

3e DEMONSTRATING FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

“Flexibility and responsiveness” refer to a teacher’s skill in making adjustments in a lesson to respond to changing conditions. When a lesson is well planned, there may be no need for changes during the course of the lesson itself. Shifting the approach in midstream is not always necessary; in fact, with experience comes skill in accurately predicting how a lesson will go and being prepared for different possible scenarios. But even the most skilled, and best prepared, teachers will occasionally find either that a lesson is not proceeding as they would like or that a teachable moment has presented itself. They are ready for such situations. Furthermore, teachers who are committed to the learning of all students persist in their attempts to engage them in learning, even when confronted with initial setbacks.

The elements of component 3e are:

Lesson adjustment

Experienced teachers are able to make both minor and (at times) major adjustments to a lesson, or mid-course corrections. Such adjustments depend on a teacher’s store of alternate instructional strategies and the confidence to make a shift when needed.

Response to students

Occasionally during a lesson, an unexpected event will occur that presents a true teachable moment. It is a mark of considerable teacher skill to be able to capitalize on such opportunities.

Persistence

Committed teachers don’t give up easily; when students encounter difficulty in learning (which all do at some point), these teachers seek alternate approaches to help their students be successful. In these efforts, teachers display a keen sense of efficacy.

Indicators include:

- Incorporation of students’ interests and daily events into a lesson
- The teacher adjusting instruction in response to evidence of student understanding (or lack of it)
- The teacher seizing on a teachable moment

UNSATISFACTORY • LEVEL 1

The teacher ignores students' questions; when students have difficulty learning, the teacher blames them or their home environment for their lack of success. The teacher makes no attempt to adjust the lesson even when students don't understand the content.

CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES

- The teacher ignores indications of student boredom or lack of understanding.
- The teacher brushes aside students' questions.
- The teacher conveys to students that when they have difficulty learning, it is their fault.
- In reflecting on practice, the teacher does not indicate that it is important to reach all students.
- The teacher makes no attempt to adjust the lesson in response to student confusion.

POSSIBLE EXAMPLES

- *The teacher says, "We don't have time for that today."*
- *The teacher says, "If you'd just pay attention, you could understand this."*
- *When a student asks the teacher to explain a mathematical procedure again, the teacher says, "Just do the homework assignment; you'll get it then."*
- *And others...*

BASIC • LEVEL 2

The teacher accepts responsibility for the success of all students but has only a limited repertoire of strategies to use. Adjustment of the lesson in response to assessment is minimal or ineffective.

- The teacher makes perfunctory attempts to incorporate students' questions and interests into the lesson.
- The teacher conveys to students a level of responsibility for their learning but also his uncertainty about how to assist them.
- In reflecting on practice, the teacher indicates the desire to reach all students but does not suggest strategies for doing so.
- The teacher's attempts to adjust the lesson are partially successful.

- *The teacher says, "I'll try to think of another way to come at this and get back to you."*
- *The teacher says, "I realize not everyone understands this, but we can't spend any more time on it."*
- *The teacher rearranges the way the students are grouped in an attempt to help students understand the lesson; the strategy is partially successful.*
- *And others...*

PROFICIENT • LEVEL 3

The teacher successfully accommodates students' questions and interests. Drawing on a broad repertoire of strategies, the teacher persists in seeking approaches for students who have difficulty learning. If impromptu measures are needed, the teacher makes a minor adjustment to the lesson and does so smoothly.

- The teacher incorporates students' interests and questions into the heart of the lesson.
 - The teacher conveys to students that she has other approaches to try when the students experience difficulty.
 - In reflecting on practice, the teacher cites multiple approaches undertaken to reach students having difficulty.
 - When improvising becomes necessary, the teacher makes adjustments to the lesson.
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- *The teacher says, "That's an interesting idea; let's see how it fits."*
 - *The teacher illustrates a principle of good writing to a student, using his interest in basketball as context.*
 - *The teacher says, "This seems to be more difficult for you than I expected; let's try this way," and then uses another approach.*
 - *And others...*

DISTINGUISHED • LEVEL 4

The teacher seizes an opportunity to enhance learning, building on a spontaneous event or students' interests, or successfully adjusts and differentiates instruction to address individual student misunderstandings. Using an extensive repertoire of instructional strategies and soliciting additional resources from the school or community, the teacher persists in seeking effective approaches for students who need help.

- The teacher seizes on a teachable moment to enhance a lesson.
 - The teacher conveys to students that she won't consider a lesson "finished" until every student understands and that she has a broad range of approaches to use.
 - In reflecting on practice, the teacher can cite others in the school and beyond whom he has contacted for assistance in reaching some students.
 - The teacher's adjustments to the lesson, when they are needed, are designed to assist individual students.
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- *The teacher stops a lesson midstream and says, "This activity doesn't seem to be working. Here's another way I'd like you to try it."*
 - *The teacher incorporates the school's upcoming championship game into an explanation of averages.*
 - *The teacher says, "If we have to come back to this tomorrow, we will; it's really important that you understand it."*
 - *And others...*