

Elements of Effective Instruction In Action

Educators know, and research around collective teacher efficacy supports, that a group of educators rowing together to grow their practice is one of the most effective ways to positively impact student learning and growth.

The Elements of Effective Instruction In Action is a tool that allows teams of educators and leaders to build a strong shared vision of what effective and inclusive instructional practice looks like, sounds like, and feels like.

This tool has been designed intentionally so that it can be used to support a variety of structures for professional learning. It can be used to calibrate instructional rounds, learning walks, match-maker pair observations, and peer coaching. This tool can also be used by PLGs or Communities of Practices in which educators learn and grow from each other.

”

“Sometimes the best
PD is the teacher
down the hall.”

—Brian Aspinall
Educator/Author

Element 1: Learning Environment

The learning environment supports each student to take risks, ask questions, and make and learn from mistakes. The physical space, routines and procedures, and development of positive relationships create a physically, socially, and emotionally safe environment.

What do we see teachers doing?

- The teacher configures the physical space to match the learning tasks and allow for movement and autonomy. For example, centers or stations, group seating for collaborative learning, reorganizing the room to allow for gallery walks, etc
- The teacher communicates a belief in every student in the room through positive narration and proactive redirection.

What do we see students doing?

- Students can explain what is expected, when, and why.
- Every student is participating in routines and learning experiences aligned to the learning objectives.

What do I see teachers doing?	What do I see students doing?
What's working well?	Possible next steps

Element 2: Clear Shared Outcomes

The learning outcomes are shared and internalized by educators and students. These outcomes anchor and guide the choices of instructional activities, materials, practice assignments, and assessment tasks. Outcomes are understood and used by students to set goals, guide learning, and prompt self-reflection.

What do we see teachers doing?

- The teacher unpacks the learning target at the beginning of class, clearly defining key terms and concepts.
- The teacher revisits the learning target at the end of class and allows students to self-assess their understanding using a criteria for success or rubric.

What do we see students doing?

- Students can explain how the activities connect to the learning outcome.
- Students engage in self-reflection and goal-setting.

What do I see teachers doing?	What do I see students doing?
What's working well?	Possible next steps

Element 3: Varied Content, Materials and Methods

Students explore ideas and information in varied ways and access learning through multiple entry points. Educators select content and materials to engage and meet the needs of each learner.

What do we see teachers doing?

- The teacher is facilitating a jigsaw activity where each student becomes an “expert” in a part of the text.
- The teacher facilitates the students so they can work independently, collaboratively, or ask the teacher for before the formative assessment.

What do we see students doing?

- Students may be engaged in different tasks or activities, but they each align to the demand of the learning objective.
- Students share their understanding using a variety of modalities including speaking and writing.

What do I see teachers doing?	What do I see students doing?
What's working well?	Possible next steps

Element 4: Practice and Feedback

Students have frequent and intentionally planned opportunities to practice what they are learning and are given timely, specific feedback based on their current performance in relation to the desired outcomes.

What do we see teachers doing?

- The teacher provides concrete, actionable feedback aligned to the task and learning objective as they circulate during independent work time.
- The teacher leads the class in a mini-reteach to address a class-wide misconception.

What do we see students doing?

- Students received work from the day before with feedback. Each student reviews it and makes an improvement based on the feedback.
- The students have completed a study guide for an assessment. They are scoring each other's study guide using a common rubric.

What do I see teachers doing?

What do I see students doing?

What's working well?

Possible next steps

Element 5: Complex Thinking and Transfer

Students are regularly coached and taught to engage in higher-order thinking through instructional activities and practice tasks. Curriculum, instruction, and assessments are designed to prompt complex thinking, integration of concepts and ideas, and application of learned skills to new material or novel situations.

What do we see teachers doing?

- One student puts their head down and says they don't understand. The teacher responds by providing a quick definition for a keyword, waits for them to practice, and then says, "I knew you could do it!" before moving on.
- The guiding questions are deep and relevant. When students are slow to engage, the teacher asks a few prompting questions before going back to the guiding questions, deepening both engagement and discourse.

What do we see students doing?

- Students engage in a turn and talk before a whole class discussion.
- During the socratic seminar, each student has a role and is engaged and prepared with notes.

What do I see teachers doing?

What do I see students doing?

What's working well?

Possible next steps