INTRODUCTION

Agility is a professional development board game that helps teachers develop the strategic thinking required for making quick decisions in response to daily classroom challenges. Teacher decisions impact learning, relationships, and student identity, yet professional development rarely focuses on teacher thinking and problem solving. While playing Agility, you'll practice agile thinking as you collaborate with colleagues and explore teaching routines rooted in motivation, cognitive science, and culturally relevant education research. The routines support and affirm every child as a unique learner. Players are guided through instructional decision-making using an If-Then-So approach to prepare for agile teaching. The ultimate goal is to maximize learning for every student.

The approach to differentiated instruction and the THEN card learning routines in this game are based on the book, Bondie, R., & Zusho, A. (2018). *Differentiated instruction made practical: Engaging the extremes through classroom routines*. Routledge. Early versions of this game were developed by the Agile Teacher Lab as part of Reach Every Reader and supported by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. This version was designed by Rhonda Bondie and Danielle Tulchinsky.

Why should you play?

In addition to taking away new learning routines for your teaching, Agility models the following important ideas about student learning:
1. Every learner follows a unique learning path
2. Learners begin from different starting points, bringing various strengths, goals, and life experiences to support their learning
3. Learners bring different needs that might hinder progress and experience different challenges
4. Learners advance at different rates and in different ways. Even when all learners reach an expected goal, they end up in different places because their learning uniquely, builds on their distinct life experiences

Agility provides teachers with:
- a practical and strategic planning model for differentiated instruction
- opportunities to explore your own and the thinking of colleagues
- playful vehicle to develop teaching expertise
- effective routines for immediate classroom use

Players learn this practical and strategic model for differentiated instruction:
- **If** - we perceive a specific student learning strength or need
- **Then** - we respond by adjusting the three teaching elements, routines, help, and choice
- **So** - the adjusted learning experience has a positive impact on student learning

The research behind Agility

Agility uses a decision-making model (i.e., If-Then statements) to help teachers mentally prepare for responding to students with diverse strengths and needs as learning unfolds (Bondie & Zusho, 2018). Research by Peter Gollwitzer (1993, 1999) and a recent synthesis (Bieleke, Keller, & Gollwitzer, 2021) show a link between articulating implementation plans (e.g., If-Then plans) and goal attainment. Applying this theory, "IF-THEN-SO" plans for potential classroom situations may enhance teachers' ability to act in line with their teaching values and goals. Mental preparation like "If a student response is X, then my teaching action will be Y" can increase teachers' ability to be present, responsive, precise, and imaginative in student interactions.
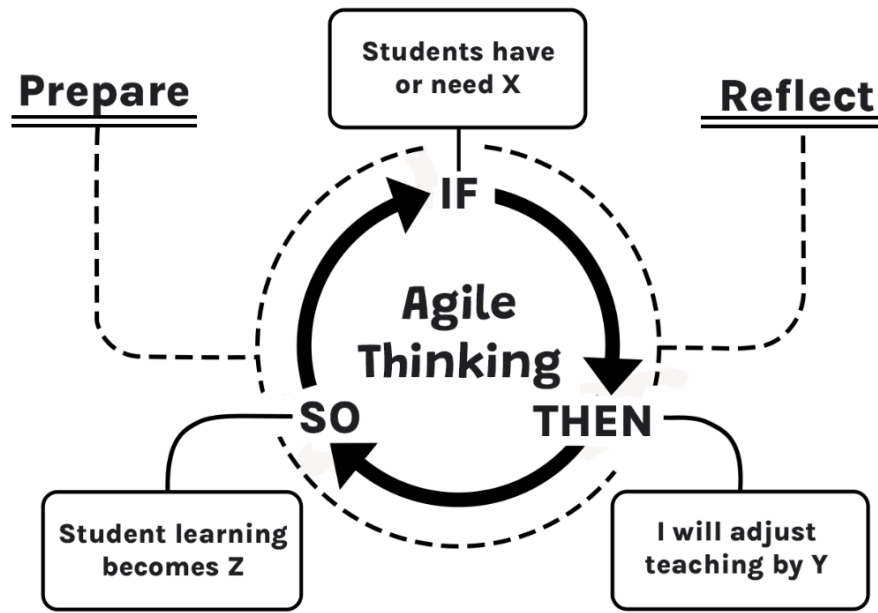

Agility's "IF, THEN, SO" model helps teachers dynamically plan motivational, cognitive, and culturally supportive teaching (Bondie & Zusho, 2018). This decision-making model is the core loop of Agility, with players repeatedly practicing it to prepare for effective teaching decisions. Playing as a team allows teachers to consider colleagues' plans, expanding their repertoire and increasing awareness of different approaches to common classroom challenges. Agility offers a supportive way to rehearse teaching plans with colleagues in a consequence-free environment.

Visit **agileteacherlab.org** to learn more, access free resources to implement THEN routines, and play Agility online.

HOW TO START

This box contains the following components:
- 1 Agility game board
- 45 Time chips, each chip represents 1 minute of lesson time
- 5 Student Meeples, each representing a student
- 4 Role cards: Facilitator, Dealer, Data Collector, Timekeeper
- 16 If cards
- 44 Then cards
- 8 So cards

16 If cards   44 Then cards   8 So cards

5 Student meeples

45 Time chips   4 Role cards

1 Agility game board
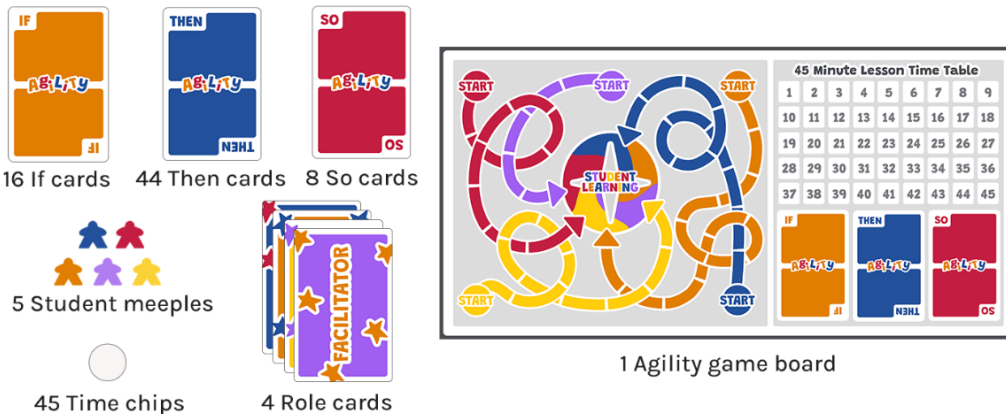
NOTE: Players will need a timer or clock.

SET UP

✦ Choose roles from the available role cards and note, if you have fewer than four players, each player will need to take on more than one role. If there are more than four players, players can share roles.

✦ Place both IF and SO cards in a pile on their respective place on the board.

✦ Give 45 time chips to the timekeeper and make sure they have a timer/clock.

✦ Let the dealer give out 6 THEN cards to each player. Place remaining cards in a pile on the board.

✦ Place the student game pieces at their corresponding learning pathway starting space.

HOW TO PLAY

Objective

As a team, your goal is to move every student forward in their learning by building teaching solutions that respond to challenges. Within the time constraint of a 45-minute lesson, you will need to move all students as far as possible in their learning journey.

STEP 1. Discuss the IF scenario

✦ The facilitator selects an IF card from the top of the IF deck, places it face up on the deck for everyone to see, and reads it out loud to the team.

✦ The timekeeper starts a 3-minute timer.

✦ The facilitator leads a group discussion related to the IF challenge. The questions are designed to help players think about how teaching needs to change to ensure all learners are progressing in the lesson. You will consider who the challenge impacts and the extent that the next teaching routine(s) or instructional move(s) in the lesson need adjustment to address clarity, access, rigor, and/or relevance for students. Use the following prompts to lead the discussion:

WHO: Who does the IF challenge affect: all students, one student, or no students?

CLARITY: Do students understand what they are learning?
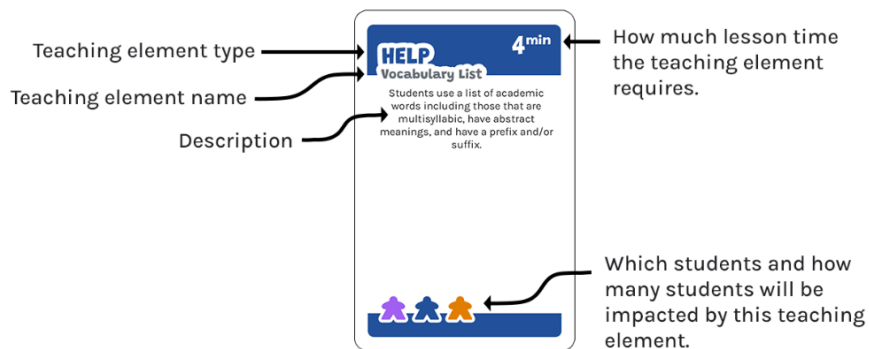
ACCESS: Can students begin on their own?

RIGOR: Is learning challenging? Consider focus time, complexity, energy needed.

RELEVANCE: Is learning meaningful and interesting?

STEP 2. Design individual teaching plans

✦ The timekeeper starts a 1-minute timer.

✦ Each player creates a teaching plan by reviewing their THEN cards and selecting **up to 3** that will respond best to the teaching challenge. Players should be ready to explain how the THEN cards in their plan might increase clarity, access, rigor and/or relevance for all, some, or individual students. Complex teaching plans (those that combine two or more THEN cards), may reach more students but they also take more time.

Teaching element type

Teaching element name

Description

How much lesson time the teaching element requires.

Which students and how many students will be impacted by this teaching element.

A teaching plan consists of 1 to 3 THEN cards

There is no limit on how many of the same type you use but differentiating increases the likelihood that you will impact all students.
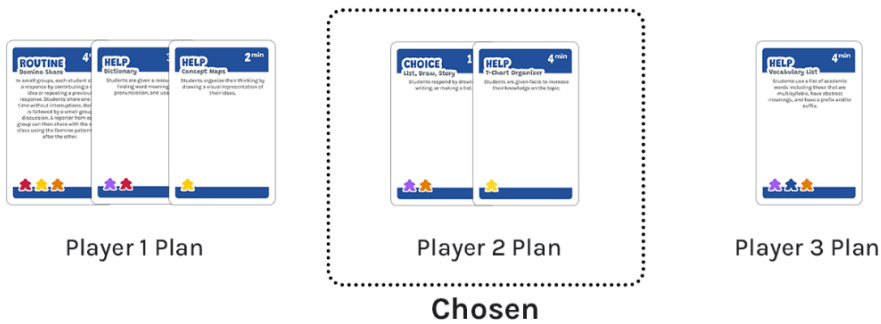
Ex. Teaching Plan 1

Ex. Teaching Plan 2

✦ When time is up, each player shares their teaching plan and explains why they selected it. The timekeeper allows 1 minute for each player.
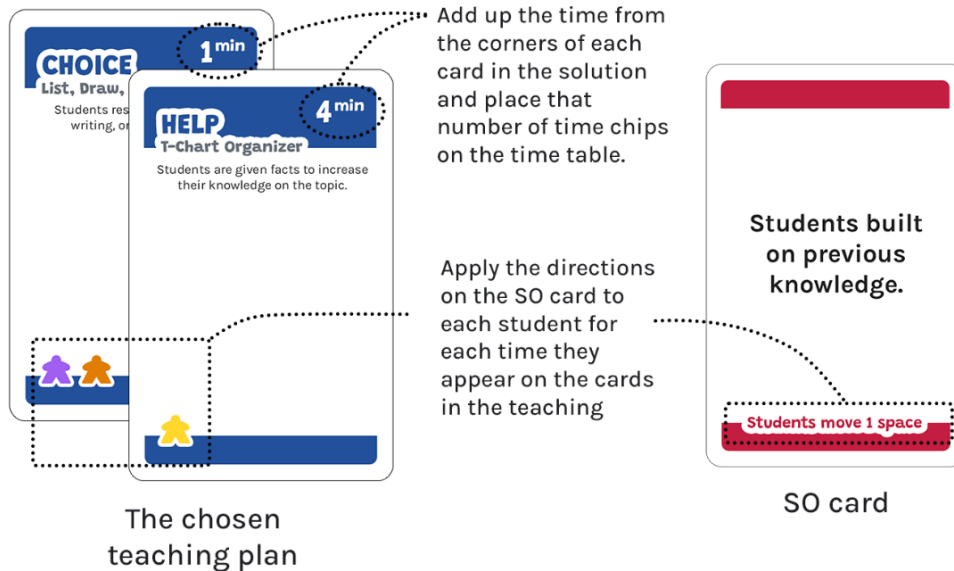
STEP 3. Choose one teaching plan

✹ The timekeeper starts a 3-minute timer.

✹ The facilitator leads a group discussion to determine which of the individual teaching plans is the most effective. The group should select one to implement and the chosen one will impact the board in Step 4.

Player 1 Plan   Player 2 Plan   Player 3 Plan

Chosen

STEP 4. Determine the student learning outcome

✹ The data collector draws a SO card and applies the outcome outlined on the card to each student who is represented on the THEN cards that make up the chosen teaching plan. If a student is represented on more than one THEN card, the outcome is applied to them as many times as they appear on the cards.

✹ The timekeeper adds up the time totals from the top right corner of the THEN cards and places a number of time chips equal to the sum on the time table.

Add up the time from the corners of each card in the solution and place that number of time chips on the time table.

Apply the directions on the SO card to each student for each time they appear on the cards in the teaching

CHOICE
List, Draw, 1 min
Students res
writing, o

HELP
T-Chart Organizer 4 min
Students are given facts to increase their knowledge on the topic.

The chosen teaching plan

Students built on previous knowledge.

Students move 1 space

SO card

✹ If the plan includes one structure card, one help card and one option card, the data collector moves ALL students forward two more squares and the timekeeper adds two time chips back into the pile.

Example Scenario:

The SO card says "Students move 1 space" and the teaching plan includes the following:

A routine THEN card with a yellow and orange dot that requires 2 minutes.

A choice THEN card with a purple, orange, and blue dot that requires 1 minute.

A choice THEN card with an orange dot and blue dot that requires 2 minutes.

The data collector:

Moves the yellow, purple, pieces forward 1 spot.

Moves the blue player piece forward 2 spots.

Moves the orange player piece forward 3 spots.

Keeps the red player where it was.

The timekeeper places 5 time chips on the time table.

STEP 5. Next round and conclusion

✦ The dealer collects the THEN cards from the previous round, places them on the bottom of the THEN deck, and deals six new THEN cards to each player.

✦ The facilitator places the old IF card on the bottom of the IF deck.

✦ Loop back to Step 1 of play until all students have reached the end of their learning curve or until the team runs out of time in the lesson (all 45 time chips have been depleted). End your game with a few reflection questions.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

After playing Agility use the following five prompts to reflect on the practicality of your experience, what you learned during play, and any unexpected results:

✦ **Practicality** - Given time and resource constraints, are the teaching plans practical?

✦ **Student Learning** - Are teaching plans likely to result in greater student learning?

✦ **Unexpected Results** - You may have had rounds when your solution did not lead to any student movement along their learning curves. Why do you think that was?

✦ **Feelings** - How might students feel when engaging in this teaching plan? What might be the students' favorite moment? How would you feel implementing the teaching plan? What might be your favorite moment? Why?

✦ **Collaboration** - Were the discussions with the players useful in reflecting on your own teaching?

✦ **Professional development** - How might your experience with Agility shape your teaching? Did you feel you were able to take away a new teaching routine, increased attention to student variance, something about how teachers think about teaching, or greater teaching confidence?