A common challenge teachers face in using the SysELD Units is getting through the entire instructional sequence in every lesson (Tab 3.14). We intentionally packed lessons so that teachers would have enough material to make decisions about what to teach. Some teaching may require more time and scaffolding, and some might be a breeze for students. It will be different for every class.

Realistically, we must think of the **Teach** portion of the lesson as a mini lesson. If we have 10–15 minutes to teach the language, we will have to make decisions about how much teaching we can get through and still have enough time to do both the **Practice** and **Take** activities.

How do teachers know how and/or when to adapt lessons? Teachers learn to be responsive by listening to their students and paying attention to what they already know. This ensures that teachers can build off the strengths students bring and spend their time teaching students the language they do not yet know.

Chunking lesson objectives is one of the strategies we can use to make sure that we have time to **Teach**, **Practice**, and **Apply** the teaching outlined in our objectives.

**Chunking a Lesson Objective**

Some lessons may actually require an additional day of teaching to complete the objective. When we chunk an objective, we are never reducing the expectation. We are simply reducing the amount of instruction we cover in one lesson. Unless students already know how to accurately apply the language called out in the objective, we don’t skip it.

As you plan your lesson, read the objective and look over the lesson. Do you think you can get through it in the time you have? If not, there are two ways to think about how to chunk the objective.

**Horizontal chunking**

In lessons that have more than one teaching point, headlines were added to help you see where a lesson might be naturally chunked. In the example at right, the two headlines are marked in red boxes:

- **Comparative adjectives**
- **Ask and answer questions to compare**

The lesson objective is: **Students will ask and answer questions to compare the city to where they live using topic-specific vocabulary and comparative adjectives.**

You could rewrite the lesson objective to teach one headline on one day and the next headline on the following day. We call this **horizontal chunking**. Example:

**Lesson 1a:** Students will use topic-specific vocabulary and comparative adjectives to compare where they live to the city.

**Lesson 1b:** Students will ask and answer questions to compare the city to where they live using topic-specific vocabulary and comparative adjectives.

Review and revise the **Practice** and **Take** activities as needed to ensure that students will practice what you teach.
Vertical chunking

Sometimes the lesson depends on all teaching points in order to make sense, and horizontal chunking won’t work. **Vertical chunking** is when you deliver the *Teach* as written but you reduce the amount of language you will teach and ask students to practice.

In the example at right, the lesson objective is: **Students will describe the weather and places in a snowy town using topic-specific vocabulary in past tense sentences.**

Again, there are two headlines:

- **Build vocabulary: nouns**
- **Build vocabulary: descriptive phrases**

However, let’s say you know that just labeling the nouns will be too easy for your students and that what they really need to practice is describing nouns. But as written, there is still too much to teach in your 10–15 minute *Teach*. You can chunk the objective by describing the setting in one lesson and the weather in the next. Example:

**Lesson 1a:** Students will describe places in a snowy town using topic-specific vocabulary in past tense sentences.

**Lesson 1b:** Students will describe the weather in a snowy town using topic-specific vocabulary in past tense sentences.

You also will need to review and revise the *Practice* and *Take* activities as needed to ensure that students will practice what you teach.

**Remember...**

The horizontal and vertical chunking options are general approaches to adjusting the objective of a lesson. Of course, we want to make informed instructional decisions based on listening carefully to students’ language use, analyzing data collected on the Ongoing Assessment Log, and reviewing students’ written work.

A typical ELD lesson lasts between 30–45 minutes. Whether your ELD block lasts 30 or 45 minutes, you must ensure that every lesson includes the entire instructional sequence.

- Open the lesson – 3–5 minutes
- Teach the language (I do) – 10–15 minutes
- Practice the language (We do) – 10 minutes
- Apply the language (You do) – 5–10 minutes
- Close the lesson – 2–5 minutes