Designing a Motivational Lesson

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There are many factors to consider when designing an engaging and motivating lesson. Attention, relevance, students' confidence, and students' satisfaction are a few important factors (Banas, n.d.) that impact students' engagement and motivation while learning. All of these components have been considered during the creation and implementation of this first grade reading lesson that is focused on inflectional endings.

Modify a Unit of Study

The first grade class that will be engaging in the inflectional endings lesson is currently working on the foundation reading skills standard RF.1.3f, which focuses on reading words that have inflectional endings (-ing and -ed). The unit's objective is for students to identify base words and their inflectional endings. Students will learn what the suffixes mean, how the suffixes change the root words, how to spell the inflectional endings, and how to apply this knowledge to their reading, writing, and everyday language. The goal of this unit is to help students comprehend the words that they read that have inflectional endings, apply this knowledge to their spelling, and utilize these verb tenses in their daily language use.

Some strengths of this unit are goal orientation, consistent routines and expectations, collaboration amongst peers and educators, the use of positive constructive feedback to increase intrinsic motivation, diverse grouping methods that focus on interests and friendships, and data collection and analysis. Some areas of this unit that could be strengthened are the lack of enrichment opportunities for those who quickly understand and are able to apply the inflectional endings, the confusion that can sometimes occur with the three sounds that -ed can make, an

increase in opportunities for student reflection, and the Canvas learning platform settings for their quick checks.

<center>**Applying a Motivational Framework**</center>

The ARCS model is a motivational framework that focuses on prioritizing students' perception of the value of the activity, task, or content they are learning about. The model ensures that students believe they are personally able to perform the task or activity (Banas, n.d.). The focus on perception and confidence helps create a strong foundation for students to build their learning upon.

Attention

To engage students in the first lesson of the unit, perceptual arousal will be used to spark their curiosity (Banas, n.d.). Two little cartoons will be shown and students will be asked to identify what is different about them. These cartoons do not have speech bubbles, but some of the pictures do have labels. After students silently observe them, they will share their findings with their turn-and-talk partners and then the partners will share their findings with the class to discuss how one is happening right now and one has happened in the past. The two verbs will be written down and then students will observe what is different about the verbs. After the students conclude that the verbs have a similar chunk (the root word) but the verb that is occuring right now has -ing at the end and the verb that happened in the past ends in -ed at the end. Therefore, students will explore the content with my guidance through an inquiry-based approach. Variability is also embedded into this lesson since students learn about the content in a variety of ways. After our discussion about the cartoons and the verbs, they will have the choice to choose

which Canvas activities they would like to do to practice applying their skills while deepening their understandings.

Adding additional inquiry arousal opportunities will help better capture students' attention. Inquiry arousal focuses on diving deeper and exploring the "whys" and "hows" (Banas, n.d.). Incorporating more "word study" time is one way to do this and it will help ensure that students understand how these tiny inflections can change the root word. Incorporating time for students to study the words and collect them in their word work notebook, independently or with partners, while the educator asks them guiding questions to help deepen their understanding of what inflectional endings mean and how they are applied to change the tense of the verb.

Relevance

Relevance connects the instruction to students' motives, needs, and interests (Banas, n.d.). Although the objectives and goals of this unit are clear and stable, my students' motives, needs, and interests change from year to year, so the incorporation of their motives, needs, and especially interests into the unit is ever changing. Verbs (to use as examples) should be chosen to match students' interests. For example, in the past my class has really enjoyed Minecraft so we have been using verbs like play, played, playing, code, coded, coding, create, created, creating, etc. We also discuss how the content is relevant to their own lives so they understand the motive to learn it (the reason it will be helpful). One of the first examples I used was the difference between something you created or something you are creating in Minecraft. We explored how this will help your friend(s) understand if you want help with it and are still working on it, or if you would rather play survival mode with it now because it has already been created. I also make

sure to tie it into nonvirtual examples so students understand the need to learn the correct verb tenses in various areas and contexts. For example, we discuss different occupations (cooks, firefighters, doctors, scientists, and other jobs they are interested in) and how the verb tenses make a big difference on the comprehension of their word choices. If a fire chief says the fire burned down an old barn, it is much different than if a chief tells his other firefighters that a fire is burning down the barn. We discussed how the firefighters would react differently to those two situations.

To better capture students' attention, additional mini lessons could be pre recorded within Canvas's Studio to highlight different occupational examples. In class time is limited and there is only so much time to tie in their diverse interests. Therefore, it would be helpful to pre-record a few examples for students to choose from, they could then choose from a pool of videos to find occupational examples that meet their personal interests. This would also increase their familiarity since they would have the opportunity to see how the content is relevant for many different real world examples. Students could explore these Canvas videos throughout the week during their word work time.

Confidence

Students' confidence can be fostered by incorporating learning requirement strategies such as specifically explaining the unit's objectives, sequence, activities, and assessments so students have a clear understanding of what to expect (Banas, n.d.). Using appropriately challenging opportunities will keep them engaged, but not overwhelmed. The writing portion near the end of the unit is an example of this. Students will be shown an example of some final

projects, but then the tasks will be broken down into small manageable steps. The purpose of the writing activity/cartoon is to educate people about the importance of carefully reading words with inflectional endings. The first step is for them to tie it to their interests. They will reflect upon what they enjoy about reading, how reading helps them accomplish things, or how reading can help them accomplish their goals. Then they will choose at least two verbs to portray in their cartoon. They will use the past and present tense. Finally, they will begin their opinion writing piece by writing their introductory sentence, their reasons (with the verbs incorporated into it), and their conclusion. Next they will edit and revise their writing. Then they will share their completed project with an audience to celebrate reading month and to help encourage others to see the value of reading.

Next time a personal reflection addition will be added after they are done with their writing project. A survey will conclude the lesson so students can reflect upon their personal responsibilities throughout the project. They will reflect upon the effort they put in, the strategies they used to create their project, how their project impacted others, etc. This will ensure that students thoughtfully take time to think about their personal responsibility, what went well, their self-efficacy, and what they can do better next time.

Satisfaction

Intrinsic motivation, praising students for their improvement and use of strategies, and equity are three strategies to increase student satisfaction (Banas, n.d.). Relevance, personal interests, and situational interests help increase motivation. Boothe, Lohmann, and Owiny (2020) found that providing students with choice not only increases motivation and engagement, but it

also increases self-efficacy because students are able to choose a topic that they excel in. This helps them feel confident throughout the project. That is why students can choose the theme of their cartoon/writing activity. Students are able to choose something they find interesting and satisfying. The project offers opportunity for creativity because the students can choose to create their cartoon using a digital format or they can also choose to use physical paper, pencil, and colors to create it. To maintain equity, a simple rubric will be used to grade their projects and the rubric will be reviewed when the activity is introduced so students know exactly what is expected of them. Throughout the project, positive praise will be used to encourage their effort, engagement, use of strategies, and improvement.

To further increase satisfaction, opportunities to expand the audience they present to are being explored. Usually when they finish their projects they present to their peers and then display their work in the hallways so other kids at the school can view and learn from it. Bence (2016) explained that publishing students' work for a larger audience manifests their creations and allows them to be consumed by a larger audience, it allows a wider variety of perspectives to be shared, and students are able to gain feedback from more people. From my experiences, I have noticed that students are eager to share their work and they are satisfied when they have the opportunity to share it with their friends and family. Bence went on to explain that it also benefits other educators because other educators are then able to obtain new ideas, understand what is possible, see what can be improved upon, determine what could be reenvisioned, and find ideas that they would like to replicate in their school. So sharing content benefits the students, the viewers who are able to obtain more perspectives, and other educators are an added bonus too.

Conclusion

Although modifications have been made to improve the engagement and motivational factors of this lesson, it is still a work in progress. Year after year I will continue to improve it. I personally am always editing and revising my lessons and units to better suit my students' needs, interests, and motives; since their needs, interests, and motives are constantly changing. I too remain flexible to best serve them.

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