He also had a chance to see how the more he read the more familiar he was becoming with words. Throughout this lesson, he was able to go through all of the words in this set with no problems until we got to the last word. Throughout this lesson, we were causally talking and doing the activity, and he was able to pull down the correct letter tiles. When we got to the last word, I said, “big”. He pulled down the letter tiles that spelled the word beg. I repeated the word again and annunciated the medial sound to see if he would catch his mistake. He left it. I then said each letter sound in the word big. “When designing and implementing phonological awareness activities include the phonetic characteristics of the sounds being manipulated and ways to reduce the cognitive demands of the task by modeling slow and exaggerated pronunciation of continuant sounds and use iteration of noncontinuant sounds” (Troia, 2004). I had him point to the letter tiles as I said the sounds. When I made the short “i" sound, he pointed to the “e”. I asked him what that letter said. He glanced at the alphabet strip and said the short “e” sound. I asked him what letter made the (short i sound) “i"? When he knew where I was heading with the questions, he pulled down the “i" and put the “e” back. I didn’t have to tell him which letter it was, he had figured it out on his own. All that I had done was use questions that guided him to figuring out the answer on his own. I was trying to give him the tools that he could use to assist him in reading on his own and I tried to motivate him to know that he could do it on his own. “One of the more important motivational beliefs for student achievement is self-efficacy, which concerns beliefs about capabilities to do a task or activity” (Linnenbrink, 2002). He was able to do this and apply it to his reading. Since there were three word families for this lesson there were 9 words for my student to spell correctly. Out of the 9 words he was able to spell 8 out of 9 correctly.

**Description of sound manipulation lesson et/at/ot:**

The final sound manipulation lesson consisted of 3 word families again. Devun seemed to have the short vowels “a” and “o” down without any issues. I wanted to focus the attention for this lesson on the –et family because I knew that he was continuing to struggle with deciphering between short vowel “e” and short vowel “i" and I wanted him to “refine the phonological awareness skills he had already acquired while learning the new phonological awareness skills” (Anthony and Francis, 2005). This lesson’s activity started off with the –at word pat, which he was able to spell correctly without any difficulty. The next word I had him listen to and spell was pet. I made sure to annunciate the medial sound so that he could try and decide on his own if it was going to be the short vowel “i" or the short vowel “e” that he would be using. He was able to pick up on the sound and knew that it was the “e” that was making the sound. He correctly spelled the word pet. He went through all of the words without making a single mistake. Out of the 9 words that he had to make, he made 9 of them correctly on the first try. This set even included the short vowel “e” and he still was successful at using the correct vowel, and not mistaking it for short “i".

**Overall assessment and analysis of manipulation lessons:**

From the beginning of this group of lessons, I watched Devun listening to the words that I said, and using the letter tiles to spell the word out on the mat. I watched as he used the tools that were available to him, such as the alphabet strip to help remind him of the short sounds that each vowel made. He was able to apply this to reading and identifying the sound within the word by spelling the words correctly. In the cases where he made a mistake, it was always with a word that had either an “e” or an “i" as the medial sound. As I mentioned before, when I was able to ask him guiding questions, he usually was able to come to the realization on his own as to which letter was in the middle. He used the alphabet strip to help him figure this out as well. Out of the 30 words that I asked him to spell and read correctly, he was able to spell and read 28 of them correctly on the first try. The other two words that he missed he was able to self-correct and then spell correctly on the second attempt.

**Conclusion and reflection**

Overall the lessons went very well. Devun went from knowing 3/52 primer sight words, and 0/41 first grade sight words. He also scored 0 words per minute on his DIBELS assessment. When I had finished the lessons, it was over a 3 week period of time during afterschool tutoring and sometimes during one on one class time. Shortly after the first few word family lessons, I began to send home small books for his book in a bag homework every night. They were books that he could read and that he wanted to read because “enjoyment of reading, exposure to the language in books, and attainment of knowledge about the world all accrue in greater measure to those who have learned how to read before the end of first grade” (Moats, 1999). The ability to decode words by using his short vowel knowledge, allowed him to read the words that he would have struggled with in the past. This also gave him a chance to be exposed to more text that he was able to read. As a result, he ended up scoring 16 words per minute on his DIBELS assessment in a matter of 4 weeks. He also had been able to learn all primer sight words and 39/41 of the first grade sight words. “The ability to sound out words is a major underpinning that allows rapid recognition of words ‘by sight’”, which could have been partially why his sight word recognition increased (Moats, 1999). One other thing that I noticed an positive increase in was his attitude. When I first had administered the test on the first day he came into my classroom, he was overwhelmed with the large paragraph that was on the page, even though I informed him that he wouldn’t need to read the whole thing but to do the best he could. He still only got 0 words per minute. This time, he sat up tall in his chair, put his tracking finger under the words, and I watched as he actually read the words on the page. He demonstrated knowledge of the relationship between letters and sounds to create words. In his case, “as whole words, morphemes, and print patterns became increasingly familiar, knowledge of these larger units of print allows students to read efficiently and spend less and less attention on sounding words out letter by letter (Moats, 1998). 16 words per minute is not anywhere near the 40 words per minute they are expected to be at by the end of first grade, but for him to make such a huge improvement in only 4 weeks, he was almost halfway to that mark. I let him know this and he was overjoyed. I also let him know that he was now able to read books with the rest of his reading group. When he got into my class, I had placed him in my lowest reading group however they were significantly higher than where he was. When Devun discovered that he would be taking home the same books as them I could tell that his confidence had completely gone up. He was no longer reading the small scholastic books, he was reading Biscuit books, and he was decoding unknown words by using the new reading strategies that he had learned over the course of the lessons.

As for the confusion between short “e” and “i", Devun continued to make the mistake, however it occurred fewer and farther between. In the past he was unsure of himself. Often he would try one sound and then immediately change it to the other one even though he might have read the word correctly the first time. After these lessons, he didn’t do that. Instead he took time to look at the letter and decide what sound it was. He also stopped using the aid of the alphabet strip. On the nonsense word fluency portion of the DIBELS assessment, he didn’t mistake an “e” or an “i" for the incorrect letter either. He had consistently made that mistake when I had first tested him in the class when he arrived.

**Next steps:**

Based on the success that I was seeing in Devun’s reading fluency when he worked with me, as well as on his DIBELS assessments, I have planned out where I want to go with him as far as mini lessons for the future. Since he shows a strong understanding of the letter sounds, including the short vowel sounds, and he displayed a minimal understanding of blends, that is the next set of lessons that I would like to do. I will continue to focus on word families, but instead of using single initial sounds, I will be having him focus on some of the common blends like st, bl, etc. The activities will be similar with a little bit more of a focus on the blends at the beginning. If that goes well, we will move into digraphs. To conclude, I will be hoping to have Devun reach the goal of 25 words per minute by the end of the year. Based on his progress this far, that is a reasonable goal and he may even exceed that with the amount of determination he has and the amount of hard work he has been putting into the process.

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