

# Responsive teaching

## Overview

Teachers use information gathered through checks for understanding to respond to students' needs in real time.

Teachers provide immediate and corrective feedback and may adapt the lesson or learning sequence by reteaching and differentiating, as needed.

Responsive teaching can be used for individual students, in temporary and flexible groupings or for the whole class.

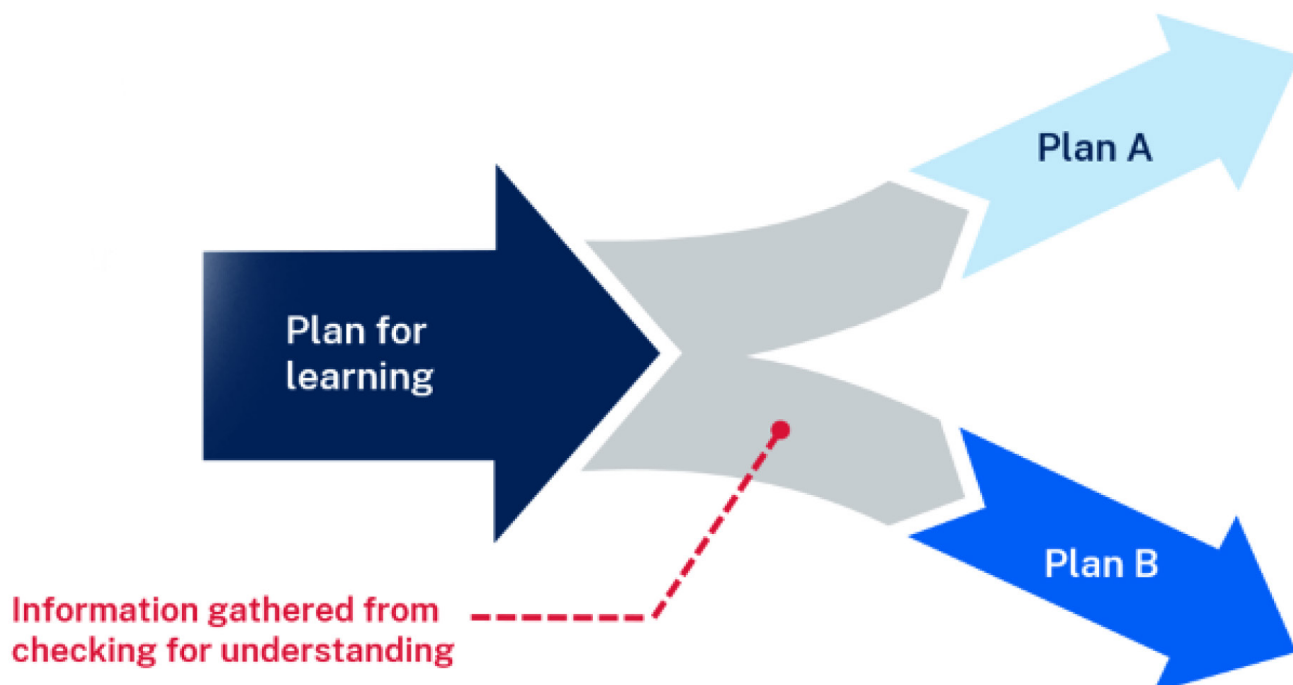
## Key considerations

### Responsive teaching:

- involves prompt feedback, correcting misconceptions and explaining correct answers and processes during a lesson
- facilitates differentiation for diverse learning needs, including extension
- supports the move between modelled, guided and independent practice
- is a key consideration in all explicit teaching strategies.

### Teachers:

- use checks for understanding to monitor learning and inform teaching responses
- monitor errors to choose whether to give feedback or additional instruction
- reflect on student responses to adapt their practice, supporting all students to succeed in learning.



*Teaching is a contingent activity. We cannot predict what students will learn as a result of any particular sequence of instruction. Formative assessment involves getting the best possible evidence about what students have learned and then using this information to decide what to do next.*

(Wiliam 2011:50)

## Classroom application

### History lesson

Students are asked to record one sentence about why the Nile River was essential to developing Ancient Egyptian civilisation. The teacher can see that most of the class connected the Nile with irrigation for agriculture. The teacher explains the correct answer and the students move forward with their learning. If most of the class did not answer correctly, the teacher would choose to re-teach and check for understanding again.

**Hinge questions:** These are pre-planned questions that check for student understanding. They are designed for all students to answer in a short time. The teacher can quickly gather data and make an informed decision whether to move on, re-teach or extend.

### English lesson

Students are learning about paragraphs. After teaching topic sentences, the teacher asks students to construct a topic sentence. Many cannot complete the task. The teacher decides to re-teach topic sentences with more scaffolded sentence starters and models writing the topic sentence using this scaffolding. The teacher continues to be responsive to the whole class and to individual student needs and provides further reasonable adjustments to the learning where needed.

**Re-teaching:** When checking for understanding reveals gaps in learning, teachers try a different approach, including breaking down concepts further or providing further scaffolding and teaching again.

### Science lesson

Before teaching a unit on forces, the teacher identifies a common misconception about gravity that heavier objects fall faster than light objects. The teacher addresses the misconception by demonstrating how objects of the same size and shape fall at the same speed regardless of mass and checks for understanding of this concept.

**Pre-empting misconceptions:** Misconceptions can be identified both before and during a lesson. This allows teachers to understand the accuracy or inaccuracy of the knowledge students use to develop their schema.

### Mathematics lesson

Kirra partitioned and regrouped numbers to solve addition and subtraction problems beyond Stage expectations. Her teacher used the Differentiation Adjustment Tool to identify ways to extend the complexity of Kirra's learning. This included 'what if...?' problems with multiple variables to stimulate her thinking.

**Extending:** If checks for understanding show that students have deep knowledge and understanding, teachers can differentiate to extend learning.

## Checking for understanding resources



<https://edu.nsw.link/explicit-teaching-checking-for-understanding>

## More resources

AERO – How students learn best

<https://www.edresearch.edu.au/research/research-reports/how-students-learn-best-overview-evidence>

AERO – Monitor progress

<https://www.edresearch.edu.au/guides-resources/practice-guides/monitor-progress>

Curriculum planning for every student in every classroom

<https://myplsso.education.nsw.gov.au/mylearning/catalogue/details/95110cf8-aa81-ed11-ade7-0003ffeadf8>

Differentiation adjustment tool

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/high-potential-and-gifted-education/supporting-educators/implement/differentiation-adjustment-strategies>

Establishing a differentiated classroom

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/professional-learning/teacher-quality-and-accreditation/strong-start-great-teachers/refining-practice/differentiating-learning/establishing-a-differentiated-classroom>

Exploring the evidence: Prior knowledge and Pupil Misconceptions

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/eef-blog-ecf-exploring-the-evidence-prior-knowledge-and-pupil-misconceptions>

Leading explicit teaching

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/explicit-teaching/leading-explicit-teaching>

## Reference

William D (2011) *Embedded Formative Assessment*, Solution Tree Press, Bloomington.