

## Exemplary Instruction Commentary: Special Education

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### 1. Lessons shown in video

The video clips show pieces of lessons 2, 3, and 4. The second lesson is shown in the first video clip titled 'Lesson 2'. In this clip the students are using cups of m&m's as manipulatives to solve the word problems involving fractions of a set and working with a partner. The third lesson is shown in the second video clip titled 'Lesson 3' where we are having whole group instruction. The third video clip titled 'Lesson 4' is the fourth lesson where the student is reading "Full House" and discussing the main idea of the story. There is one extra video clip that shows communication, in the video clip you will see the students discussing how they can apply what they have learned at home. For lesson one I had to change part of the lesson as we progressed that day. In my lesson plan I put that the student would read the problem and show her process of thinking by explaining each step as she solves the word problem. As the student began working through each problem on the active board I realized that she was not verbally walking me through each step. I wanted the student to do this independently, I realized that I was going to have to prompt her along the way. I had to continually ask her to explain her thinking. For lesson 2 I had hoped that the students would interact more with their partners, it was also a little difficult to hear the focus student at times because she speaks so softly. Several times I had to encourage all of the students to make sure they were communicating with their partner and discussing each problem in a loud voice. Lesson 3 I had not anticipated, before I started teaching the lessons I thought I would use my third lesson as a review of all they had learned before going into their post-assessment. Before I moved onto the third lesson I gave a progress monitoring check-in, at the end of the lesson 2. I wanted to track their progress to see if I needed to change anything. After looking at the results I knew the students needed more support with this concept. The focus student earned a  $2/6$  which was a 33%. The other students performed similarly. I decided to add another lesson with the same concepts, but I would introduce a new strategy. This is why lesson 3 introduces students to portioning sets. After introducing this strategy I gave the students the same post-assessment, each student scored 100%.

### 2. Additional context if needed

The learning environment is in a small resource room shared by two para-educators. Often there will be other voices that you will hear in the background, this is from our para-educator that is teaching another group at the same time. This math group starts at 8:30am, so students are often getting into the classroom at various times after they drop their belongings off in their general education classroom. The curriculum that is required to use for this group is Focus Math Intensive Intervention. The students also have set jobs they must do at the beginning and end of the group (take out tub, hang up rules poster/job chart, turn on technology), this takes up some instruction time. The cooperating teacher requires that I use the Read Naturally curriculum for teaching reading comprehension.

#### Focus learner

Lesson 2 (video clip 1) –The focus learner is seen closest to the camera and has a black and green dress on.

Lesson 3 (video clip 2) – The focus learner is seen in the middle of the table. She is wearing a long sleeve pink and blue shirt and her hair is in pigtails.

Lesson 4 (video clip 3) – The focus learner is the only student seen in the video.

Communication video clip – The focus learner is wearing a black top and green skirt.

### 3. Promoting a positive environment

When a student gets something incorrect, I gently correct them or ask questions so they are able to self-evaluate and self-correct; you will notice this in video clip 'Lesson 2' at 00:14. Instead of telling students what to do or how to do something I give them choices or ask them questions until they are able to generate ideas and answer on their own; you can see this in video clip 'Lesson 3' at 5:11. I try to make encouraging comments to student's and lead them to self-correction when they get an answer incorrect as seen in video clip 'Lesson 4' at 2:42 where I redirect the student's answer and offer her praise after the correction. I also praise students when they get something correct, such as working well together, as seen in video clip 'Lesson 2' at 2:08. If a student is confused I make sure to stop and clarify anything that is confusing and slowly walk through each step until the student understands as seen in video clip 'Lesson 3' at 5:02.

### **Supportive and challenging environment**

You will see my interactions with the students are friendly, I demonstrate caring and respect for each student. For example in video clip 'Lesson 2' at 2:29 you will see how I gently let J know that she needs to move through each problem at a quicker pace. I also respectfully explain to her that I want her to have a chance to get through each problem. You will also notice that there are high expectations set for each student and hard work is praised, notice video clip 'Lesson 2' at 2:07 you will hear me praising the students for working so hard/good together. Throughout each clip you will notice that there is little loss of instruction time because students need few prompts or reminders. Students all follow the classroom rules and routines which are established. You will also see throughout video clip 'Lesson 3' that each student has access to the learning activities, the table and chairs are set up to ensure each student is able to access resources in the classroom (reply to learning checks, view visual timer, read the learning objective, and view the document camera).

### **4. Engage and motivate**

As seen in video clip 'Lesson 4' at 7:04 the focus learner engaged in self-reflection by using the reflection cards. Reflection cards were used at the end of each lesson. Reflection cards are meant to gauge the students understanding and comprehension of the learning target and lesson objectives. The focus learner also uses learning checks which can be seen in video clip 'Lesson 3' at 1:30 and 4:32. Learning checks are used for self-evaluation and expression of the students understanding of the lesson objective. The focus learner also uses exit slips to express her understanding of the learning target and lesson objective this can be found in the work samples provided.

### **Strategies to engage and motivate**

Throughout each lesson I used strategies that engaged and motivated the focus learner. I used M&M's to use as a manipulative as seen in video clip 'Lesson 2' at 1:00. In lesson 1 I made use of the active board. This was important to incorporate into the lesson because the focus student enjoys using technology. The word problems were turned into an active board activity in lesson 1. In video clip 'Lesson 4' at 00:50 you will notice that I made use of the students love for reading. I found a book related to the math lesson and this is how I incorporated the primary and secondary learning targets. I asked a lot of questions throughout each lesson, I also randomly call on students to answer questions to ensure they are remaining engaged you will see this in video clip 'Lesson 3' at 00:08 and 00:34. I also sent home several emails to parents to let them know how each student was progressing throughout the lesson sequence. Home-school communication is a big motivation for the focus learner. Her parents have set up a reward system at home where she can earn video game time each time her teacher sends home a positive email. This is a big incentive for her to try her best. The focus learner is also motivated by reaching her goals, by explaining what the learning objective is and reviewing this each day it gives her motivation to succeed and understanding of what she is working towards. You can see the student reading the learning objective for the day in the communication clip at 00:01.

### **Link to prior learning and assets**

As you can see in the communication video clip at 00:14 which was taken from lesson 2 I specifically address the students' personal life with new learning. We discuss how students can use what we are learning about fractions in their everyday life. The students respond with several responses. The focus learner responds with, "pizza." This was also done

as an exit slip, which is shown in the work samples provided. In video clip 'Lesson 3' at 00:10 I assess prior learning by asking the students, "What is my bottom number, and what does this stand for?" and "What is my top number, and what does this stand for?" Before beginning each lesson I discuss what the learning objective was for the previous lesson and how that relates to the lesson objective for the current lesson. I also discuss what we learned from the previous lesson and how we can apply what we have learned to the current lesson.

### **Strategies leading to independence**

In lesson 1 I chose to create an activity using technology instead of using a worksheet. I knew the student would get bored with writing on a worksheet the entire lesson. I created word problems on the active board, I know she enjoys using the active board and that she would remain engaged while working toward the primary learning target (student will be able to use a manipulative to solve problems involving fractions of a set.) You will also see in video clip 'Lesson 2' at 1:00 I brought in a fun manipulative (M&M's) for the students to solve the word problems. Students were motivated to finish their word problems so they could eat the M&M's; this kept the students on task and engaged. You will also see in video clip 'Lesson 4' at 1:23 the student is shown reading a book about fractions to find the main idea. The student enjoys reading so this story was helpful in reinforcing fractions and working on finding the main idea in the text.

### **5. Eliciting deep learning**

There are many times that I respond to the focus learner's performance to promote application of learning related to the primary learning target. In video clip 'Lesson 2' at 1:50 the focus learner is working with a partner to answer word problems. At this point you will see the focus learner say 18 is three groups of 6, I respond by telling her good job at sorting the groups. By providing praise when she gets the answer correct the focus learner feels more confident about her answers. In the same video clip (Lesson 2) at 2:38 you will see me telling the focus learner that she needs to sort the M&M's quickly so that she can work through each problem. This is important because the focus learner struggles with completing tasks in a timely manner. When she is given prompts she performs at a quicker rate. In this same video clip (Lesson 2) at 4:48 and 5:12 you will see the focus learner and her partner struggling with a word problem. I respond to how she was working through the problem and give her an explanation of total groups/number of groups. In video clip 3 'Lesson 3', you will see at 4:30 I respond to J's learning check. She is feeling confused and I respond to her confusion by explaining a word problem in a slower pace to figure out where the confusion is.

### **Feedback opportunities**

Throughout each lesson I provide feedback to the focus learner. If you see video clip 'Lesson 2' at 4:50 and 5:12 I prompted the student to look at how she was sorting groups and also prompted her on the strategy that was taught the previous day. This was meant to supply verbal feedback so each student could change the way they were sorting the groups, we then had a conference about this feedback after the lesson. I also provide written feedback on student work (as you will see in the work samples provided). One to two times weekly I have a conference with the focus learner to go over her work and explain my feedback. She is then given an opportunity to take her work and apply my feedback on a separate sheet of paper.

### **Promoting self-monitoring**

As you can see in video clip 'Lesson 2' at 4:33 the focus learner was confused about how many groups she was getting out for the fraction  $\frac{1}{5}$ . After some prompting she was able to self-evaluate and correct it. This was also shown in video clip 'Lesson 2' at 5:30, when the focus learner was not able to explain to me how many M&M's were in the number of groups and the total groups. After a few clarifying questions and prompting she was able to self-correct. In video clip 'Lesson 3' after introducing the new strategy the students do a learning check and are able to self-evaluate on how they understand the new strategy (not shown in the video clip). The focus learner self-evaluates with a green learning check, meaning she understands the concept (not shown in the video clip). Later in this video clip at 1:30 another learning check is done and the focus learner has changed her learning check to red. This means that she has self-evaluated and believes that she is confused about the new strategy. After asking her to clarify what is confusing she is able to self-evaluate and move her learning check back to green. You will see at 4:31 another learning check is done and the focus

learner moves her learning check to yellow, meaning that she is a little confused. I ask her to explain what she is confused about; I walked through each step of the process to figure out what she was confused about and clarified each step in the process. After a follow-up learning check was done she changed her learning check back to green.

## **6. Supporting student learning**

The materials, supports, and instructional strategies in each lesson supported the focus learner's progress toward the lesson objectives for the primary learning target. They also reflected the learner's development, age, strengths, and needs. For lesson 1 the learning objective was, "I can use a manipulative to correctly solve  $\frac{7}{8}$  (87.5%) word problems (using words to show my work) involving fractions of a set on the active board." For lesson 1 the lesson objective is met by having the focus learner solve word problems with fractions of a set on the active board. This was age appropriate; the student enjoys using the active board. One of her strengths is being able to remember concrete facts; she is able to immediately tell me what the numerator and denominator represent. One of her accommodations is to have visual assignments. This accommodation was offered in lesson 1, she is able to visually watch the large chips and move the chips to categorize them. In lesson 2 the learning objective was, "I can discuss with a partner and use a manipulative to correctly solve  $\frac{8}{9}$  (87.5%) word problems involving fractions of a set." The focus learner is given a worksheet where she can show her work, it is difficult for her to solve problems without showing her work. You can see in video clip 'Lesson 3' at 3:46 the student working through the word problems. She also needs to use a manipulative when solving math problems. M&M's were provided as the manipulative as seen in video clip 'Lesson 2' at 1:00. It is difficult for the focus learner to communicate while working through word problems. I encourage her to explain the process because I want her to get more comfortable discussing her work. J was put with a partner that she feels comfortable with and that will kindly encourage her to explain her answers as seen in video clip 'Lesson 2' at 1:25. The focus learner does better when she has word problems that she can relate to, in each word problem I used the names of individuals that she knows. In lesson 3 the learning objective was, "I can partition sets to correctly solve  $\frac{8}{9}$  (87.5%) word problems involving fractions of a set." In this lesson I taught the students a new strategy. The focus learner has a difficult time solving word problems without showing her work on a separate sheet of paper. As you can see in video clip 'Lesson 3' at 5:58 I encouraged J to show her work in whichever way was best for her. J expressed that it was easier for her to use circles and stars to show her work instead of circles and tally marks. J also needs instructions broken down into smaller chunks. Several times I stopped and asked her formative assessment questions as shown in video clip 'Lesson 4' at 2:30. Because J needs repetition in order to master a concept, the concepts were provided in various formats (active board, worksheet, M&M's, independent work, partner work, whole group instruction). J can be an inaccurate self-reflector at times. This is why I make a point to stop and go through the entire process each time she changes her learning check color. It is helpful to ask J prompting/leading questions when determining what is confusing; you can see this in video clip 'Lesson 3' at 4:36.

## **Strategies to promote self-direction**

As you can see in video clip 'Lesson 3' at 00:28. I taught the students to use a new strategy of solving word problems involving fractions of a set. The strategy taught the students to partition fractions into groups in order to solve the word problem. After learning this new strategy J was then able to apply her learning and become more independent. With this strategy she was able to direct herself and move onto more difficult word problems. As mentioned in the planning commentary J does best when provided several accommodations. In video clip Lesson 2 I provided J with the use of a manipulative. The student was also provided a manipulative in Lesson 1 (not shown). In video clip 'Lesson 4' at 4:07 I provided J with the use of a graphic organizer to help her to organize her ideas in order to write her summary. Expectations and instructions were also provided as a visual in close proximity to J. J used many different materials throughout the lesson sequence. You will see in video clip 'Lesson 2' at 1:00 J uses M&M's as a manipulative. In video clip 'Lesson 3' at 1:34 J used a separate sheet of paper in order to show her work. In video clip 'Lesson 4' J used a book related to fractions to help her better understand the concept.

## **7. Analysis of teaching**

For lesson 1 instead of having the focus learner work on the active board the entire lesson I would have incorporated a variety of ways for her to work on the word problems. I might have even incorporated stations. I would have done a

small assessment earlier in the lesson sequence to see if students were mastering the concepts, I then could have intervened with a new strategy sooner than lesson 3. I also would have given the focus learner more reminders of quickly showing her work instead of taking so much time to use her manipulative to create groups or to draw partitioning sets as seen in video clip 'Lesson 3' at 1:40 and video clip 'Lesson 2' at 2:30. After looking at the video she was spending too much time playing with the manipulative and showing her work instead of working on the word problems. I may have also had a discussion with the focus learner in regards to accurate self-reflection. She struggles with accurately determining what color she is on for learning checks and thinks she needs to change the color every time there is a learning check even if her understanding is the same. For example, you can see her change her learning check in video clip 'Lesson 3' at 1:37, this was only a few minutes after the previous learning check. In video clip 'Lesson 4' at 00:21 you can see the student reading every other page of "Full House". I would have had the student read the entire book aloud, and had her stop several times throughout the book to answer comprehension questions. This would have made it a little easier for her to complete the graphic organizer. I also would have set up an extra lesson before the math post-assessment to create a review game for the students. I think this would have been helpful for each of the students and given them a chance to generalize their knowledge.

### **Changes for improvement**

I think that by implementing stations in lesson 1 the focus learner would have remained more engaged throughout the lesson. She enjoyed working on the active board but after 15 minutes of doing the same thing she needed a transition into something different. By giving the focus learner more reminders and prompts about working quicker with the use of her manipulative and drawing her sets she could have spent more time solving the problems instead of spending so much time drawing her sets as seen in video clip 'Lesson 3' at 1:29 and 3:42. By discussing what accurate self-reflection looks like I may have been able to determine sooner that the focus learner was confused and needed a new strategy to use. I also could have spent less time going over concepts for a second time, that she already understood as seen in video clip 'Lesson 4' at 1:30, it was unnecessary to stop and discuss that  $\frac{6}{6}$  equals 1 whole. If I would have instructed the student to read the entire "Full House" book and asked her formative assessment questions throughout the book I feel that she would have been able to go directly into the graphic organizer with little prompts. This also would have helped with her confusion in regards to the fraction question asked on the last page of the book. As you can see on the last page of reading "Full House" in video clip 'Lesson 4' at 2:32 she was a bit confused about the fraction of cake that was left for Miss Bloom.