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Mini-Lesson Template

The Power of a Predictable Routine

A mini-lesson is a 10-15 minute lesson that teaches a single skill.

It follows a predictable pattern because routines reduce extraneous cognitive load, protect instructional time, and give students the clarity they need to engage (Simonsen et al., 2008 and Evans & Martin, 2023). They also allow teachers to be more present for the emerging needs of their students.

If you want a challenge, try giving yourself the same amount of time to plan the lesson as the amount of time you want the lesson to take in class! So, if you want to teach a mini-lesson in 15 minutes, only give yourself 15 minutes of planning. This keeps us honest and helps prevent lesson-spread.

You can use a mini-lesson in any content area where you are teaching a skill.

Here's a template for what a mini-lesson might look and sound like:

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Elements of a Mini-Lesson

Lesson Element	The Teacher...	Might Sound Like...
Hook	**presents** a problem students will likely face in their current work.	"Sometimes when we are writing an argument, we have a great idea in our head, but it's hard to get that big idea into words as a clear claim in our essay."
Objective	**shares** the specific skill or strategy that will be taught.	"Today, I'm going to show you one way to write a claim."
Strategy	**names** and **shows** the strategy being taught.	"One way to articulate a claim is to use a strategy called the Big Idea Claim. When you use this strategy, all you do is state your topic, follow it with the word "is", and then finish the sentence with your own original thought. For example, 'Prohibition is a failed experiment of the United States government interfering in the private lives of its citizens.'"
Model	**shows** an example from a mentor text, **models** a writing strategy, **performs** a think aloud, **models** a reading strategy, etc.	"Let me show you what this looks like in a couple of pieces of professional writing. [Teacher shows the Big Idea Claim in 2-4 WAGOLLS.]"
Try It	**directs** the students to try the skill or strategy in their own work	"Okay. Right now, go into your piece of writing and try the Big Idea Claim about your own topic. I'm going to walk around to give you some feedback when you're ready."

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