Adaptive Teaching: A Lesson Planning Tool

Plan accessible explanations, scaffolds and checks for understanding while keeping ambitious goals.

For: Class teachers, subject leaders and teaching assistants

Start with the learning

State what learners should understand or be able to do. Separate the learning goal from an avoidable access demand, such as extensive handwriting when the goal is explaining a scientific idea.

Make the model accessible

Use a short explanation and a visible example. Teach essential vocabulary, break directions into manageable steps and offer processing time. Check understanding through a response rather than asking only whether everyone understands.

Scaffold, then release responsibility

Use worked examples, visual sequences, sentence starters or concrete materials according to observed need. Plan when support will be reduced. Avoid making adult proximity the only route to success.

Check and adjust

Use brief questions, demonstrations or work samples during learning. Offer an appropriate way to respond and decide whether to re-model, provide guided practice or increase challenge. Do not infer ability from a diagnosis.

A classroom example

Goal: explain why a material is suitable for a purpose. Provide real objects, images and a spoken model. Learners may point, speak, type or write an explanation. Assess the reasoning rather than handwriting, unless handwriting is itself the goal.

Put it into practice

Print and complete with your team. Use initials or an anonymous reference; store personal information only in approved systems.

Learning goal and evidence of success

Likely access barriers and learner strengths

Vocabulary, explanation and model

Scaffold and plan to reduce it

Response choices and checks during learning

What changed for the learner? Next lesson adjustment

Further reading

Early Excellence: SEND in the Early Years

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