Adaptive teaching in practice

Use the table to discuss what evidence would justify a change. The nine cases are authored illustrations, not observations of named classrooms.

Authored illustrations and two captured opinions. No routine is presented as a trial result.

Routine	What to check	Source and limit
1. Boards up, then change the explanation Authored illustration. Collect every response to a short question. If a shared difficulty appears, explain the step another way.	Look at the reasoning behind the answers. After the explanation, ask a related question to see whether understanding changed.	[A] describes whole-class checks and small in-lesson changes. [B] offers pause and fix. These are practitioner accounts and guidance, not a trial of this routine.
2. A gap is a reason to pause Authored illustration. Stop at an insecure step shown on a mini whiteboard before adding new content.	Ask what the learner meant. An empty board may reflect uncertainty, timing or an access need. Do not infer one cause from the board alone.	[B] offers a response when many misunderstand. [C] describes collecting boards together. Neither supplies a number of wrong answers that must trigger a pause.
3. A shared task with responsive prompts Authored illustration. Start from a common question. Offer a first-step prompt where needed and a justification question where appropriate.	Can the learner now begin and explain the relevant step? Check whether the prompt supported the thinking or completed it for them.	[B] describes adapting support. [D] says support should connect with universal provision. These sources do not establish that one shared task is always preferable.
4. Questions that increase in demand Authored illustration. Use a sequence that begins with a worked step and later asks for an explanation without that prompt.	Check who can explain the method independently. Adjust from the response, rather than fixing a ceiling from an earlier grouping.	[D] warns against reducing thinking through oversimplification. [E] says needs can change. This does not validate a particular sequence or guarantee progress.
5. A new label, the same three tasks Authored discussion case. Examine whether a renamed lesson changed any actual teaching decision. Captured opinion: “Focus has now become adaptive teaching (but still three tasks)”.	Compare the intended learning, the support and the later independent response. A label alone cannot tell you whether a decision was helpful.	@Sci_Hypothesis, 13 January 2026. Opinion on renamed teaching. This is a sarcastic opinion about practice, not evidence against every three-task lesson. [B] supports judgement rather than a formula.

From a response to a decision

Continued. Check the source's scope before treating a routine as an expectation.

Authored illustrations and two captured opinions. No routine is presented as a trial result.

Routine	What to check	Source and limit
6. One writing task, different scaffolds Authored illustration. Two adults circulate during a shared writing task. Offer prompts to learners who need help starting or organising an idea.	Who can continue without the prompt? Check whether additional adult support is helping access to teaching and independent thinking.	[D] connects additional support with classroom learning. [A] describes flexible grouping. These pages do not test this co-teaching arrangement or prescribe group membership.
7. An exit ticket that goes unused Authored discussion case. Ask whether an end-of-lesson check changed subsequent planning. Captured opinion: "I find that I don't adjust my instruction based on exit tickets and only use them for dog & pony shows for admin."	Identify one specific decision informed by the check. If there was none, examine the purpose of collecting it.	@thsuburbanmommy, 25 July 2026. Opinion on unused exit tickets. One person's criticism does not show that exit tickets fail. [A] links present evidence with the next lesson.
8. Reteach, review or explore tomorrow Authored illustration. Use yesterday's responses to plan a short recheck and temporary groups for the next lesson.	Recheck the knowledge before assuming the group still needs the same support. Move learners when the evidence warrants it.	[A] describes adapted starters and sorting work. The three planning labels here are authored. They are not EEF routes or a tested grouping system.
9. Support the thinking, not just completion Authored staff discussion. Compare two prompts: one helps a learner organise an explanation; another supplies the explanation for them.	What reasoning remains for the learner to do? Look for an independent response after support, not only a completed task.	[D] warns that reducing thinking can hinder learning. [F] describes professional noticing and response. These sources do not test this staff activity.

Sources and reading limits

[A]
Wilson, R. (29 April 2026). Adaptive Teaching: Getting the Most from the Moment and What Comes Next. Norfolk Research School.

[B]
Settle, C. (23 February 2026). Checking for understanding that leads to action: adaptive teaching. EEF.

[C]
Settle, C. (14 April 2026). How small changes to everyday teaching can improve how you respond to pupils. EEF.

[D]
EEF (6 July 2026). The EEF Guide to Inclusive Teaching: Adaptations and additional support.

[E]
Settle, C. (21 September 2026). Seeing the learner: the starting point for inclusive teaching. EEF.

[F]
Stock, P. (11 May 2026). Adaptive Expertise: more a mindset than a set of strategies. Greenshaw Research School.