Student 2, who falls within the age group of 6-0 to 6-5 for the Robertson and Salter Phonological Awareness Test, also falls somewhere between the early and later alphabetic stages according to this assessment. Sge scored above the 50th percentile in all areas, excepting the segmenting of syllables and blending syllables and phonemes.

The student had some difficulty in segmenting syllables, scoring in the 46th percentile. She responded with 3 claps for pizza (segmenting the /p/ and /i /sounds); 3 claps for fix (segmenting the /f/, /ĭ/, and /ks/ sounds); 4 claps for moose (again, segmenting the /m/ and /s/ phonemes and double-pronouncing the /ū/ sound); 3 claps for pillow (segmenting the /p/ as separate from the middle /Il/ and final /o/ sound); and 3 claps for candy (pronouncing the initial phoneme /k/, the ‘and’ as one syllable, and the final sound /i/. Based on this pattern, the student shows confusion in differentiating the segmenting of syllables and phonemes. As with student 1, I recognized that student 2 segmented the phonemes in fix during segmentation of syllables.

This could be due to increased attention in the beginning of this first grade class in the pronunciation and segmentation of phonemes. Increased attention to phonemes could be mixing with their background knowledge of syllable segmentation emphasized in kindergarten. It would seem some additional instruction on differentiating individual sounds from syllables is needed. Considering that student 2 also appears, according to this assessment, to fall somewhere between the early and later alphabetic stages, this student might benefit best from explicit instruction into exercises that allow practice for oral blending of syllables, as well as increased sound to letter instruction in how syllables are encoded i.e. a vowel at the center and taking the forms of a beginning consonant or consonant cluster and with a following rime.

In segmenting phonemes, student 2 also gave no pause to pronouncing off or me. This may be due to the words being much smaller and with less pronunciation time, and the student not focusing awareness and discerning between the two sounds in each of those words. The consonant m is also a continuant, which lends itself to more easily blending the following vowel sound. Additional instruction in hearing and separating the phonemes in CV words might be useful. Student 2 had more difficult with the segmenting of phonemes, which is typical of phonemic awareness development (Moats, 2010; Ehri, 2004). She pronounced the [ag] in brag as one sound; pronounced the [lop] in plop as one sound; pronounced the [ilk] in milk as one sound; pronounced the [ent] in dent as one sound; and pronounced the consonant blend cr and [isp] as two separate sounds in crisp. This trend seems to be evidence of the child’s activating background knowledge of onset and rime, an earlier phonological awareness characteristic that is recognizable in children about age 5 of kindergarten. This student may need some additional instruction in syllable awareness before continuing to focus on phonemes.

In production of rhymes, the student responded to brother with “wuter”. This may be indicative of difficulty in discerning the voiced fricative [th]. In final phoneme isolation, the student gave /t/ as the final sound in math, which again shows lack in discerning the fricative [th], this time voiceless. This tendency may also be apparent in the student’s spelling i.e. omitting the h when spelling words ending with th. The student would likely benefit from grapheme-phoneme correspondence instruction, with specific attention to words ending in th and t.

When giving the final sound in cheese, the student responded with the phoneme /i/. This lack of awareness of the final /z/ sound could be due to the student directing more attention to the long, drawn out /i/ sound in the medial position. This heightened attention to long vowel sounds in the medial position seems to correlate with the student double-pronouncing the /ū/ sound in moose, when segmenting syllables. Additionally, in isolating the medial phoneme, the student had difficulty hearing the diphthong ou, or /æw/, in mouse, and pronounced the medial sound as /a/. Vowel diphthongs are more difficult to discern phonologically, and the student could benefit from increased grapheme-phoneme correspondence instruction in middle-vowel substitution. I would also recommend further instruction in isolating medial and final phonemes in words that consist of doubled vowels and vowel teams.

The student had some difficulty in deletion of phonemes, which is typical of phonemic awareness development in early 1st grade (Moats, 2010). The student responded with the sounds /wa/ instead of /waj/ in wise, which is typical considering the similar place of articulation in vowels. The student could also benefit from mouth awareness in forming vowels and explicit exploration of how these two sounds look similar when formed in the mouth, but sound different when pronounced.