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<u>Case Study</u>

The case study student that I decided to do my research and observations on is a girl named Lucy. I chose her because when I first got into this 3ʳᵈ grade classroom at Riverside Elementary School I was instantly drawn to her. The reason being is she reminded me a lot of myself when I was younger. Her work efficacy and learning motivation was quite similar to myself, so I wanted to dissect it further.

Upon arrival into this classroom my dyad partner and I, Tera, decided to put a survey (artifact 1) together to get to know our students better, as well as grasp the types of learners they are. So to begin, I first want to introduce Lucy and her background, to give a visual of what type of student and learner she is. She is a Caucasian with naturally light tanned skin. She usually has her hair in a pony tail and dresses like an athlete. She loves to read, play video games, soccer, basketball, softball, kickball, and wants to be a mom when she grows up. After reading the part of the survey about how she likes to learn, I discovered that she works for personal achievement, works better individually rather than with other students, studies best when it is quiet, and learns best while sitting at a desk. As far as family background, she is one of seven children and most of her favorite memories of her family involve playing outside, usually sports.

One thing that is evident in Lucy, is her passion for reading. She loves to read! Every time I approach her while doing independent reading or reading with a partner, she tells me

about her latest favorite book. Another survey she took was the Garfield survey that identifies the student's attitude of reading. Every single question she answered was marked the highest rating. After she was about half way done marking the best on all the answers, she looked and me and said, "I just like to read!"

For Lucy, academics is one of her strengths. She's on a higher developmental level in comparison to her classmates. Most of the assessments and samples that I have gathered, range from on track, to above level. Lucy has excelled academically in her class and finishes all of her assignments (which is definitely better than some of her classmates). I have seen her grow throughout the course of the semester, but there are definitely specific things that if worked on, would greatly enhance her learning. Although she is intrinsically motivated, she has areas where she struggles. As much as she likes to get everything done, is advanced, and wants to accomplish everything that is asked of her, she also struggles a little bit with laziness. Lucy is capable of allot more than what is being expected of her. She's in her comfort zone and should be stretched to reach her potential. Just like the Zone of Proximal Development and the i+1 theory, she needs someone to push her beyond the point she already knows and is comfortable with, and then stretch her by adding new information. I think a lot of the work that she does in class is busy work and is just a check off her to-do list.

A lot of the student samples that I've gathered have showed and outlined Lucy's progression throughout the semester as well as her case of laziness. Each of these samples are centered around the study of literacy and through them I have come up with ways to be able to help her as a teacher both in content and instructional strategies that will help her succeed as a learner.

In artifact 2 Lucy was supposed to identify verbs and adjectives of a character and then on the back identify the similarities and differences of two different characters. Artifact 3 is the same exact worksheet but given a little later. In comparing them it is evident that Lucy has a stronger grasp on what verbs and adjectives are in the artifact 3. Her knowledge is more solidified and she is more accurate in her responses. However, there is still room for growth. For example, although she had responses on the backside of both of those artifacts when she was comparing and contrasting characters, her descriptions were really vague. For instance for one character difference she said the character had prickly and furry hair while the other character didn't have furry or prickly hair. While this answer is correct it would have been better if she was able to describe what the character had beside that furry and prickly hair, that way her description is more thorough and valuable. This shows that Lucy could definitely use some help in her higher level thinking. She is definitely capable, but needs the support.

Artifacts 4-9 really capture the advancement in Lucy's writing. Her sentence structure, syntax, and mechanics have developed more accurately. In artifact 4 her writing was simple and short and then the following artifacts show how her thoughts have been expanded. Artifacts 4-7 helped me identify her problems with the mechanics and sentence structure in writing. She has trouble with putting capitals, periods, and commas in the correct places. A lot of her possessive nouns were incorrect as well. Then in artifact 9 she was able to radiate her knowledge of possessive nouns. Finally in her Hero writing (artifact 9), her ability to write correctly was captured. Not completely correct, but it shows great improvement.

Artifacts 10 and 11 are assessments that were really fun for me to analyze and synthesize because the evidence was clear and her advancement was visual. The first one,

artifact 10, was an oral fluency assessment. This assessed her fluency and her words per minute. Throughout the minute she read, she self-corrected her reading three times and had no mistakes. When the time was up, she read 100 words per minute. This is really good for her age and development level. Miss Dutson, her teacher, has a goal for everyone to be between 80-90 words per minute. There are students both above her and below her, but she's definitely beyond level.

The DIBELS test is artifact 11. This test assesses words per minute, errors, accuracy, and comprehension. This is a more accurate measuring tool than the oral fluency assessment because it assesses three different stories with different difficulty levels and then takes the average. The first story she read 117 words per minute (WPM), the second 111, and the last one 105. Her average was 111 WPM with and accuracy of 99%. These numbers are outstanding. These two artifacts 10 and 11 were taken only a month a part and her fluency increased greatly. Although, with the DIBELS test her comprehension level was only a 1 out of 4, which is significantly low. This also relates back to what was stated earlier about higher level thinking. Thoughtfully thinking about the text you read is the most important aspect in literacy learning. This is an area that Lucy definitely needs help in.

The final artifact that I have for Lucy is Critchlow's Verbal Language Scales assessment. What this assessment does is it assesses the student's vocabulary and how vast it is. A more advanced vocabulary enables students to better comprehend what they read and hear as well as the ability to better express their thoughts. This assessment can be given in English or Spanish and is administered by having a word read to the student and the student defining that word by saying the opposite. She ended up getting a 44 on the test. This is really good! She's in

a 3rd grade classroom and she tested at a 7th grade vocabulary level! So she really is above average according to where she's supposed to be. Although, it doesn't mean she can't improve. For example, she stated that the opposite of raw is unraw, the opposite of stale is not stale, and the opposite of imprisoned is out of prison. These are a few words that Lucy struggled with. Lucy can gain more higher level thinking strategies. While talking to Ms. Dutson she brought this to my attention because she said the one of the biggest things that the students are doing right now is being lazy on their vocab charts. They are supposed to define words by showing antonyms and synonyms. They don't look up the words in the dictionary, but rather add un, de, or non, in front of the words to make them the opposite. This requires little thinking.

While observing and analyzing Lucy's work all semester I have some recommendations and have come to the conclusion of 2 things. The first one involves the content. Throughout all the samples and the artifacts it was evident that Lucy needs some guidance to learn how to use a higher order of thinking. This skill will help her in all of her schooling and especially in literacy. For example when Lucy took the DIBELS test, her comprehension was at a level one. When she reads she needs to be able to thoughtfully look at the text and draw conclusions to what the meanings are. This skill will not only help in her reading, but also in her vocabulary and writing. Her understanding of words will then be heightened and her critical thinking process will be broadened.

The second thing I've come to the conclusion about deals with the instruction. Lucy is a student that, although she is very intrinsically motivated, she needs that praise and recognition from the teacher to keep her productively moving forward. If I were her teacher I would definitely incorporate this knowledge into my teaching. I've noticed throughout my time at Riverside, the more attention I, Tera, or her teacher gave her, the more willing she was to do

was asked and she'd also push herself harder. When participating and talking to the class, she speaks very quiet, almost like she's not confident. This is another reason I feel she needs that recognition and personal attention. Most importantly though as her teacher I would really assist and support her higher leveled learning. She needs to have challenging work in her academic progress, but yet still motivating. She has the knowledge and skills, they just need to be channeled into the right direction. By doing this I can see her succeed and apply herself more fully to invest in her learning.