Elementary Case Study for Annual Goals and Student Investment

As a fourth grade Reading teacher, Ms. E. teaches a diverse group of students at a Title 1 Campus in Houston Independent School District. The school is 81% Hispanic, 5% white, 5% African- American, and 9% Asian. 98% of the school population is on free or reduced price lunch. She teaches a combination of gifted and ELL students. The following is a description of how she sets goals for her students and invests them in their academic achievement.

Ms. E's Goal Setting Planning Process

At the beginning of the year, Ms. E's appraiser assigned a (required) Value-Added measure based on the STAAR end-of-year assessment in Reading and a (required) Comparative Growth measure in Reading based on Stanford. To determine her students' starting points and goals, Ms. E first identified sources of data to show evidence on how many of the pre-requisite skills her students had coming into her class. She reviewed their third grade Reading Stanford NCE scores and their third grade Reading STAAR raw scores and corresponding lexile levels.

Quarter 1	Quarter 2
• Discuss student learning needs	• Discuss student learning needs
• Look for concept gaps	• Look for concept gaps
• Review the progress of and the success of interventions for these students from previous school years	• Review the progress of and the success of interventions for these students from previous school years
• Plan accelerated instruction and targeted intervention	• Plan accelerated instruction and targeted intervention

Quarter 1			Quarter 2		
Top % Correct		38	Top % Correct		50
Students	Lexile	% Score	Students	Lexile	% Score
Mario	235	38	Sofia	370	50
Emma	235	38	Alisha	350	48
Hilda	205	30	Roncarlos	350	48
Roberto	205	28	Andrea	350	46
Angel	180	20	Jackson	280	42
			Samuel	280	42

Ms. E analyzed the data from the previous year to determine student starting points. Ms. E ranked her students' scores and divided them into four categories using their lexile reading levels[1]. She chose the lexile levels because it is a strong predictor of how difficult a text is to comprehend and the student's ability. The first quartile has lexile scores ranging from 108L to 235L and the second category ranges from 280L to 270L. The third category ranges from 395L to 505L and the fourth quartile ranges from 635L to 1045L. The lexile range for the median percentiles (25th to 75th) is from 445 to 810L[2]. Ms. E reflected on what would be an ambitious yet feasible goal for her students in each of the 4 categories. She analyzed the growth of her students in the past year and talked with her team members about the scores of their past students. Based on historical data, Ms. E determined that students with the minimum passing lexile score in 3rd grade (485L[i]) and the minimum passing score in 4th grade (650L) had a 165 point difference. She decided her goal for all of her students would be to grow her students' lexile levels above the expected 165 point difference for just passing the state test. She decided that a growth of 200 points would be a stretch but still attainable based on the past patterns and trends in student test data.

Ms. E wrote the goal:

Each student will grow 200 points in reading lexile measure from their baseline score on their 3rd Grade Reading STAAR lexile level to their end of year assessment, as measured by 4th Grade Reading STAAR lexile level.

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[1] Refer to secondary case study to see a value added teacher using raw scores and an adaptation for teachers of performance based or non-Value added classes.

[2] Letter to Grade Correspondence
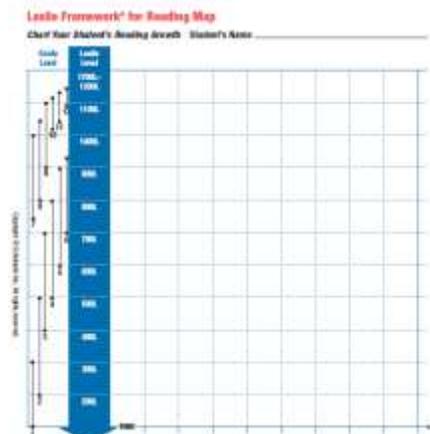
Ms. E's Presentation to Students

Once the goal was set, Ms. E planned to explain to her students why the goal was important. She shared the annual goal and how the goal related to students individually using examples of lexile scores. She set a time to meet with each student to talk about their individualized goals recorded in their reading notebooks, then provided each student with a personal lexile growth tracker with their individual starting point in an interactive journal.

Ms. E introduced goal setting to her students and had them imagine what it will look like when they achieved their lexile reading goal. She set a mini goal for each 9 weeks. Ms. E determined that students should progress 50L points each nine weeks in order to reach their yearly goal of a 200L point increase in their lexile level. Students recorded progress toward goal using their reading folder.

Ms. E also gave students an interest survey at the beginning of the year. The survey provided information regarding what activities students were interested in, and that allowed her to provide books on various lexile levels that addressed the interests of her students. She asked a myriad of questions about student preferences that she incorporated into her lessons and bulletin boards. She used the lexile measures to provide reading lists tailored to the different lexile scores in the room and to texts that stimulate reading growth. To facilitate student choice in reading selections, she organized her classroom library by genre and lexile levels.

Next Steps

Ms. E plans to dedicate time every four weeks to revisit student goals. She meets with 1-2 students daily for 2-3 minutes to check their progress toward goals, and students use their interactive journals to record and articulate their progress prior to dismissal from her class. Students record in their journals the books they have read from the lexile leveled reading list in their reading folders. Ms. E commits to looking at 4-5 interactive journals each week and offer feedback regarding their progress, so that students get feedback from her at least once a month whether it is face to face or through the journal.

Ms. E makes an effort to set up a system that rewards what the students are doing well. Ms. E reinforces effort and progress toward student goals through the use of praise and public recognition. When students are not progressing toward goals, she plans interventions that will help them become successful. She pulls students in small groups to work on specific learning needs. She uses interest centers to spark students' curiosity and desire to learn. Students choose what interest center to learn from and an approach to show what they have learned.

Adaptations

For early childhood education, their goals might be based off of completing a set of skills (saying all the sounds of the alphabet). Referring back to Student Performance measures, this would be the exception to the idea of growth goals, because all students are expected to achieve the same goal. Teachers for early childhood education could word their goals as an "I can" statement, such as "I can say all the letter sounds of the alphabet." To have students track their progress, they could have an individual charts for their students that say "I can say…" and have all the letters on the chart that they get to mark with a sticker when they have mastered that letter sound.

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[i] Taken from TEA Raw score conversion tables with 2010-2011TAKS data because STAAR conversion tables are not posted for 4th grade yet.