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Adapted Book Project
DePaul University: SER 409
May 22nd, 2021

Participant Description

The student this book has been created for is a 7 year old student I have worked with extensively in the past, Avery. He had a developmental delay along with cerebral palsy and would sit in a wheelchair for every one on one session (we worked on phonemic awareness, reading, and comprehension). During his breaks, we would help him out of his wheel chair and support him while he walked a few laps around our learning center. He was constantly smiling, and loved to play jokes on his tutors, like holding out a ball to hand to a teacher, only to throw it at the last second. While he was able to understand some simple conversation and one step directions, some concepts were still not yet stable (we had been working on the concept of first, second, and last for a considerable amount of time) and was unable to answer open-ended questions. He would also seem to lose track of the conversation if his teachers spoke too fast or said too many things at once. He could choose between two or three concrete options, however, and most of his instruction was done in this way. While he was able to hold onto items tightly, grabbing items initially posed a challenge, and delicately turning the pages of a book were difficult (this was a skill that the teachers generally did for Avery. He communicated his answers with pointing and communicated his feelings with squeals of delights or unhappy sounds. At the time we worked with him, he did not yet have any form of AAC, but was comfortable using a picture board we had created for him to communicate his needs and wants. Additionally, he wore glasses with a high prescription and required the text in our normal materials to be blown up (he could identify about 25 sight words).

Original Book

The original book I chose was *The Rainbow Fish*, by Marcus Pfister. This book was chosen as it is a very appropriate picture book for a first grade child that teaches selflessness and the importance of sharing. I imagine that I would read this book to the students to both work on developing sequencing and main ideas, but also during a social emotional learning class. Sharing is a key skill that students of this age must master, and not one that comes easily (especially to students with disabilities who may need direct instruction in this matter). My student mentioned above would benefit from the story in this book as the sparkles on the Rainbow Fish's special scales would engage him, as would the story itself.

Cognitive Adaptations

There are three main areas in which I cognitively adapted this book. First, I added pictures above many of the words. Second, I simplified the language so that the main ideas remained while extraneous detail was removed. Lastly, I included comprehension questions with removable answer choices within the text itself. As an almost second grader, we had been working with Avery on identifying the first 25 sight words on the sight words list we utilized (similar to Fry's sight word list). Therefore, placing pictures above most of the words serves two purposes: first, it allows him to better follow along with the text as we read it, allowing him practice with following the words of a story. Second, it allows for greater comprehension, as words and phrases that are not yet concrete (such as

sparkly, scales, or show off) are reinforced with images that he can refer back to. This will scaffold the act of reading for him, allowing to quickly make the connection between the word blue and the color that is shown right above it.

Secondly, the language was simplified so that it more closely matched his receptive vocabulary and the length of sentence that he was able to comprehend. As stated previously, Avery could understand and follow one step directions, but would lose track of any that came after. Therefore, in order to help his language processing, I shrunk the amount of words on a page, taking out figurative language that he would not yet understand while leaving in the elements of the story that fed into the main idea. For example, the book originally said:

“What good were the dazzling, shimmering scales with no one to admire them? Now he was the loneliest fish in the entire ocean.

One day he poured out his troubles to the starfish. ‘I really am beautiful. Why doesn’t anybody like me?’

‘I can’t answer *that* for you,” said the starfish. ‘But if you go beyond the coral reef to a deep cave you will find the wise octopus. Maybe she can help you’” (Pfister).

I adapted the book to say only, “Now Rainbow Fish was sad. Rainbow Fish asked, ‘Why do I have no friends?’ A starfish said, ‘Go ask the octopus in the cave. He will help.’” (I have now realized I accidentally changed the gender of the octopus.) Because the goal of this lesson and adaptation was not vocabulary but sequencing, main idea, and the concept of sharing, a lot of that more complex language was not necessary and would only serve to increase the cognitive load placed on Avery. (Had the goal been to increase social emotional language, the words “loneliest” and “wise” would have been emphasized.) Therefore, because most of that complex language has been removed, Avery will be able to focus on the task at hand: understanding the concept of sharing, chronically the events in the story, and determining what exactly it is that the Rainbow Fish learned.

Lastly, I included comprehension questions within the actual text of the book itself, including removeable answers with graphics attached. These are stuck on to each page for easy storage but would be removed before the page was read and placed onto a whiteboard, so that Avery could choose his answer and place it anywhere on the page. (They also help to separate the pages of the story, making each page easier to turn, but I’ll touch on that in the next section.) I had never thought to do this before, but after looking into all the different types of adaptations, this seemed to be the best fit. By having check-in questions every other page or so, it allows for me as a teacher to ensure he is truly following along and engaging with the story. Some questions are straightforward, such as “Where does Rainbow Fish live?” while others require a bit of prediction, such as “Do you think Rainbow Fish will give away one of his scales?” These questions will make the story more engaging for Avery as well, as there is some need for action and engagement as the story continues. Additionally, three answer choices have been provided for most of the questions, though that could be scaffolded down to two if necessary. I have also included a sequencing question at the end, which would serve as a good summative assessment and alert his teachers as to whether or not he had mastered the concept of first, second, and last. A main idea, or story lesson, question has been included in the end, for the same reason.

Physical Adaptations

The physical adaptations I created were threefold: first, I enlarged the size of the text in the book by about 350%. Additionally, I placed each page in a sheet protector, included removable answers to questions that help to separate the pages, and also included toggles to help Avery turn the pages of the book much more easily. As stated above, Avery had a strong optical prescription, and wore glasses at all times. Even still, if text was too small it was easy to see that he became fatigued and disinterested very quickly. Therefore, enlarging the text was a necessity. It also would allow for his teachers to help his finger follow along with the words as they were read, something that Avery found engaging and helped his teachers to ensure that he was following along with his eyes as well.

Each page has been placed in a sheet protector as there have been many times when, do to no fault of his own, pages of books have been ripped in Avery's hands. As I've said, he was able to grip things tightly, but had less control over when he was to let go. This resulted in a few grabbed pages that were then accidentally torn as his arm spasmed to one side. Covering each sheet in plastic prevents this eventuality, while also creating a reusable space for Avery (and other students) to stick the removable answers on. For a similar reason, I included toggles to help Avery flip the page more easily. Though he could occasionally grasp the page of a normal book, more often than not his teachers would lift of the page so he could grab it. The soft felt of the toggle would help him to easily grab and turn a page without support or fear of ripping the book.

Reflection

This was an incredibly illuminating process. So much thought went into every aspect of this book, and even as I'm writing this I'm considering ways I could improve it. I now have so much more respect for anyone who creates and shares adapted books. First of all, the advice that this would take more than one day was extremely helpful, as it was definitely a long term project. As a creative writing major in college, I did enjoy the actual adapting of the book, but would not in a million years say that it was easy. What was incredibly helpful was keeping a specific student in mind who would benefit, which helped to inform each of the changes I made. Whenever I felt stuck (should I remove this word, or keep it?), I thought back to the many sessions I had over the course of a year and a half with Avery and considered if the word would cause him to shut down. I do believe that if I had had a student who I was currently working with, this would not only have been even more enjoyable, but easier as well. Creating materials for hypothetical or past students is always a touch more demanding.

I can say with certainty, however, that this assignment was particularly useful. When reading the many textbooks and articles pertaining to Special Education, there had been so many mentions of adapted materials, but no one explanation of how to create them. This was an excellent lesson in how to consider the needs of a specific student, and also how much time and energy is needed in order to make sure the materials are an instructional match. While I don't expect that I will be making these materials from scratch again in the near future, I now know how to take other adapted materials and individualize them for specific students. Plus, if necessary, I know that I can create these materials from scratch, or at least help a colleague to do so.

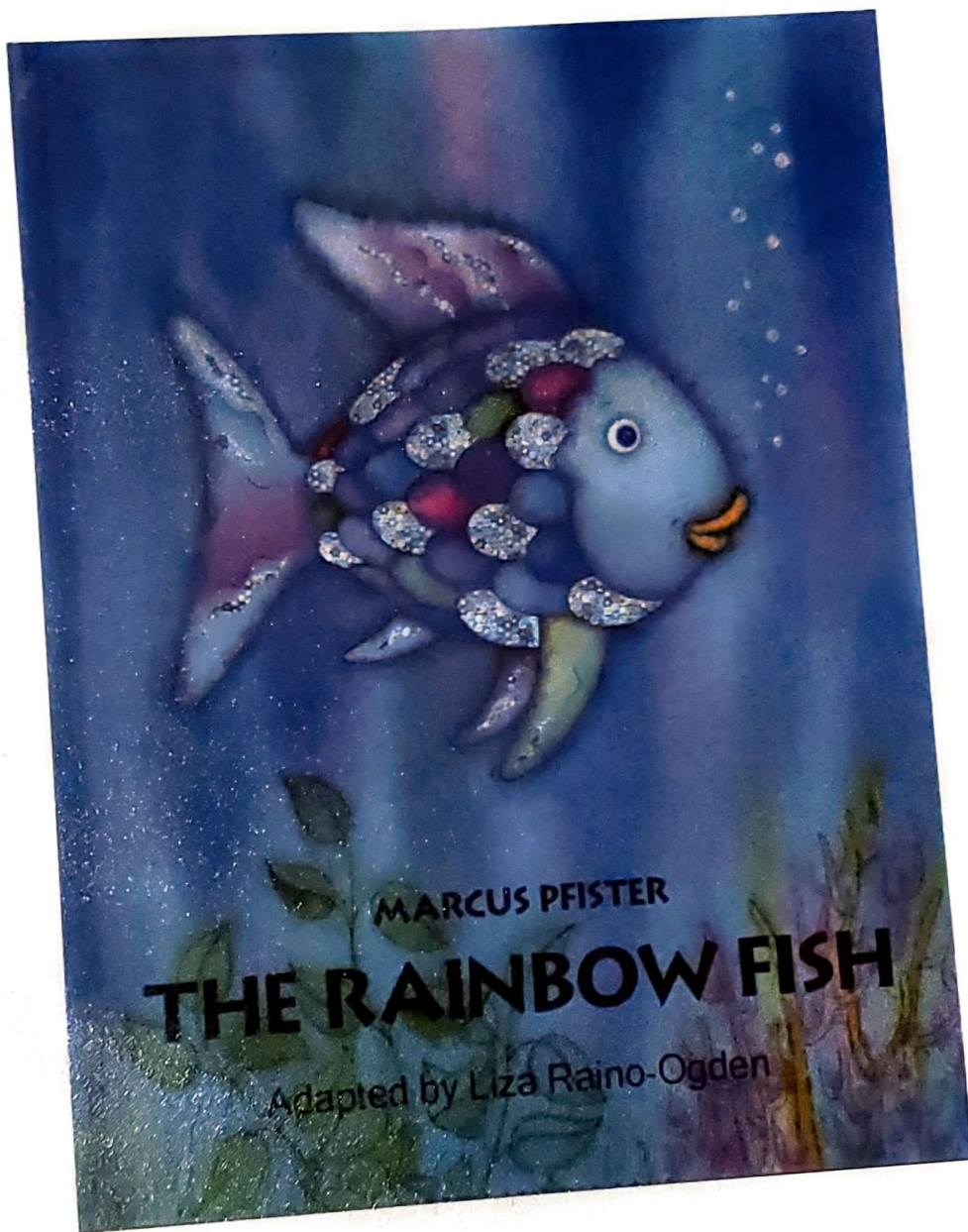
I learned that incredible thought and care is poured into every adapted material that is given to a specific student. While creating this, I thought about other students and how the adaptation would be slightly different for them. For example, I taught a with autism and PTSD who communicated mostly

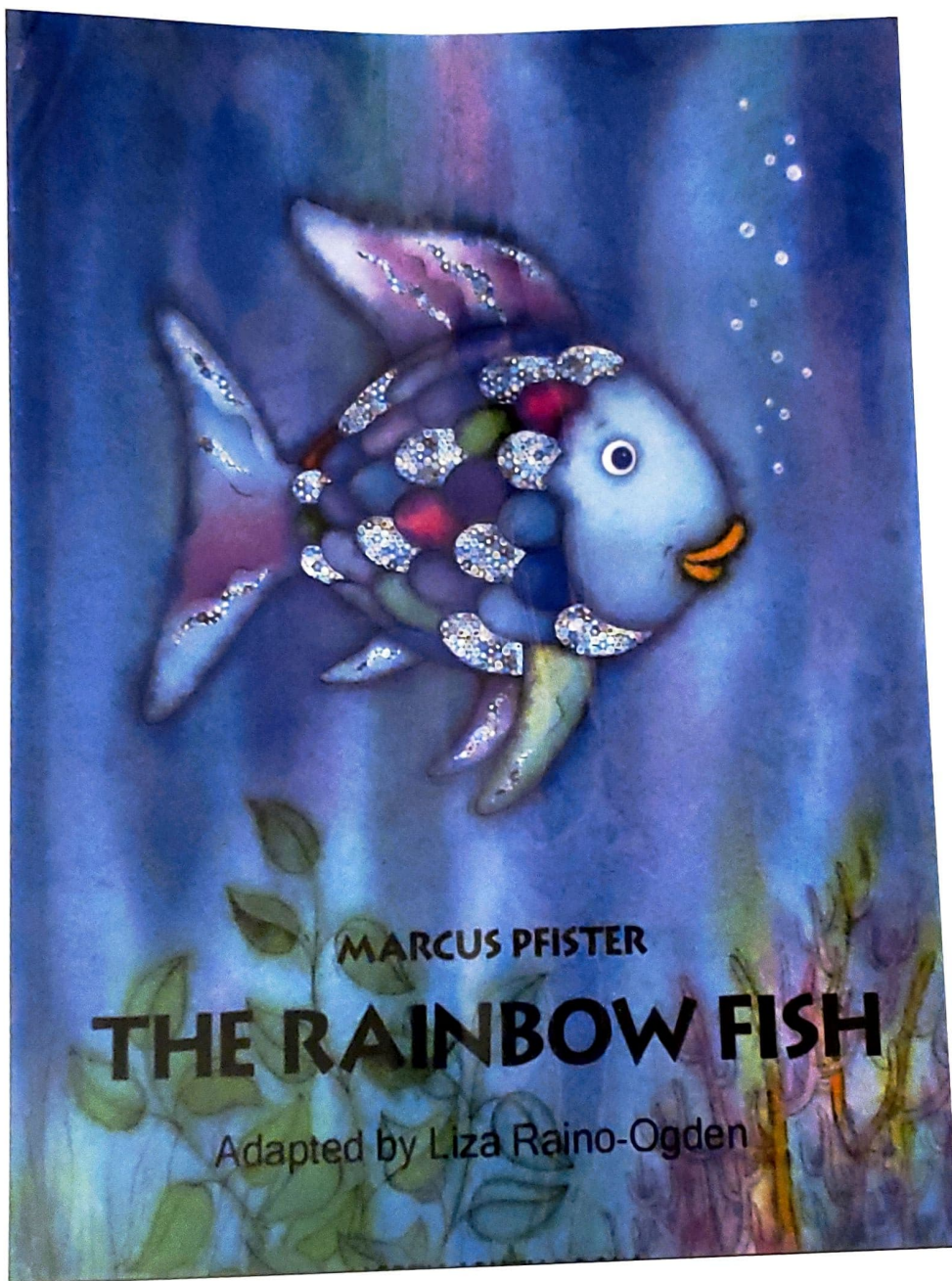
through *My Little Pony* quotes. While the cognitive adaptations would have been appropriate for her, the physical adaptations would not have been. She had perfect eyesight and could easily turn the pages of a book (though the removable answers would have been engaging for her as well). It taught me to consider the whole child when creating these materials, not just their cognitive abilities but their physical limitations as well. These small things can help our students to feel more independent and can help to develop that sense of self determination, as they can be the ones to choose to turn the page.



Lastly, I do think I would change a few things about this book that I was unable to, as my color printer has stopped working. Instead of the phrase “give away,” I would rather say “share,” as that better encompasses the main idea of the story. I would also make the image of each page slightly smaller, so that the questions and answers could fit more neatly below. Lastly, one thing I would add is a removable sparkly scale that Avery could move from the fin of the Rainbow Fish to the little blue fish once the Rainbow Fish finally decides to share (this would add another element to help Avery stay engage with the story). Overall, however, this was an extremely rewarding process that taught me a lot about differentiation and adapting materials.

Works Cited

Pfister, Marcus, and J. Alison James. *The Rainbow Fish*. North South, 2020.





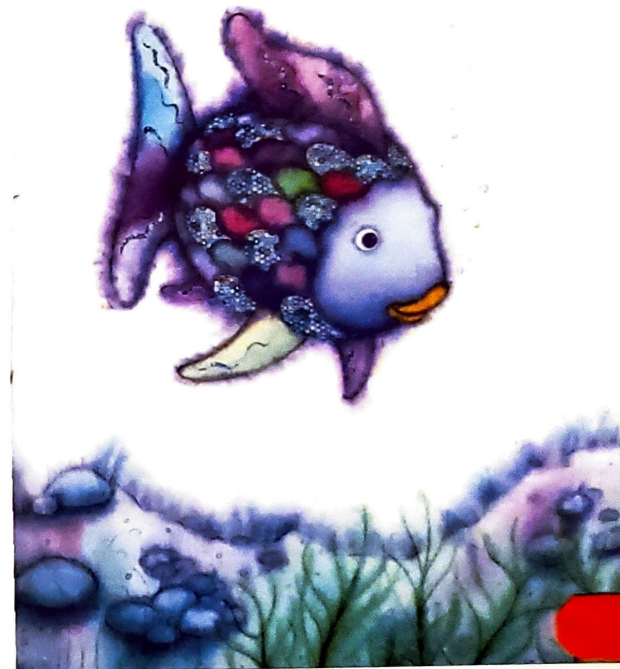
 
In the sea, there was a
 
beautiful fish.


  
He had sparkly scales.

   
His name was Rainbow Fish.



Where does Rainbow Fish live?



 
In the sea, there was a
 
beautiful fish.

  
He had sparkly scales.

   
His name was Rainbow Fish.



Where does Rainbow Fish live?



The other fish wanted to play
with him. But Rainbow Fish did
not want to play.



Does Rainbow Fish like to play?

No

Yes

Play

Show off

Eat

He wanted to show off his
sparkly scales.

What does Rainbow Fish like to do?






 One day, a little blue fish




 asked Rainbow Fish to give




 him one sparkly scale.





 Little Blue Fish

Who asked Rainbow Fish for sparkly scale?


 Big Blue Fish


 Little Red Fish




 Yes

Do you think Rainbow Fish will give away one of his scales?




 No



Rainbow Fish said,



"NO! GO AWAY!"



All the fish were sad.








All the fish swam away.





  
Now Rainbow Fish was sad.

  
Rainbow Fish asked,
 

"Why do I have no friends?"

 
A starfish said,

   
"Go ask the octopus in the
  
cave. He will help."

Who is going to help Rainbow Fish?



Starfish



Octopus



Fish



Rainbow Fish found the

octopus in the cave.



In the seaweed

Where does the octopus live?










In a cave



On a rock



 
The octopus said,
 
"Give a scale to every
   
fish friend. Then you will be

happy."



Go play



Keep his scales

What does the octopus tell
Rainbow Fish to do?





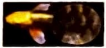















Give his scales away



Do you think Rainbow Fish will listen to the octopus?



















 Rainbow Fish loved his




 sparkly scales. He did not




 want to give one sparkly



 scale to all his fish friends.




 He did not want to share.

Does Rainbow Fish like to share?





   
Then the little blue fish came
   
back. The little blue fish

asked,

  
"Can I have one sparkly scale

please?"



Rainbow Fish gave one sparkly



scale to the little blue fish.



Rainbow Fish felt happy.

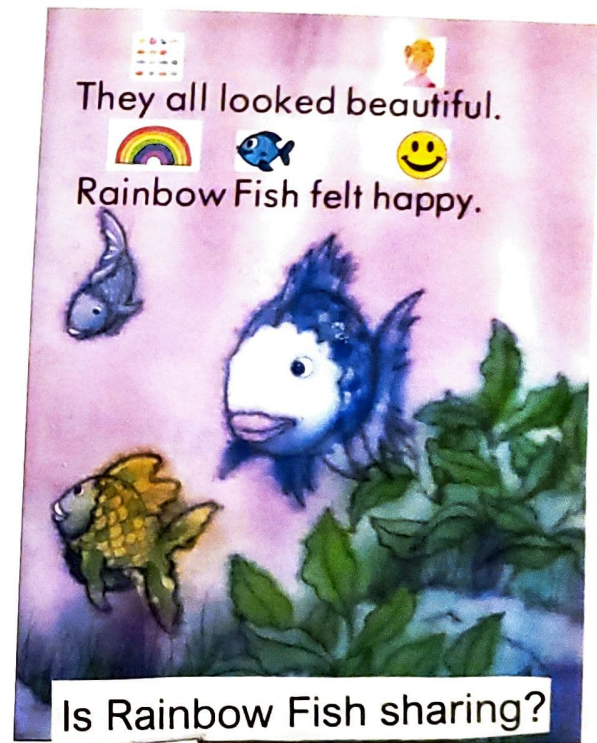


How many sparkly scales does the
Rainbow Fish give to the little blue
fish?

1
One

2
Two

3
Three



✓
Yes

✗
No



Mad

Now Rainbow Fish had only
1 one sparkly scale.



Happy

How do the other fish feel now?



Sad



But he was happy. He



played with his fish friends.

Why is Rainbow Fish happy?



He shared



He looked beautiful



He did not share

2

Two



3

Three

How many sparkly scales does Rainbow Fish have left?

1

One

What happened first?

What happened second?

What happened last?



Rainbow Fish talked to the octopus.



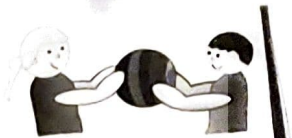
Rainbow Fish shared his sparkly scales.



Rainbow Fish did not share his sparkly scales.



He learned about octopuses.



He learned to share.



He learned to play.



What did Rainbow Fish learn?