Jennifer E. Litts   February 27, 2009
Graduate Exceptional Students
Lesson Plan Reflection

What went well in your lesson?

In general, I am extremely happy with how my mini-lesson went. The game itself was a huge success in my classroom; basically all of the students in my kindergarten classroom wanted to play because they loved the movie. I got a great deal of comments such as: "I have that movie!" "I have a Lightning McQueen car!" and "Can I play that?" But my target student, Mr. Z, was *ecstatic* about the game. He generally has a very hard time staying on task, but I genuinely believe his love of the Disney movie Cars really kept him working.

I had two different sessions held with my target student. On Tuesday this past week, I organized a group of three and then a group of four students (both including Mr. Z) to play the Cars Counting game in the kindergarten core. This was the day observed by my CT. From my pre-assessment, I knew that Mr. Z could not count accurately beyond 13, so I decided to attempt counting up to 15 in the first game and then pushed it to 20 in the second. Mr. Z was excited to participate and did not show the littlest bit of dissatisfaction that he did not win either of these games. From working with these students, I found some strengths and weaknesses with Mr. Z's classmates, but more importantly, I learned that Mr. Z has trouble not only recalling numbers in order, but he also could not read some of the numbers and certain numbers (specifically 14 and 15) did not exist to him.

In the second session (today), I decided to try to implement the intervention more as it was described in the research; therefore I played the game one-on-one with Mr. Z. I know that this is not realistic in the classroom, but I wanted to see how much it might actually help him. I also felt that it would address some of the issues I was having with Mr. Z in the first session, which I will describe later. In this second session, Mr. Z. was again very excited. He had seen that I had the game earlier in the day and told me, "Ms. Litts, thank you for making the Cars game. It is my favorite game to play ever." (That really touched me.) This time when we played, I had him point to and count by himself how many spaces he had moved total after each turn, and I also had him point to and count with me how many spaces total I had moved after each turn. Though I even felt this was a little tiresome, Mr. Z was highly motivated and never gave any resistance to counting. If he made a mistake while counting (which was always above 10), we would go back to 10 and he would start counting again. I also had him really look at the numbers to try to figure it out, and he made an effort. After several times, he started correcting himself after saying the wrong number, and later on he even made it through counting up to 20 correctly a few times.

I conducted a post-assessment with Mr. Z today, and I am very happy to report that he counted accurately through 14! And even though he skipped 15 still, he proceeded to count accurately up to 20! He also said the numbers more clearly and I feel that having him physically point at each space on the board as we counted helped slightly with his one-to-one matching because that seemed somewhat more accurate this time. These improvements are really not hugely impressive, but I believe that if Mr. Z could play this game on a regular basis, he could be counting accurately to 30 rather soon.

What could have gone better? Why?

During the first session on Tuesday, I was happy that my CT suggested that I have the students count all the spaces that they had moved after each turn. This allowed them to concentrate more on counting skills than reading the numbers. Therefore I feel that, although this could have been a problem, the issue was resolved before it developed. The biggest issue I had was keeping Mr. Z focused on counting and not talking about the Cars movie or on things going on around him. When it was his turn, he played well and counted, but totally lost focus when it was another student's turn to play. He flopped in his chair, and even fell onto the floor twice. I have seen this behavior in him before, and I know it is because he gets distracted and has poor impulse control. Because of this lack of focus between turns, I strongly felt that Mr. Z was not gaining as much from the experience as he could. Therefore, I decided to do the intervention once again in a one-to-one format before administering the post-assessment.

What would you do differently the next time?

The next time I use this game with Mr. Z and other students, I believe that I might be able to keep him better focused if I ask all the students to count the numbers aloud at the same time. Mr. Z responded well to counting aloud with me, and I believe that he will become less distracted while waiting for his turn to come around again if he is required to pay more attention to his peers.

Also, the students with whom I had Mr. Z play the game are students who likewise need help and assistance. I think that once Mr. Z has some practice to be rather accustomed to playing the game, he can play with other students who do not need assistance to play. These students can serve as models for his behavior as well as peer tutors if he has difficulties. Ideally, however, I feel that this intervention best serves Mr. Z through one-on-one administration as was suggested in the research.

Jennifer E. Litts   February 15, 2009

Title: Counting with Cars!
Grade: Kindergarten
Subject Area: Mathematics - Specifically counting skills.
Content of the Lesson ("big picture"):
       This lesson is meant to improve the counting skills of students. Correctly counting is vitally important in mathematics. If a student does not know the correct order of numbers, then he will have a very hard time doing any other mathematics including counting objects, skip-counting, or simple addition/subtraction.
Why this intervention:
       Mr. Z is a student who is developmentally delayed. Among the content areas in which he is struggling, math is especially difficult. According to his IEP, he has trouble processing information, and both the special education teacher and general education teacher have found that Mr. Z cannot count accurately. This intervention is based on the article *Playing linear board games promotes low-income children's numerical development* by Siegler and Ramani and is meant to improve Mr. Z's ability to count accurately.
Intervention Objective:
       After repeatedly participating in counting game, the student will successfully count from 1 to 10 along an unnumbered path with 90% accuracy.
Duration: Several games/ as many as time allows.
Related SOL's:
       K.5 The student will count forward to 30 and backward from 10.
Materials: Cars Counting Game game-board, spinner, and game pieces for four students, and counting bears.
Format: Small group mini-lesson.
Procedures:
1) Up to four students can play the game at once. Students should each sit at a corner of the game board. To begin, either the teacher can pick who should go first, or a name can be randomly drawn. The teacher should also determine the target number which will signal the end of the game. This should be based on the results of the targeted student's pre-assessment needs.
2) Each child has their own game piece and path to follow. For this version of the game, the students will begin on the Cars logo.
3) After using the spinner to get the number of spaces to be moved, the active student should move his game piece while counting the numbers on the space aloud.
4) Each student takes a turn (clockwise order) spinning and moving their pieces.
5) On the following turns, the students count on from their current positions. For example, if a student in on 4 and needs to move two spaces, he would say, "5, 6."
6) Students will continue taking turns spinning and counting aloud until on person reaches the target number. The game may continue if students want to determine a second, third, and/or fourth place.

Note: If any student makes a mistake saying the correct numbers, the teacher should direct the student's attention to the mistake, demonstrate, and then have the student count again.

Evaluation:
Pre-assessment: Ask student to count as high as he can using counting bears and take note of where he begins to incorrectly name numerals.
Formative: Make observations of students' performance during counting game activity. Intervene when mistakes are made and continue to monitor.
Summative: Ask student to count as high as he can using counting bears and look to see if there is any measurable improvement in counting ability after several games.

Differentiation:
1) The board is made for each student to play on a path of 30 spaces. As students master counting from 1-10, the target number can be increased to 15, 20, 25, and finally 30. This allows students to continue using the game as they develop their skills.
2) Students who need extra help can be paired with a partner for a variation of the game. The paths in opposite corners of the game board match, so students with matching paths can be considered a team. In order to win, both players much reach the target number. If one student struggles with counting, their partner can help them. This extension of the game also allows the game to last longer and all students to count higher.
3) Not all students need to be moving their pieces in the same direction. For students who have mastered counting upward, their game pieces can begin at the higher number and count backwards down to 1.

Accommodation:
1) To increase target student's exposure to the game, allow him to play repeatedly with several different groups of students.
2) Provide target student with sufficient time to respond and make sure to encourage correct responses with positive reinforcement through praise.
3) The game board theme was specifically chosen to be of high interest and especially motivating to the target student, Mr. Z. He can also be motivated to have active participation in the game through a reward system if he can demonstrate his effort in counting.
4) Mr. Z will play this game counting upwards from 1 and, at first, to a number he can reach on his own so that he can feel successful. Then he will be guided toward working beyond that.