LEARNING DESIGN SOLUTION

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Phase I - Information Gathering

Target Audience

The target audience is learners of English as an additional language. It will be designed for grades 6+ (but could possibly be used at lower grade levels).

Our school has tried for all 4 years of its existence to raise the reading level of the students so that we can open more first language classes; however, we have never seemed to find a solution that works. In the first year, the higher level students used class sets of graded readers at increasing stages over the year. The lower level students were given short story boxes. The issue there was that the lower level students were incredibly bored by the stories aimed at children and the higher level students were kept all at the same level as a class despite varying reading levels.

Years 2 and 3 we used the scholastic reading program which allowed students to read books at their lexile level online. The issue here was that the program wasn't aimed at second language learners, so the books at certain lexile levels were childrens books which we were asking grade 8 students to read in order to increase their reading abilities. It was demotivating to most students. The questions were also difficult for second language speakers to answer, so many saw little to no progress, and many students saw their score get worse despite trying their genuine best.

This year, we've switched to a system called Achieve3000 which gives students access to countless articles and accompanying comprehension questions. The articles are all written at a range of lexile levels (similar to Newsela), so students with different abilities can read the same article. However, there is very little interest (even though students can search for topics they enjoy). Students don't engage with the articles very much and just do it because they have to. Because of this, we haven't seen much lexile growth this year. Plus, the articles don't seem to prepare students for future literature reading. It's a good system, but it isn't working for our students.

Purpose and Goal

What I'd like to design is something that uses graded readers (i.e. literature aimed at second language learners) to create an engaging learning experience through gamification. I'd like something that encourages students to gain experience points for correct comprehension answers (rather than showing a score), and then gives them an opportunity to use those points for something like an avatar. The idea is to give them a motivation to get the answer right because while some students are intrinsically motivated to do their best, many of our students don't care about their score as long as the work is done so they aren't given infractions for not finishing the homework.

Hopefully, the motivation to get points will encourage students to try to increase their level and read higher levels as appropriate. But I don't want them to be so obsessed with the actual number of their lexile score because in the past, it has almost always been a cause of anxiety and stress to students.

In short, the goal is to motivate students to read and engage them as they do to make reading a habit and increase reading levels along the way.

Learning Levels

If we achieve our goals, the program won't take students past the **understanding** stage of Bloom's (comparing, contrasting, paraphrasing, summarizing, predicting, categorizing, etc.). We are really just looking for an understanding of what students have read, but it could open the doors for higher order thinking in the classroom with projects and presentations.

Research Reviewed

Describe the learning theories or models that you have reviewed to arrive at this instructional design solution. Your description should include how this research has influenced or guided your learning solution. Include any diagrams of learning models or theories that you have found or created.

Below are some websites I've read in trying to come up with ideas for the gamification aspect of this project:
https://www.trueeducationpartnerships.com/schools/gamification-in-education/
https://learningsolutionsmag.com/articles/155/five-e-learning-design-strategies-that-keep-learners-coming-back-for-more

For theories of gamification, I've read this:

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563221002867

This looks at some things from the other sites such as the ACRS motivational model, and the cognitive load theory which is the basis for E-Learning theory. The article notes that based on the available research, gamification is not a "silver-bullet" for getting students to learn, but can be effective when designed in well researched ways. Table 3 of this article is particularly helpful in understanding the theories behind gamification; however, it is a massive table.

It mentions theories of motivation and self-efficacy, which directly aligns with what I want to do. Motivation is the key to what I'm trying to do with this idea.

I've also looked back at our class google site on Instructional design theories. I think a lot of what I learned about E-Learning Theory would be relevant here because it talks about how to make things like videos engaging without being overwhelming. Principles such as using visuals, text, and narration in groups of two, but not all three at once so as not to overwhelm the working memory.

Phase II - Learning Design Solution

I've chosen to go with a SAM model for this design because I like the iterative nature of it. I think that when developing an online program, it would be beneficial to have multiple places to test and re-evaluate. A linear process doesn't seem like the appropriate choice in this instance. SAM is also very collaborative and I'll need to work with a designer as well as either get permissions to use graded readers or work with a team to write our own (very preferably get permission to use existing ones).
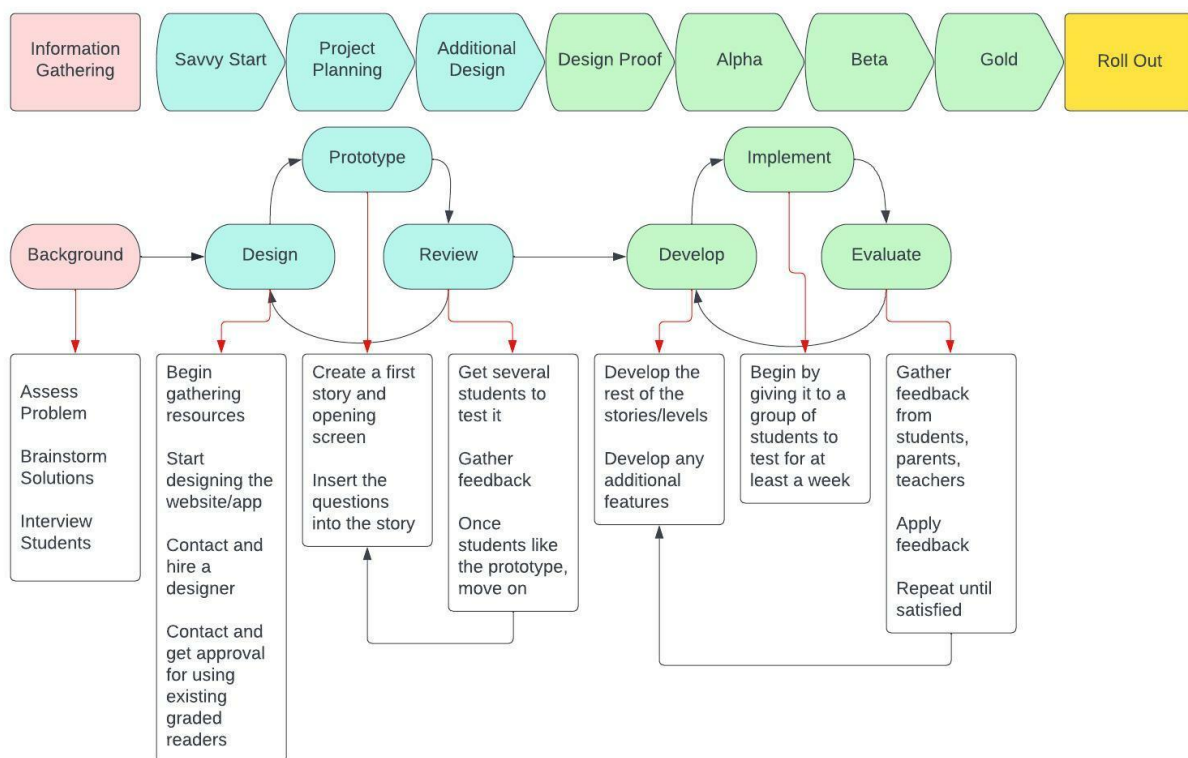
Phase III - Technology Implementation Plan

Please find here the link to my timeline. I've created a 9 month timeline which I think is a reasonable amount of time to create something as big as this. We may find that the timeline needs to be extended, which we could always do later. There may need to be more iterations than I've planned for based on the feedback we get. Another issue may be that if we can't get permission to use existing graded readers from a publisher such as Cambridge or Oxford university press, we would have to find another publisher or write our own stories. This would involve a much bigger team and a much longer process of creation.