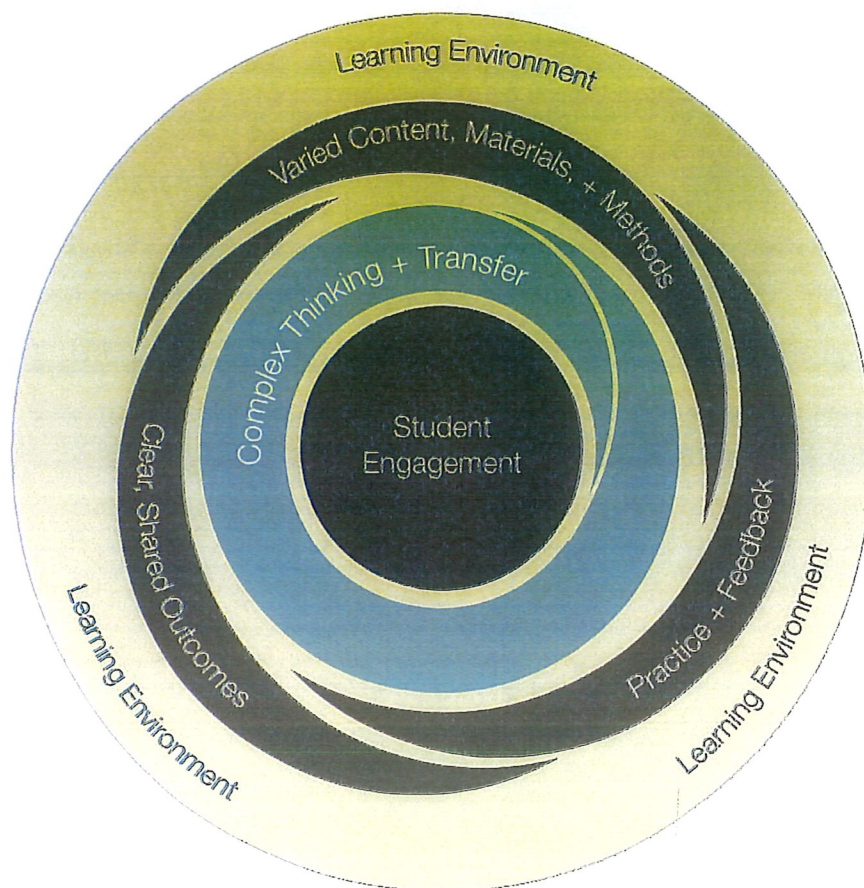# Elements of Effective Instruction

The **Elements of Effective Instruction** framework outlines five intertwined elements of instructional practice that complement and enhance one another. When integrated into learning experiences, these elements foster student engagement with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes and achievement. The framework is grounded in the understanding that students are more interested and invested in their learning when they feel safe in their learning environment, understand what they are learning and why it matters, have opportunities to practice, receive clear feedback on their work, and engage in complex, meaningful thinking.

The tool below supports educators to design and facilitate learning experiences that reflect the five *elements of effective instruction* and incorporate the corresponding *key traits*. While applying the key traits is critical, a demonstrated commitment to each element's *supporting beliefs* is a necessary foundation for fostering student ownership of learning and ensuring equitable outcomes for all students.

Student Engagement
a result of effective instruction

Engaged students are curious about and invested in their learning. They make choices about what and how they learn and can explain the relevance and importance of their work. Genuine engagement leads to deeper learning and improved outcomes.

Elements

1. Learning Environment: The learning environment supports all students 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.

Supporting Beliefs

- The learning environment is a shared domain between students, teachers, families, and other partners.
- Positive and meaningful relationships are the foundation of a productive learning culture.
- Safety and respect are vital to engagement and risk-taking.

Key Traits

Physical Space and Routines	Relationships and Culture
- Clear, consistent, and respectful routines, procedures, and expectations are collaboratively established; students know what is expected, when, and why. - Tools and materials are readily available to students. - The learning environment can be configured in different ways to best fit the task at hand. - Students are empowered to use and move around the learning environment in ways that support their learning.	- Teachers, students, and families establish and maintain positive relationships. - Families are included and engaged in a variety of ways to promote student learning. - All students feel safe to take risks and participate. - Students are supported in building productive relationships with a variety of classmates across differences. - Students collaborate with each other throughout the learning process. - Making multiple attempts and mistakes is expected, accepted, and used as a foundation for further learning.

2. Clear, Shared Outcomes: The learning outcomes are shared and internalized by teachers 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.

Supporting Beliefs

- Everyone involved in the learning process must know where they are going and why the work matters.
- Teachers and students need to be invested in the learning process to achieve outcomes.
- A culture of reflection is necessary for students to set and adjust personalized goals.

- Learning outcomes are clear—both long-term (e.g., graduation standards and performance indicators) and short-term (e.g., learning targets).
- Clear descriptions of what success looks like are established and shared.
- Materials, activities, and assessment tasks are selected by teachers and students to align with the learning outcomes.
- Students can explain how tasks and experiences align to learning outcomes.
- Students use standards and learning targets to reflect on their own progress and set goals for growth.

3. Varied Content, Materials, and Methods of Instruction: Students explore ideas and information in varied ways and access learning through multiple entry points. Teachers select content and materials to engage and meet the needs of all learners.

Supporting Beliefs

- Selected content must foster and reflect an understanding of multiple perspectives, critical issues, and the diversity of our world.
- Learners must see themselves represented in the materials and connect to the content in authentic ways to become fully engaged.
- Different entry points, options for exploration, and end products are critical for student engagement and success.

Key Traits

Content	Process	Assessment
• Instructional materials and activities reflect the identities of learners in the community and the diversity of our world. • Content is selected and explored in ways that foster and reflect an understanding of multiple perspectives and critical issues. • Teachers select materials for instructional activities to meet the needs of a variety of learners. • Students have choice in materials and topics in order to meet learning outcomes.	• Students make meaningful choices about their learning and are taught how to make those choices well. • Students learn new information in different ways—inquiry, investigation, presentation, etc. • Student groupings are flexible, varied and intentionally matched to the activity and learner. • Students use a range of methods (differentiated homework, reading, activities) and supports (including technology) to advance their learning. • Time and structures support reteaching and extension of learning, as needed. • Resources and materials improve accessibility for a variety of learners.	• Students have choices about how they demonstrate their learning. • Students use multiple and varied pathways to reach common ends. • Students use varied tools and supports (including technology) to demonstrate learning. • Assessments are relevant, authentic, and purposeful.

4. Practice and Feedback: Students have opportunities to practice what they are learning and are given timely, specific feedback based on their current performance in relation to the desired outcomes.

Supporting Beliefs

- Learning is a cycle that includes goal-setting, successes, multiple attempts, and course corrections.
- Productive practice and novel application of skills are essential for learning.
- Timely, specific, and varied feedback is a catalyst for growth.

Key Traits

Practice	Feedback
• Routines, strategies, and instruction support student learning of essential skills and knowledge by providing opportunities for practice.	• Teachers give students feedback that is timely, specific, and actionable.
• Opportunities for practice allow students to work independently, cooperatively, and with teacher guidance	• Students are taught how to give, interpret, and use feedback in their learning.
• Students practice applying complex skills over time within and across disciplines.	• Students have opportunities to give, receive, and use feedback to revise essential pieces of work.

5. Complex Thinking and Transfer: Students are 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.

Supporting Beliefs

- Every student is capable of complex thought and transfer of learning.
- Higher order thinking promotes student engagement.
- Learning that promotes transfer of knowledge and skills prepares students for the future.

Key Traits

- Students engage in complex thinking throughout all stages of learning—from the introduction of new material to the application of what has been learned.
- Students ask and are asked questions that help them access and integrate knowledge to analyze, evaluate, and draw conclusions.
- Students are taught how to integrate and apply what they have learned within and across content areas and are given opportunities to practice.
- Students wrestle with complex and authentic problems.