Start with What Students Must Learn

Write the subject goal first, then select the reading, talk and writing needed to reach it.

10 min preparation | Staff planning and review

Before you begin

Bring one upcoming task and a learner response to a short planning conversation.

Use it in four steps

1. Write the subject goal first, then select the reading, talk and writing needed to reach it.
2. Identify the language needed to demonstrate it.
3. Allocate complementary teaching roles and choose one precise support.
4. Review individual responses and agree what to adjust next time.

Worked example: Start with What Students Must Learn

For a science conclusion, the subject teacher checks the mechanism while the EAL specialist plans language linking result, evidence and explanation. Both inspect whether learners use the link independently.

Teacher prompt: “Who will do what in this task, and what learner evidence will we review?”

Review the evidence

Can the team point to a change in learner responses attributable to the planned support?

Review and refine

Reduce scaffolds and specialist prompting as classroom routines become shared and effective.

Apply in your setting

Maths: plan justification language. Humanities: plan source qualification. Agree roles around one shared task rather than separate parallel work.

Adjust the language support

A1-A2 access: keep the subject goal; use visuals, a small word bank, pointing or drawing and partner rehearsal. Use a home language to establish meaning where helpful.

B1-B2 extension: ask for fuller explanations, precise subject vocabulary and qualifications. Reduce sentence openings when learners can organise the response independently.

These are starting points, not placement rules. Judge support from the learner’s response to this task; proficiency can differ across skills.