Element
Lesson Adjustment

Description
Experienced teachers are able to make both minor and major adjustments to a lesson during instruction, if necessary. Such adjustments depend on a teacher’s store of alternate instructional strategies and the confidence to make a shift when needed.

A Closer Look

To help you recognize the subtle differences between the higher levels of performance for this element, note the keywords emphasized in the descriptions and review the activities common to those levels.

PROFICIENT

The teacher makes a minor adjustment to the lesson, and the adjustment occurs smoothly.

At the proficient level of performance, teaching practices may include the following types of activities:

• Teacher continuously uses whole-class assessment techniques (see Component 3d on page 331) to understand who is and is not learning and why.
• Teacher identifies the aspects of a lesson that are likely to cause confusion and plans for alternative approaches in advance.
• When making a minor lesson adjustment, the teacher lets students know about it and solicits their feedback about how it’s working.
• Teachable moments are always connected to content standards and learning objectives.
• During instruction, teacher regularly prompts for student interests that relate to the content.

DISTINGUISHED

The teacher successfully makes a major adjustment to a lesson when needed.

At the distinguished level of performance, teaching practices may include the following types of activities:

• Teacher accurately diagnoses difficulties with the lesson based on regular, whole-class assessment.
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• Teacher identifies likely content and activity challenges in the original lesson and
designs a second lesson that avoids those challenges. If an informal assessment reveals
student difficulties, the teacher implements the backup lesson.
• Teacher accurately weighs the value of implementing a major adjustment against the
loss of the planned instruction.
• Teacher reveals to students the reasons for making a major lesson change and gets their
feedback about its success.
• The teacher invites students to connect a teachable moment to the appropriate content
standard or learning objective.
• When students have difficulties with the lesson, the teacher probes them for additional
information so that the lesson adjustment accurately addresses the problem.

The tools that follow will help you explore how to put the activities of these high levels of
performance into practice in your classroom.
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Element Reflection

✔ Teacher tool  _ Student tool

1. During a lesson, what indicates that you need to make an adjustment?

2. How effective are your lesson adjustments? How do you know?
By anticipating areas where students may have problems understanding, you can increase your flexibility and responsiveness by planning adjustments such as reteaching or increasing or decreasing the pace.

Study the lesson plan flow chart below and note how it plans for the possible difficulties of confusion or low understanding. Then plan an action flow lesson of your own.

**SAMPLE ACTION FLOW LESSON**

- **Time Frame:** 4–6 minutes
- **Grouping:** Choral Work (whole class)
- **Teaching Notes (Example):**
  - Show cards with material students must internalize.
  - Encourage high energy.

- **Time Frame:** 3–6 minutes
- **Grouping:** Guided Practice (whole class)
- **Teaching Notes (Example):**
  - Pose problem may be as below:
  - Write each student works alone at desk, solve the problem correctly on the board or overhead. Students check their own work.
  - Focus is on student practice. No expectation that all students have mastered material.
  - Assess content mastery as lesson proceeds.
  - Avoid extended discussion or taking too much. Keep pace moving.

- **Time Frame:** 5–10 minutes
- **Grouping:** Think Aloud (whole class)
- **Teaching Notes (Example):**
  - Work some problems aloud after students have tried to solve them.
  - Verbalize how you are reasoning the solutions.
  - Students turn to their elbow partners and help each other.
  - If both understand, they create new challenges for each other.
  - Circulate and help students as necessary.

- **Time Frame:** 5–10 minutes
- **Grouping:** Sharing Pairs (pairs)
  - Students turn to their elbow partners and help each other.
  - If both understand, they create new challenges for each other.
  - Circulate and help students as necessary.
If Understanding Is High

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<tr>
<th>Grouping Arrangement</th>
<th>Teaching Notes (Example)</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
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| Think Aloud (whole class) | • Introduce easy example of new problem, thinking aloud when working on the board or overhead.  
• Pose similar problem for students to try by themselves.  
• Work the problem on board, again thinking aloud.  
• Pose a slightly harder problem, let them try it, then invite a student to show the solution on board.  
• Continue at comfortable pace, and move on before interest lags. | 6–12 minutes |
| Review, Test (whole class) | • Write problem on board.  
• Pause to let students begin working and check that they are.  
• Work the problem correctly on the board, and students correct their own work.  
• Proceed through set of problems.  
• Avoid giving instruction on how to solve problems.  
• Focus is on review, self-correction, and personal challenge.  
• Pace is sufficiently brisk to maximize student involvement. | 4–8 minutes |
| Voting Strategy (whole class) | • Give students a few moments to assess their learning process or learning outcomes and to express themselves.  
• Ask how many took risks on today’s review, how many strengthened old understandings, how many like the way they handled today’s test.  
• Students respond by raising their hands or thumbs-up, thumbs-down.  
• Use information to plan for following lesson. | 1–2 minutes |