

# TEACHING SKILLS

## What is a teaching skill?

A skill is defined as special ability to do something. Therefore a teaching skill can be defined as:

- ✓ the ability that one possesses which helps him/her to teach effectively.
- ✓ a discrete and coherent activities which facilitate and foster learning.

The ten Teaching Skills are:

1. Planning
2. Introduction
3. Explanation
4. Questioning
5. Illustration
6. Reinforcement
7. Variation
8. Class management
9. Chalkboard use
10. Closure

## Description of the use of each teaching skill

### 1. The skill of Planning

When using the skill of planning do the following:

- Fit in the work planned into available time in the term. Allow for holidays, testing and other activities shown on the calendar.
- Vary the success criteria to cover the three domains of learning i.e. cognitive, affective and psychomotor.
- Sequence the success criteria in logical order to facilitate teaching and learning.
- Vary teaching, learning and assessment strategies to match learning styles.
- Formulate clear success criterion which is measurable, realistic and achievable within a lesson or unit and with one unitary verb.
- Use a lesson plan which has an introduction, developmental steps, conclusion and lesson evaluation. The lesson evaluation is the basis for completing the records of work.
- Keep some administrative records such as attendance register, stock book and teaching time table.

The following questions should guide you when using the skill of planning:

- Are schemes of work prepared?
- Are lesson plans planned and used for each teaching day?
- Are lesson plans evaluated soon after teaching?
- Are records of work filled each week?
- Are follow-ups made which were not successful?

## 2. The Skill of Introduction:

Every lesson must have an introduction of about 3-5 minutes. An introduction can take the form of oral questions and answer, story, dramatization, explanations and learners' experiences. It is live and brief, and should present theme and expected outcomes. It helps learners to focus on the lesson and stimulate their interest and involvement in the lesson.

A good lesson introduction is necessary because:

- It states the purpose and limits of the lesson.
- The teacher gains the attention of the learners from the beginning of the lesson. This is done through:
  - ✓ Eye contact
  - ✓ Use of visual resources
  - ✓ Variation of voice patterns and
  - ✓ Use of various gestures
  - ✓ Use of an activity
- An introduction should motivate and arouse learners' curiosity.
- The teacher reviews the previous lesson and links this background with the content in the lesson.

### Techniques for introducing lessons:

#### a. *Use of advance organizers*

Begin the lesson by providing an outline of the topic or concepts to be learned e.g. *In this lesson you will learn.....* This helps learners to organize their thinking in advance.

#### b. *Use of pre-questions*

Begin with questions on issues to be taught to check any previous knowledge e.g. *Why is it important to care for the environment?* This will help the learners to follow the lesson. In addition, it arouses their interest.

#### c. *Recall of pre-requisite knowledge*

Begin by reviewing previous lesson in order to establish a foundation for the new concept to be learned. E.g. *what are the causes of soil erosion?* The learners will see the relationship between what they learned the previous lesson.

#### d. *Communicating a set of success criteria*

State what the learner will be able to do at the end of the lesson. Communicate a set of success criteria orally or in written on the board.

#### e. *Use of rationale*

Begin by stating the purpose or significance for learning the concepts. E.g. *"It is important to learn how to conserve the soil because agricultural productivity depends on land"*. This helps to motivate learners.

**Appraisal guide for the skill of introduction**

Skill Components	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs support
<b>1. Gaining Learners' Attention</b>				
a. Does she/he use gestures?				
b. Does she/he vary voice pattern?				
c. Does she/he look at the learners?				
d. Does she/he use teaching, learning and assessment resources?				
e. Does she/he involve learners?				
<b>2. Arousing Learners' Motivation</b>				
a. Does she/he show interest in the learners?				
b. Does she/he show warmth and enthusiasm?				
c. Does she/he excite learners' curiosity?				
<b>3. Structuring</b>				
a. Does she/he state limits of the task?				
b. Does she/he state the purpose of the task?				
c. Does she/he suggest learning procedure?				
<b>4. Making Links</b>				
a. Does she/he start the lesson from known to unknown?				

**3. The Skill of Explanation:**

Explanation is the process of clarifying concepts, ideas or skill to increase understanding. The following points are important in the use of the skill:

- Explain in simple and clear language, considering the age and level of learners.
- Explanations must include suitable examples.
- Present teaching and learning in logical order.

Variation of voice helps to gain learners' attention.

Repeat important points of the lesson.

**Appraisal guide for the skill of explanation**

Skill Components	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs support
1. Is the explanation clear?				
2. Is the explanation short?				
3. Is it relevant to the success criteria?				
4. Does the explanation cover important points?				
5. Are examples clearly explained?				
6. Does the explanation arouse interest?				

**4. The Skill of Questioning:**

Questions are very important in teaching, learning and assessment as they help in:

- Checking learners' prerequisite knowledge
- Helping learners to take part in discussion

- Stimulating thinking; giving feedback
- Summarizing learning points
- Highlighting the main points in the lesson; Assessing teaching and learning
- Evaluating teaching and learning processes

The following points are very important when you are using the skill of questioning:

- Advance preparation of key questions for each stage of the lesson (introduction, developmental steps and closure)
- Relate questions to the success criteria
- Phrasing questions in simple and clear words
- Re-phrasing a question when learners have not understood it
- Probing learners' responses through follow-up questions to obtain full answers
- Distributing questions evenly
- Ask, pause then nominate a learner to respond
- Asking questions within three domains (cognitive, affective and psychomotor)
- Nominating both volunteers and non-volunteers

Handling learners' responses

- Do not walk towards the learner who speaks softly. Encourage them to speak aloud.
- Correct speech and grammatical errors after the learner has given the answer.
- Do not distract/interfere while the learner is attempting a question.
- Encourage learners to give complete and correct answers.
- Avoid negative remarks as they discourage learners. Reinforce learners appropriately.
- Discourage chorus answers.

### Appraisal guide for the skill of questioning

Skill Components	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs support
<b>1. Appropriateness</b>				
a. Is it relevant to the success criteria?				
b. Is it realistic in terms of learners' ability?				
<b>2. Rule</b>				
a. Is it clear?				
b. Is it brief?				
<b>3. Type</b>				
a. Memory				
b. Thought provoking				
c. Application				
<b>4. technique</b>				
a. Are questions evenly distributed?				
b. Does the teacher Ask, Pause and Nominate?				
c. Does she/he wait for volunteers?				
d. Does she/he nominate non-volunteers too?				
<b>5. Prompting</b>				
a. Does she/he re-phrase question where needed?				
b. Does she/he give supplementary or follow –up questions?				

## 5. The Skill of Illustration:

The skill of illustration involves the use of resources such as real objects, raised diagrams, sketches, drawings on chart paper or chalkboard.

Illustrations improve teaching and learning of abstract concepts such as mathematical formulae, procedures, processes and the understanding of concrete concepts. Illustration helps a teacher to show, demonstrate or exemplify concepts

Illustrations are important in teaching and learning because they:

- Bring concrete reality to class
- Improve clarity in teaching and learning
- Relate what is taught to learners' lives

### Appraisal guide for the skill of illustration

Skill Components	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs support
<b>1. Illustrated resources</b>				
a. Does she/he use resources at the right time?				
b. Are the resources relevant to the topic?				
c. Are resources clearly drawn and well labeled?				
<b>2. Simple examples</b>				
a. Are examples relevant to the success criteria?				
b. Are examples from real life situation?				
<b>3. Relevance of resources</b>				
a. Does she/he use resources which are relevant to the success criteria of lesson?				
b. Are resources friendly to learners?				
<b>4. Interesting resources</b>				
a. Does she/he use resources which arouse learners' curiosity and interest?				
b. Does she/he use resources with appropriate colouring, legibility, etc.?				
<b>5. Suitable language</b>				
a. Does she/he use language which is suitable to learners?				
<b>6. Real objects</b>				
a. Does she/he use real objects as resources?				

## 6. The Skill of Reinforcement:

When learners answer questions, they should be rewarded accordingly.

The skill of reinforcement helps to increase the learners' attention, motivation, confidence and classroom discipline.

Ensure that most important behavior is reinforced. It also helps learners to prepare what is coming next.

Reinforcement is classified as follows:

- a. **Verbal reinforcement:** use of encouraging comment such as very good, excellent, correct, well done, etc.
- b. **Gestural reinforcement:** use of body language such nodding, shaking head, clapping, and smiling etc.
- c. **Proximity reinforcement:** (closeness with the learner) the teacher moves and stands near to the learner with the view to encourage him/her to attempt a response.
- d. **Contact reinforcement:** patting the learner, shaking hands when correct response is given.
- e. **Token reinforcement:** giving rewards such as pencils, exercise books and money to learners for correct responses.

### Appraisal guide for the skill of reinforcement

Skill Components	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs support
<b>1. Verbal</b>				
a. Did the teacher make comments of praise and encouragement?				
b. Did she/he vary the way of praising learners?				
<b>2. Gestural</b>				
a. Did she/he use any gestures?				
b. Were gestures relevant to the lesson?				
<b>3. Proximity</b>				
a. Did she/he move closer/near to learners to assist learners?				
b. Were the movements necessary?				
<b>4. Contact</b>				
a. Did she/he pat, shake hands appropriately?				
b. Was it necessary to use contact?				
<b>5. Activity</b>				
a. Did she/he give extra work to the learners?				
<b>6. Token</b>				
a. Did she/he give any written comments or remarks to learners?				
b. Did she/he give any physical thing such as money or any item to learners?				

### 7. The Skill of Variation:

Variation refers to differing actions a teacher takes order to develop and maintain learners' attention.

Variation serves three purposes:

- Focuses and maintains learners attention
- Places emphasis on important points, concepts and ideas
- Changes the pace of the lesson

**Variation can be done in the following ways:****a. Movement**

Teacher moves from one location to another in the classroom. Make sure that you do not distract learners.

Movement helps to check what is going on in the classroom and improves communication between the teacher and the learners.

**b. Focusing**

This is the teacher's ability to control the direction of learners' attention. The purpose is to control direction of learners' attention and to reinforce their behavior. It is done through:

**i. Voice variation**

Teacher varies pace and tone of his/her voice

**ii. Body gestures**

Teacher uses a pointer, a head, hands and facial expressions.

**iii. Voice gestures**

This is a combination of both voice and gestures. A teacher can use a pointer to point at a diagram and say... 'Study the diagram on the board'. A teacher can clap hands and say... 'Listen!'

**The following should be done as you use the skill of variation**

- Move freely in class such as in front of the class or from front to back of the classroom.
- Use voice variation in terms of loudness, tone, or pace and pausing.
- Use a variety of teaching, learning and assessment strategies to satisfy individual learner's learning styles.
- Use a variety of teaching, learning and assessment resources such as visual, audio and audio-visual resources.

**Use a variety of teaching, learning and assessment activities which appeal to all five senses such as: sight, touch, smell, taste and hearing.**

**Use a variety of classroom interaction strategies such as:**

- *Teacher- group*: this is where the teacher demonstrates or passes information to learners. The approach is teacher-centred.
- *Teacher-learner*: this is teacher directed where she/he sets the ball rolling and let learners do the work.
- *Learner-learner*: this is a learner centred style. Learners interact with each other in the teaching and learning process.

**Appraisal guide for the skill of variation**

Skill Components	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs support
<b>1. Teacher movement</b>				
Does she/he move on purpose to:				
a. Write on the chalkboard?				
b. Help learners during the lesson?				

c. Supervise group work?				
d. Mark learners' work?				
<b>2. Change in sensory</b>				
a. Does she/he use a variety of teaching resources?				
<b>3. Change of teacher-learner interaction Pattern</b>				
a. Does she/he encourage learners to answer questions?				
b. Does she/he engage learners in other activities?				

## 8. The Skill of Class Management:

Class management refers to activities and strategies used to establish classroom conditions which facilitate teaching and learning.

The following points will help you in the use of this skill if teaching and learning are to be effective:

- Plan and implement appropriate and interesting lessons
- Display exemplary professional behavior through punctuality to class, appropriate dress and teaching within given time/ period.
- Listen to learners and encouraging them to express their views.
- Build positive teacher-learner and learner-learner inter-relationship on continuous basis.
- Establish and enforce rules, work standards and procedures agreed upon with learners.
- Use language of praise rather than that of judgment and punishment.
- Give equal and timely reinforcement for behavior or performance without favour or discrimination.
- Resolve conflicts and restore group unity without blaming any learner.
- Exercise equal and fair distribution of leadership roles among all learners.
- Form working groups and assign activities effectively and efficiently.
- Distribute and collect teaching, learning and assessment resources through group leaders.
- Organize learners' seating plan taking into consideration gender, age, space and ability.

### Appraisal guide for the skill of class management

Skill Components	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs support
a. Has she/he dressed appropriately for the lesson?				
b. Does she/he encourage the learners to express themselves?				
c. Did she/he use groups in lessons?				
d. Does she/he control class effectively?				
e. Does she/he give responsibilities to both boys and girls?				
f. Does she/he involve learners in the distribution and collection of resources?				
g. Is there a seating arrangement for learners?				
h. Does she/he start and end lessons at the right time?				



## 9. The Skill of Chalkboard Use:

The chalkboard is the most common and widely used teaching, learning and assessment resource in Malawian schools. It is used to record main points, drawings, illustrations, displays and important information.

Do the following as you use the skill of chalkboard use:

- If the chalkboard is big divide it into a number of equal columns so that learners can focus on relevant columns.
- Indicate class, date and enrolment of learners.
- State the learning area, topic and sub-topics in descending order and underline them.
- Number main points for easy reference during discussion.
- Write in straight lines from left to right starting as high as you can comfortably reach.
- Draw faint straight lines using a nail or a lead pencil to guide you in writing.
- Use chalkboard ruler to draw straight lines.
- Make the writing or drawing large, clear and neat to be seen from any part of the classroom.
- Write the right information to avoid over-crowding the chalkboard.
- Write the main learning points on the chalkboard for learners to see and copy where appropriate.
- Use coloured chalk (where available) to distinguish points or parts of a lesson content.
- Clean the chalkboard after use. When cleaning, move the chalkboard duster up and down to avoid spreading chalkboard dust.
- Avoid talking to the chalkboard while you are writing because learners may not follow. This can lead to unnecessary noise among the learners.
- Use a pointer to point at certain items on the chalkboard. It should be in a form a thin long stick.
- If the lesson involves the use of complicated drawing, draw it before the lesson starts in faint lines and make it bold when using it. This helps to save time.
- Be brief in what you write on the chalkboard, turning towards the learners immediately you are through.
- Check for spelling errors or mistakes as you write on the chalkboard to avoid learners correcting you.

### Appraisal guide for the skill of chalkboard use

Skill Components	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs support
1. Did she/he start writing from left to right?				
2. Did she/he use a pointer?				
3. Did she/he divide the chalkboard into appropriate portions?				
4. Did she/he use horizontal lines correctly?				
5. Did she/he use legible handwriting?				
6. Did she/he use large and clear drawings?				
7. Did she/he involve learners to write on the chalkboard?				

**10. The Skill of Closure:**

Closure is the skill which marks the end of the lesson. It sometimes summarizes the main points in the lesson. It ensures that learners store the main points from the lesson.

The purposes of the closure are to:

- Find out whether the intended lesson outcomes have been achieved.
- Tie all information and activities covered into a meaningful whole.
- To focus on key ideas and processes presented in the lesson.

**Appraisal guide for the skill of closure**

<b>Skill Components</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Needs support</b>
1. Did she/he draw learners' attention to closing points in the lesson				
2. Did she/he review major learning points in the lesson?				
3. Did she/he review the sequence used in the teaching/learning process?				
4. Did she/he provide a summary on key points from learners' activities?				
5. Did she/he relate the lesson and its main points to the success criteria of the lesson?				
6. Did she/he link present lesson points with previous learned material and the future lesson?				