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Teaching Phonics Mastery Through the Use of Differentiated and Instructional Strategies

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University Honors Capstone

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Senior Honors Project/Thesis

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Abstract

This capstone reports the effectiveness of using differentiated instructional and assessment strategies to improve student understanding in phonics mastery. Based on pretest data that analyzed understanding of short u consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words, phonics instruction was implemented to meet the needs of students in whole-group and small-group settings. This unit consisted of five whole-group lessons over short u blending and segmentation. In addition to the whole group learning, specific students were pulled for small-group intervention. The unit concluded with a post-assessment that tested student understanding on real and nonsense CVC words; these assessments were implemented to assess if the integration of nonlinguistic representation and scaffolding improved student understanding. After reviewing and analyzing student information, data shows that learning increased when engaging instructional strategies were implemented into lessons. I found that feedback, nonlinguistic representations turn-and-talks, and scaffolding support student understanding of phonics mastery.

Keywords: phonological mastery, phonemic awareness, turn-and-talks, scaffolding, nonlinguistic representations, feedback

Background

I completed my clinical practice placement at Prairie Wind Elementary school within the Omaha Public Schools District. Prairie Wind is considered a Title I school with a staff population of 53 certified staff members. The phonics unit was conducted in a first-grade classroom under the supervision of my cooperating teacher, Sarah Monaco, who has taught as a first-grade teacher for 22 consecutive years. Under her guidance, we looked at the need of our

student population and determined that my research would be centered around phonics mastery to enhance student understanding of short vowel segmentation and blending.

Introduction

The purpose of this unit was to determine if the integration of nonlinguistic representation and scaffolding would improve student understanding of phonemic awareness. I referenced the following guiding question throughout this research process: "*How does student performance regarding phonics instruction improve when direct phonics instruction and purposeful instructional strategies* such *as nonlinguistic representation and stations are integrated into the curriculum?*" I specifically focused on using scaffolding as my main instructional strategy and integrating feedback and nonlinguistic representation to use as practical assessment strategies.

I formulated four objectives that guided my planning of instruction and simultaneously tested student understanding of phonemic capabilities relating to blending, segmentation, and dictation. In conjunction with our curriculum pacing guide, we centered each lesson around short vowel sounds; students were assessed over their knowledge of the short u sound. The first objective prompted students to blend short u words utilizing nonlinguistic representation by blending fifteen words in a small group setting. In contrast, the second objective prompted students to segment short u words utilizing nonlinguistic representation by segmenting fifteen words in a whole group setting. The third objective was completed through pre-assigned station groups; students dictated and counted the number of phonemes in a word through the utilization of Elkonin boxes and play-dough kinesthetic sensory bins. The final objective prompted students to identify short u words by correctly sounding out six of the ten given words from the post assessment; this serves as a quantitative indicator to view individual progress.

The unit began with a pretest of ten questions. Each individual student was given a list with ten words and were prompted to verbally sound out ten real and nonsense words with a short u sound. Students were encouraged to blend and segment their sounds with their fingers or arms; this is a kinesthetic concept that aids students in putting sounds together and pulling sounds apart. This directly aligns with my first objective where students blend and segment short u words utilizing nonlinguistic representation (their hands and fingers.) I documented the number of words that students got right out of 10 for both the real (5) and nonsense words (5) on a spreadsheet. Following the analysis of the pre-test, I divided my intervention groups into three groups: students who received a score of 10, students who received a score between 7-9, and students who received a score of 0-6.

Having access to student response scored aided me in formulating intervention small groups and providing learners with content-appropriate materials and feedback. Students received five-whole group lessons within the unit; I also created station rotations that allowed me to meet with two intervention groups each afternoon. On the last day of the unit, I administered a posttest assessment that was identical to the pretest. The test results were documented and used to develop subsequent lessons within our classroom learning environment.

Instructional Strategies

Turn and Talks

Educators must make conscious efforts to implement the instructional strategies of turn and talks, partner work, and general student-centered dialogue and discussion to create a rich learning environment for students. These strategies when implemented can "increase the dialogic nature of classrooms" and improve comprehension through collaboration and strategic conversations (Boelé & Klingner, 2018, p.175). Boelé and Klingner (2018) asserted that turn and

talks are more effective when there is a higher ratio of student talk to teacher talk and less conversation that is solely meant to give information to students.

The steps of a turn and talk begin with prompting the students with a question or word. The students are to independently reflect on the question or prompt being asked of them. From there, the students pair up with a pre-assigned partner and discuss the answers they have developed. They then they share their results and defend their answer by providing a reason for their response. Finally, the students share their answer within the small-group or whole-group instruction and compare and check answers.

Stibbard (2020) conducted a study where she implemented a range of dialogic strategies that promoted student talk. She found that classrooms with a variety of functional dialogic environments produced "increased opportunities for students voices to be heard" (Stibbard, 2020, p. 4). Stibbard (2020) also noted that "this challenge is fundamental to changing practices to actively promote classrooms where students have a voice and are able to talk their way to understandings and to learn from each other and from their teachers" (Stibbard, 2020, p. 6). As a whole, turn and talks created a strong community where student voices could be heard through whole group, small group, and partner work interactions.

<div align="center">Scaffolding</div>

Another instructional strategy that supports teachers in their quest to create comprehensive educational content is the integration of scaffolding strategies for student understanding. Scaffolding techniques are developed when an educator establishes a framework of foundational knowledge and then builds upon that framework to create more complex knowledge. Scaffolding is a multi-step process of sequencing the activities in the unit to benefit the learning needs of the students. At the beginning of the process, the teacher provides many

supports, including but not limited to kinesthetic movement, nonlinguistic representation, and alphabetical letter and sound review. From there, teacher support gradually decreases so that students can interact with the content material independently.

Wilcox and Richey (2012) proposed that educators should make their academic activities concrete and engaging. Educators can determine if scaffoldings are developmentally engaging and appropriate by limiting their concepts to ones that are visual and engaging. They noted that educators should create content that can be "scaffolded effectively and are developmentally appropriate" (p.67). They suggested that scaffolding activities must be clear, visible, and developmentally appropriate. They found that creative scaffolding incorporation led to meaningful reflections on learning for both students and teachers. When one integrates creativity and appropriate scaffolding into curriculum, students are more engaged and prouder of their work.

Scaffolding presents valuable opportunities for students to analyze their own work to generate deeper understanding of insight and findings. When educators scaffold to meet the needs of learners, they provide them with specific and differentiated supports that set them up for success.

Assessment Methods

Nonlinguistic Representation

Within their learning process, students receive and process information on both linguistic and nonlinguistic levels. To support their learning, teachers integrated the instructional strategy of nonlinguistic representations to support their learning.

Nonlinguistic representation is defined as any supportive strategy that has a visual component and that identifies critical learning information. Nonlinguistic representation forms

include but are not limited to graphic organizers, flowcharts, concept maps, sketches, and simulations. The integration and utilization of graphic organizers, concept maps, and sketches supported diverse learning processes in numerous content areas.

Lott and Read (2015) explored how nonlinguistic representation can be a functional tool that helps students "understand the steps and patterns within complex processes [and] explain and describe the steps in a procedure" (pg. 49). They found that one of the most powerful nonlinguistic representation tools are graphic organizers as they present students with opportunities to "visualize patterns and organize their ideas within the different genres of writing" (p. 47). Furthermore, these graphic organizers "provide links to students' prior knowledge when learning new knowledge" (p. 51). In addition to graphic organizers, concepts maps are an effective assessment method to include in a classroom setting. Eshuis et al (2021) reported that "concept maps can help students overcome challenges of accurate knowledge monitoring and thus foster learning" (p. 350). They investigated the effectiveness of concept maps embedded in lessons. In their study they split students into two groups (one with concept maps and one without) and discovered that students who had access to concept maps "significantly increased their knowledge in all conditions… and further analysis showed that students in the experimental conditions demonstrated higher learning gains if they consulted the combined concept map more often than their peers" (Eshuis et al, p. 350). Their research supports the idea that concept maps are a highly effective nonlinguistic tool that promotes student learning and facilitates self-directed learning growth, if supported with strong instructional teaching.

<div align="center">Feedback</div>

Feedback gives teachers opportunities to communicate to students what they have done in their learning and what they need to do to improve it further. Feedback can provide students with clear insight on their educational growth and personal progress and helps them come up with ideas on how they can progress in subjects. Kia et al (2023) recognizes that effective feedback "should offer an assessment of task performance against a shared understanding of standards. It is crucial to include the informative component in the feedback to explain recommendations for the learner's next steps" (pg. 861).

Kia et al (2023) asserted that there are ample opportunities to collect student data and "bring new insights into student learning processes" (p. 860). She conducted a study where instructors provided personal feedback for students using an app called 'OnTask'. After collecting data from 99 courses and 19,385 students, their findings revealed that "there is a significant association between the topics of feedback and students with different performance" (p. 860). Kia et al (2023) noted that students who received personalized and encouraging feedback continued to improve, whereas students who received minimal feedback remained stagnant in growth and had minimal personal motivation to put forth effort in their performance. She noted that it is important to provide effective feedback to support students and their morale and this can be accomplished through individual meetings, verbal encouragement, and access to concrete learning tactics and strategies.

Ion et al (2019) conducted a study that analyzed the benefits of giving and receiving feedback to one-hundred and eighty-eight students. The results indicated that, "after providing feedback, the students perceived a better learning experience and an increased sense of commitment to their own learning and their colleagues" (p. 124). They found that feedback promoted motivation and pride in students' personal understanding of educational subjects.

Furthermore, they recognize that feedback will "promote active learning and the development of skills related to teamwork, verbal communication, negotiation, and diplomacy" (p. 127)

Participants

This study was conducted with 26 students in a first-grade classroom at Prairie Wind Elementary School. There were twelve boys and twelve girls. 42.3% of students are Caucasian, 38.5% are African American, 15.4% come from Asian descent, and 3.8% are Hispanic. Three of the students are on an Individualized Education Plan to support their speech and language needs. Six of the students, identified as English Language Learners, speak languages other than English, including French, Arabic, Nepali, Persian, and Farsi.

Methods and Materials

Instructional Methods

This unit aligned with the following Nebraska State Standards:

- **LA.1.F.2** Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).

- **LA.1.F.3** Know and apply phonics and word analysis skills in decoding and encoding (spelling) words.

- **LA.1.FW.1** Demonstrate and apply handwriting skills.

- **LA.1.FW.2** Demonstrate sound-letter concepts when writing.

From these standards, I created objectives that aligned with the content during whole-group and small-group instruction. On day one, I administered a ten-question pre-test (Appendix A) to each student; this helped me to determine individual understanding of CVC sounds. Each participant was instructed to verbally sound out ten real and nonsense words that had the short u sound. Students were instructed to take their time and use any strategy

that benefitted them. They did not receive any prompting or assistance from me or my cooperating teacher.

Following analysis of the pre-test data I created three intervention groups based on their pre-test scores. Students that scored 10/10 were placed in a high ability group, the middle ability group scored 7/10, 8/10, or 9/10 on the pre-test, and the low ability group scored 6/10 or less on the pre-test. I determined that all students would receive whole-group phonics instruction in the morning, and I would meet with each small group for twenty-minutes in the afternoon to differentiate to their instructional needs.

After the pre-test, I implemented five days of phonics instruction. I began each lesson using an OPS-provided phonics mastery guide entitled "HMH into Reading Mastery Guide" (Appendix B). Each unit consisted of five days of lessons centered around blending and segmenting words and identifying short vowel sounds at the beginning, middle, and end of a word. I utilized differentiated instructional strategies throughout the unit. I incorporated the gradual release model of instruction, as well as kinesthetic movement activities to keep the students engaged in the lessons.

In the afternoon, I created three stations that the students rotated through during their intervention block. Each station lasted for twenty minutes and gave all three of the student groups an opportunity to work independently, with a teacher, and with technology. Each station focused on a specific objective that was targeted for small-group instruction. These objectives can be viewed below:

- Day 1: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to blend and segment fifteen short u CVC words in whole group with 70% accuracy.

- Day 2: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to dictate and count the number of phonemes in three out of five words accurately.

- Day 3: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to complete an exit ticket where they dictate 3 out of the 5 CVC words given on a sticky note.

- Day 4: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to independently complete a Kahoot with 75% accuracy.

- Day 5: By the end of unit, students will be able to identify short u words by correctly sounding out six of the ten given words from the post assessment.

<div align="center">Instructional Materials</div>

In station one, the students were instructed to utilize the intervention app called Amira. Amira is an online intervention that assesses oral reading fluency, gives students reading and speaking practice, and documents student data for district and teacher access. I found this app to be beneficial because it gave students' opportunities to practice reading out loud. The app also included a variety of stories that the students could read that aligned with consonant-vowel-consonant word practice.

In station two, the students independently completed packets that aligned with their intervention group level. Each day, I printed different worksheets and placed them in colorful tubs. Group One (high ability group) utilized activities in a pink tub, Group 2 (middle ability group) utilized activities in a green tub, and Group Three (low ability group) utilized activities in a blue tub. The tubs had interactive worksheets that extended their knowledge from the morning's activity or gave them extra practice from a previous day.

On day one of the unit, students were given a pre-written list of CVC short u words and a worksheet with space to write different words. Students wrote each word down in white

crayon, and then colored over their words to reveal the hidden words. As they wrote each word, they blended the word using the fingers. I differentiated the lesson by giving each group a different number of words. The middle and high ability groups wrote both real and nonsense words while the low ability group only wrote real words.

On day two of instruction the low and middle ability groups completed a matching activity. The activity required them identify sounds to letters using an alphabet chart (Appendix C). The groups practiced saying the letter name, letter sound, and a word that began with that letter sound (ex. A, ah, apple, B, buh, bear). The groups then completed a worksheet that corresponded with the images. The high ability group completed a worksheet that required them to first identify a picture of a short u CVC object and then they were to fill in the missing beginning and ending sound to form a whole word. On days three through five, the students received a specific packet with activities that aligned with what they were learning in small group. The student work samples gave me quantitative data to assess seeing how each student best understood the objective of the lesson. If a student finished the task early, they were instructed to go onto their Amira intervention app to keep them engaged.

When students arrived at station three, they worked with me. During station three I used the "Phonics Mastery Guide- Ready to Use Lessons for Reading Success" (Appendix D) to guide my instruction. Each group began by blending, or combining different sounds, and then segmenting, or breaking words into individual sounds. From there, we reviewed the short a, e, and u sounds and how they could be found at the beginning, middle, or end of a word. The students then completed a blending activity where they isolated letter sounds to create a word. I wrote a letter on the board and told them to tell me a sound, and then repeated the process for the second letter. Once students said both sounds, they blended the sounds together. I wrote down a third letter and

asked students to say both sounds, then had students say the entire word. This strategy helped the students recognize that each letter had an individual sound, or phoneme, that could be manipulated to create a word.

My middle and low ability students dictated words on Elkonin boxes. The Elkonin boxes are a graphic organizer that students wrote and broke down a word and put each phoneme into a box. Students touched the corresponding dots and blended the word as I checked for accuracy and completion. See Appendix E to see a student sample of a dictation exercise. My high ability group read short stories that integrated short u sounds. Following the reading of the short stories the completed an activity where they "text tagged" information that was pertinent to the story structure and organization. The high ability students were given an opportunity to practice text tagging independently by completing a packet in station two.

Based on the pretest data, I spent most of whole-group instruction giving students strategies to segment and blend words. The students struggled to blend nonsense words because they had not encountered them through text or oral communication. The students practiced blending and segmenting words with their arms, fingers, Elkonin boxes, and Play Dough. On the final day of instruction, students prepared for the post-test by participating in a Kahoot review game.

Instructional Strategies: Scaffolding and Turn and Talks

I integrated multiple research-based instructional and assessment strategies throughout my unit to support student comprehension. To begin with, I integrated scaffolding strategies into whole-group and small-group instruction to elevate student engagement and independence. I intentionally created stations with visually engaging activities that were developmentally

appropriate. Students were able to see a modeled example and then we practiced completing a portion of the worksheet or activity together. From there, students broke into small groups or worked independently to practice putting the concepts into motion. I used scaffolding to create clear, visual, and developmentally appropriate activities.

I also incorporated the instructional strategy called turn and talks. In this strategy, the students read a passage and then were asked to orally share their thought processes with their partners. This instructional strategy promoted cooperative learning, critical thinking, and constructive communication between peers. I implemented this strategy by having students check their answers in Station 3. Students paired up with a pre-assigned partner and read their dictation answer to one another. The first student used the following script to state their answer: I hear the ___ (ex. uh) sound, and I know that the letter ___ (ex. U) makes the ___ (ex. uh) sound so I wrote it in the first/second/third box." The second student either agreed with their response or disagreed and gave their opinion. At the end of each word, I provided the students the answer and they adjusted accordingly. The partners would then switch roles until the next activity. I found that this strategy was effective because students had to justify their responses and think about their work on a deeper level.

Assessment Strategies: Nonlinguistic Representation and Feedback

I used the assessment strategy of nonlinguistic representation to enhance the lessons and increase student engagement and understanding. Students used a variety of physical models throughout the unit, including but not limited to alphabet charts, white boards, Elkonin boxes, packets, and phoneme tiles. These visual components assisted the students in learning information about CVC.

I also used feedback to assess student understanding and foster genuine relationships with students on a one-to-one level. I observed student work samples in their pre-test and packet samples and individually met with students when I noticed that they didn't fully grasp a concept. I also held "speed-conferences" on Day 3 of the unit instruction. I met with every student to give them a strength and growth point to work on during small groups. As I interacted with the students and became accustomed to their specific needs, I was able to personalize my feedback and give them goals that challenged them as individual scholars. My specific and personal feedback gave each student a clear insight on their educational growth and personal progress and helped them come up with ideas on how they can progress in further phonics concepts.

On day four of the unit, I integrated a second feedback activity during whole class review. During whole class instruction all students participated in a Kahoot review game. During the game I would pause to review the answers for each question. I used a random name generator to call on a student to share their response to a posed question. When called on, the students were asked to explain their answer and why they chose that as the answer. If the answer was correct, I would affirm them and make sure that other classmates understood his or her logic. If the student response was incorrect, I would highlight an aspect of the question that they understood and call on another student to help explain what the correct answer was and why. This method was effective because it fostered a community dynamic and gave students exposure to student-led phonics strategies.

On the last day of instruction, I administered the post-test (Appendix A). The post-test had ten questions and it was the same test as the pretest. I met with each student and recorded their data on an Excel sheet to determine if and how the scores had improved within the instructional unit.

Results/Analysis

Figure 1

Pre-Assessment

Q#	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12
TCQ	9	10	8	2	0	10	9	3	6	9	9	0

Correct:
Incorrect:

Q#	S13	S14	S15	S16	S17	S18	S19	S20	S21	S22	S23	S24
	10	6	9	8	8	9	6	3	8	5	0	10

Q#: Question Number, S#: Students Numbers, & TCQ: Total Questions Correct

Note. Figure 1 illustrates the pretest question/student correct answer ratio.

I organized my data into two groups so student samples can be easily seen. Figure 1 shows the pre-test data for students 1-12 and Figure 2 shows the pre-test data for students 13-24. The horizontal axis space is each student and on the last row, it lists the total score correct (out of 10). The vertical axis shows the question numbers (1-10). Correct answers are documented in black and incorrect answered are documented in yellow. This table helped me plan for instruction because it gave me visual insight over the questions that students struggled with or understood from previous knowledge and instruction. It also helped me visualize how to group my students into corresponding intervention groups.

Figure 2

Post-Assessment

Q#	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												
	10	10	9	9	0	10	10	8	10	9	10	0

	Correct: (black)
	Incorrect: (yellow)

Q#	S13	S14	S15	S16	S17	S18	S19	S20	S21	S22	S23	S24
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												
	10	8	10	10	10	10	8	6	9	6	0	10
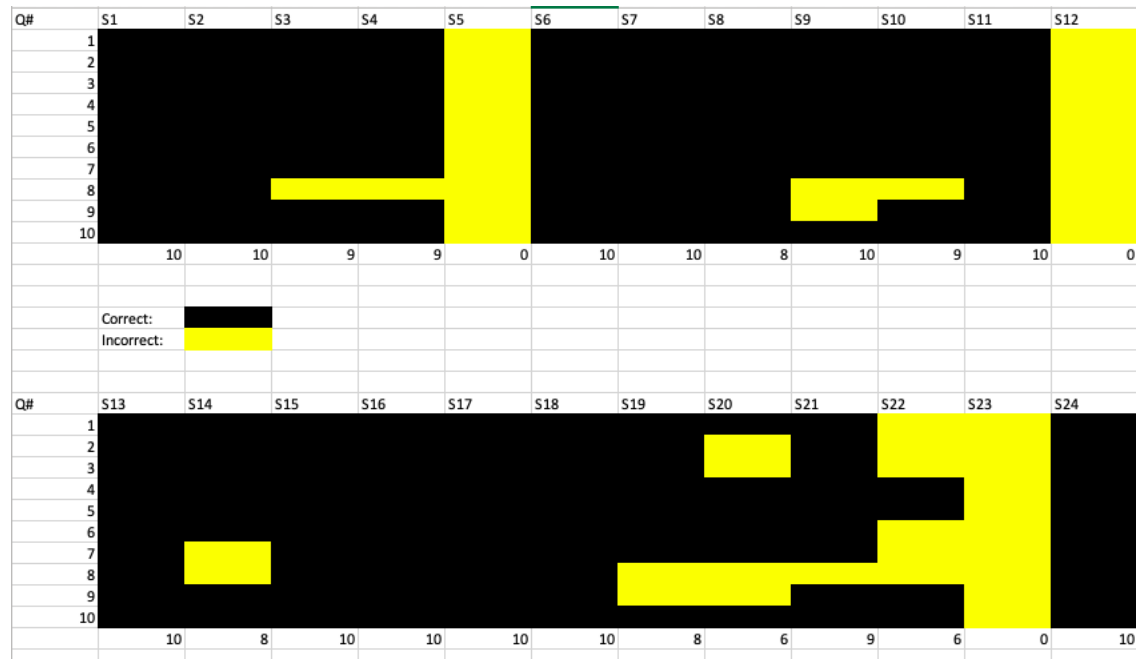
Q#: Question Number, S#: Students Numbers, & TCQ: Total Questions Correct

Note. Figure 2 shows the post-test question/student correct answer ratio.

The data is organized into two groups where the post-test data can be viewed for students 1-12 are seen on top and data for students 13-24 are seen on the bottom. The horizontal axis space is each student and on the last row and it lists the total score correct (out of 10). The vertical axis shows the question numbers (1-10). Correct answers are documented in black and incorrect answered are documented in yellow. Figure 2 highlights the visual and quantitative progress students made from the pre-test to the post-test. This data helps me recognize personal growth points and the new knowledge they have regarding phonics mastery.

Figure 3

Pre and Post Test Scores
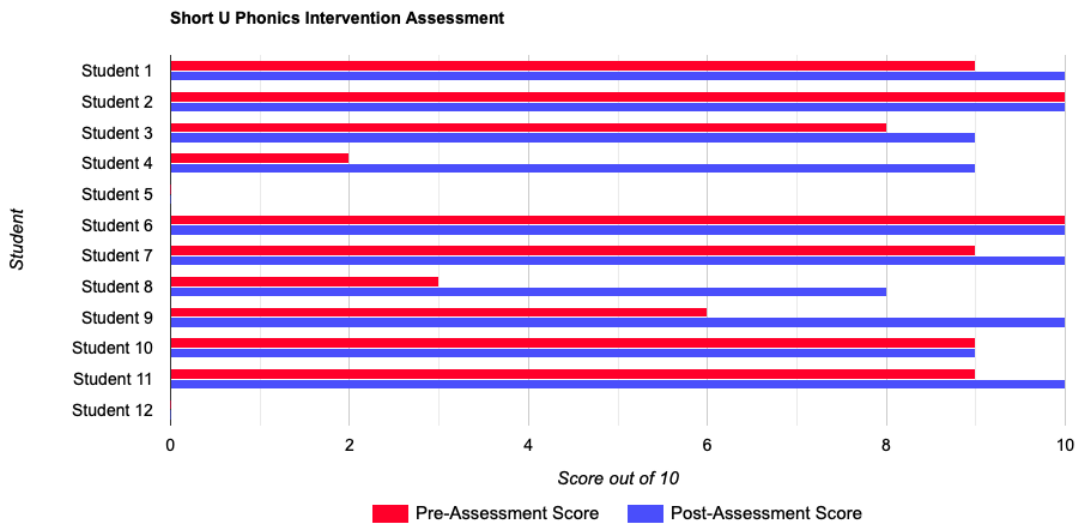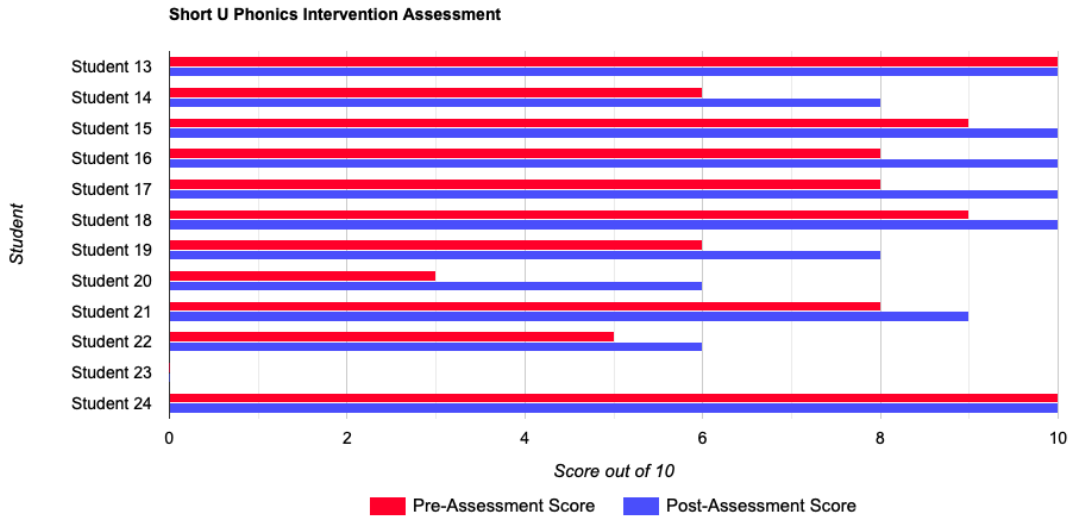
Note. Figure 3 is a double bar graph that represents students' overall improvement for the unit that was taught. The data is organized into two groups where the post-test data can be viewed for students 1-12 is seen on top and data for students 13-24 is seen on the bottom. The horizontal axis shows the pre-assessment score, which is documented in blue. It also shows the post-assessment score, which is documented in red. The vertical axis labels the student and their respective score analysis.

Discussion and Conclusions

Twenty-six students completed the pre-assessment. The pre-assessment scores provided me with information I needed to make instructional decisions regarding the support students would require during the unit. I used the pre-assessment scores to create three phonics intervention groups. I assigned each student a number 1-26 to assist in placing students in like intervention groups. Each group contained 6-10 students. In each group, I used various differentiation instructional practices to support their understanding of short vowel sounds.

Group 1 had eight students: 2, 6, 13, and 24. I also placed students 7, 10, 11, and 15 in Group 1 because they correctly identified 9/10 words and had strong reading comprehension. For Group 1 I began each lesson by reviewing the content completed during whole group instruction. Students were asked to identify short vowel sounds for the following vowels: A, E, I, O, and U. They were also asked to blend and segment ten words. I created an extension activity that challenged their knowledge and gave them opportunities to work with partners and independently. At the end of the intervention, I modeled how to complete their station two activity pack and utilized the gradual release model to give them opportunities to practice the content. For example, I had the students fill in the missing beginning and ending sound of a CVC word to create a word with beginning, middle, and ending parts. Students in Group 1 began with

intervention small groups, then transitioned to their independent worksheet stations. They ended their last station on Amira.

Group 2 included students 1, 3, 16, 17, 18, and 21. I also placed students 9, 14, and 19 into this group because they correctly identified 6/10 words. I created this group of nine students as their pre-assessment scores indicated they would benefit from further practice from direct instruction. I made this decision with approval of my cooperating teacher. She agreed that additional direct instruction would encourage them and increase their proficiency in phonics. Group 2 received grade direct instruction from the Phonics Mastery guide script (Appendix D). Students identified the short vowel sounds U and A and blended and segmented ten words before ending the small group with dictation practice. This group began with Amira, transitioned into their independent worksheet stations, and ended with small group intervention. These students showed extensive progress in understanding the content, as seen in the analysis of their pre-test and post-test scores.

Group 3 included students 4, 5, 8, 12, 20, 22, and 23. This was a very diverse group that was a combination of students who had scores between 0-6. Group 3 included two students who were nonverbal. This group required additional instruction. This group primarily received grade direct instruction from the Phonics Mastery guide script that focused on the identification of short vowel u sounds. Group 3 did not have mastery of letters and sounds, so I created content related to matching letters to their corresponding sounds. Group 3 began with independent worksheet stations, transitioned to small group intervention, and ended with Amira.

Groups 1-3 received additional instructional and assessment strategies to guide their learning. Through modeling and nonlinguistic exposure, students began to use their blending and segmentation strategies in small-group instruction, independent instruction, and within the post-

assessment. The students thrived off structure and consistently. I kept the group schedules the same, followed a specific format in small groups, and provided individuals with specific, achievable feedback that could be implemented immediately.

Using the pre-test and post-test data to gauge quantitative gains, I recognized that my instructional strategies were effective in increasing student comprehension. The integration of kinesthetic and tactile resources introduced students to phonics intervention and gave them valuable opportunities to visualize and touch the material/content. Students were active and engaged participants in the learning process when they had opportunities to explore the topic with multiple modalities. I specifically incorporated kinesthetic and tactile resources by having students use Play Dough to write out letters and blend words. They also had the opportunity to segment words using their arms and fingers to break the words into individual phoneme sounds. I also found that using nonlinguistic representation helped break down complex processes and procedures into manageable steps and patterns. The visual displays during intervention and small groups promoted organized and effective work.

Utilizing feedback in my teaching instruction helped me build strong, personal relationships with my students. Students were more engaged when they had a specific goal to focus on. The students responded positively to praise and wanted to better themselves because they understand why and how the content being taught affected their learning process. For example, I noted on the post-test that students consistently answered Question #7 and Question #8 incorrectly. Students struggled to differentiate between the letter b and letter d. I printed the names of each student who incorrectly identified b and d and pulled them for intervention to give them specific feedback and support. In future phonics lessons, I would like to craft a review lesson focused solely on differentiating the two letters.

The data collected showed significant gain in student understanding of short u sounds. The pretest data showed me that 9 students had a strong developing understanding of the short u sound and correctly identified 7-9 short U CVC words; 5 students scored 10/10 on their initial test. Ten students correctly identified 6 or fewer words and were placed on a daily intervention. Following the post-test, the data showed me that 12 students scored 10/10 on their post-test. Of the 10 students who scored a six or lower on their pre-test, six of those students scored a 7 or more on their post-test after intervention.

All twenty-four students completed the ten-question pre-test, which meant there were 240 questions. Only 157/240 questions were answered correctly, which is a 65.4% accuracy rate. After the pre-test, I implemented a variety of instructional and assessment strategies (e.g., nonlinguistic representation, feedback, stations, and turn and talks) to improve student scores. After the post-test, data revealed that 192/240 questions were answered correctly, which was an 80% accuracy rate. Twenty-one out of the twenty-four students showed a quantitative gain within the unit being taught. Most of the instructional time was spent working with blending and segmenting words into their individual sounds. Students learn how to read by encoding words and must recognize how they can break words apart to develop linguistic mastery.

The instructional and assessment strategies I implemented were effective processes that met individual student needs and supported student understanding of phonics mastery. Feedback, nonlinguistic representations turn-and-talks, and scaffolding support student understanding and set the students up for long-term success.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Pre-Test and Post-Test Assessment'

Pre-Test:

Name: _____

Date Administered: _____

Real words:

    Rug   bus   pup   sub   up

Nonsense Words:

    Un   rud   duf   sug   cun

Post-Test:

Name: _____

Date Administered: _____

Real words:

    Rug   bus   pup   sub   up

Nonsense Words:

    Un   rud   duf   sug   cun

Appendix B

'HMH Mastery Guide' Intervention Resource

Appendix C

Alphabet Chart

Appendix D

Omaha Public Schools Intervention Resource

<u>**Phonemic Awareness Words**</u>

Blending: nab   peg   tub   let   cub
Segmenting: net   mud   den   hut   cap

<u>**Sound Spelling:**</u> Review short a, e, u

Aa   Ee   Uu

<u>**Words to Blend**</u>

rat   met   up
peg   bun   pat
tub   pen   fed
cap   wed   led

Irregular Sight Words: have, from

Decodable: (see next page)

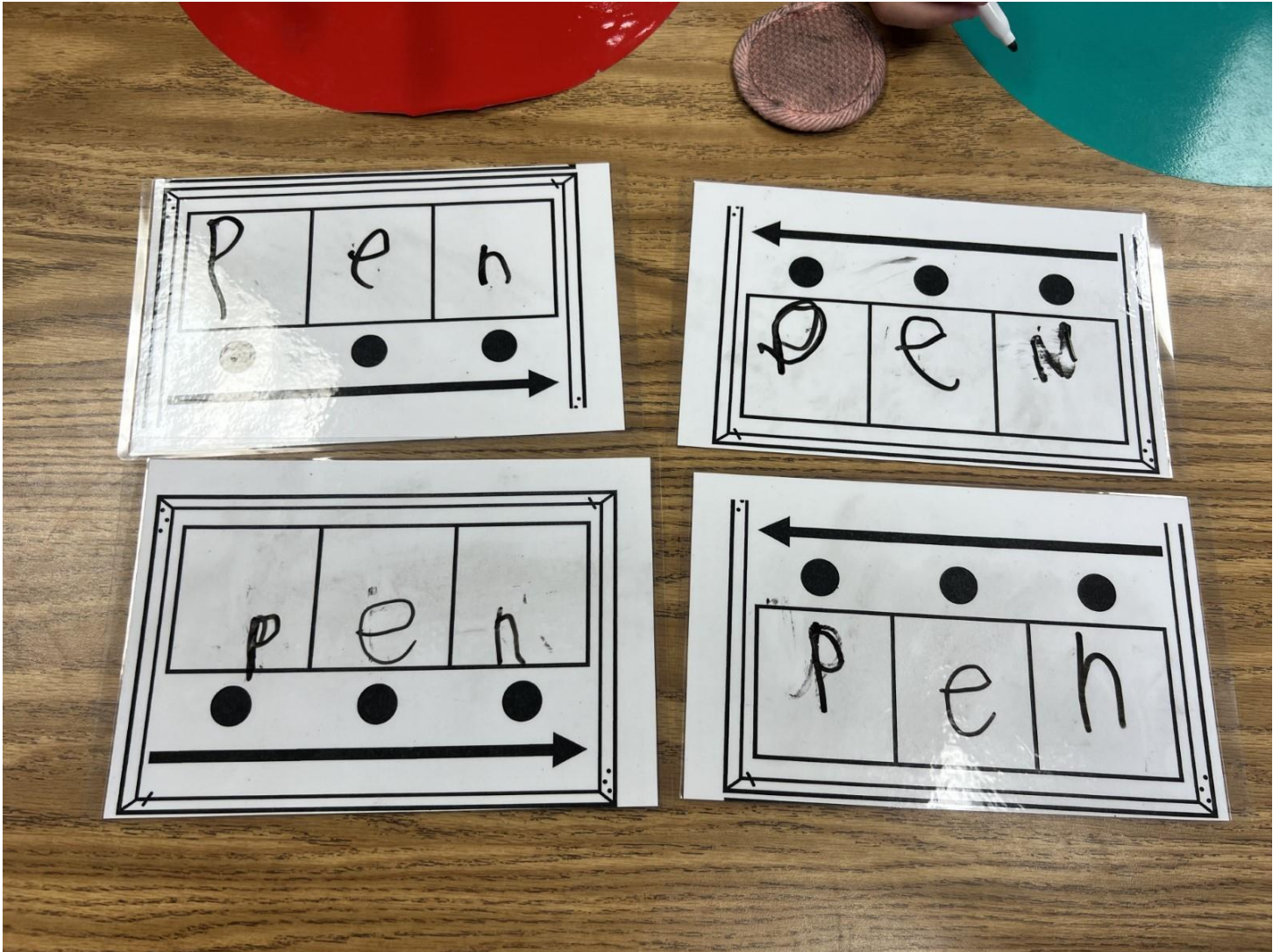**Dictation:**   hut   pen
                    set   rat

REMINDER

Don't forget to remind students that you have positive expectations for them and you believe in their ability to do well.

Appendix E

Elkonin Box Student Sample

Appendix F

Intervention Schedule

Group 1:	Group 2:	Group 3:
Station 3	Station 1	Station 2
Station 1	Station 2	Station 3
Station 2 (Pink)	Station 3 (Green)	Station 1 (Blue)

Station 1: Amira
Station 2: Word Work Worksheet
Station 3: Small Groups with Miss Honeyman