

### **Differentiated Instruction Through Small Groups in Kindergarten Classrooms:**

My focus on my Academic Showcase project was my practicum experiences. Practicum is a hands-on experience where NWC students are placed in a classroom with a mentor teacher for 50 hours over a 10-week period. During this time, students plan lessons, work with children, and reflect on their teaching while gaining real classroom experience. During my practicum experiences in a kindergarten classroom, I focused on using small-group instruction to support differentiated learning. Students enter Kindergarten at different levels with skills such as letter recognition, counting, writing, and early reading, so it is important to meet them where they are. In small groups, I learned how to differentiate my instruction based on each group's needs. My first lesson included a guided reading group focused on decoding, where I helped students practice sounding out words and recognizing patterns. Some students needed more support, while others were ready for a larger challenge. I learned that using small groups and guided reading helped students stay engaged, build confidence, and learn at their own pace. This experience showed me how important it is to adjust teaching to support all learners.