

TEACHING METHODS

Every teacher develops a certain style of teaching, unique from others in every way. The teacher's personality and character gives life to any lesson, no matter how dull the subject may be. However, people tend to repeat what works and what's comfortable to them, and teachers are no different. In order to stay ahead, the teacher must continuously work to improve and change their teaching style. This requires great effort on the teacher's part, consistent and constant self-evaluation, combined with a strong desire to reach the learner in the classroom, but it isn't impossible!



There are many types of teaching methods but they can be categorized into three types. These are teacher-centered methods, learner-centered methods, content-focused methods and the last is a combination of the three in the interactive/participative methods. These teaching methods can and should be varied in the classroom, which will keep not only the teacher vigilant and stimulating, but keep the attention of the learner as well.

THREE TYPES OF TEACHING METHODS

1. INSTRUCTOR/TEACHER-CENTERED METHODS

Here the teacher casts himself/herself in the role of being a master of the subject matter. The teacher is looked upon by the learners as an expert or an authority. Learners, on the other hand, are presumed to be compliant recipients of knowledge from the teacher. Examples of such methods are expository or lecture methods - which require little or no involvement of learners in the teaching process. It is also for this lack of involvement of the learners in what they are taught, that such methods are called "closed-ended".

2. LEARNER-CENTRED METHODS

In learner-centered methods, the teacher/instructor is both a teacher and a learner at the same time. The teacher also learns new things everyday which he/she didn't know in the process of teaching. The teacher, "becomes a resource rather than an authority". Examples of learner-centered methods are the discussion or group methods.

3. CONTENT-FOCUSED METHODS

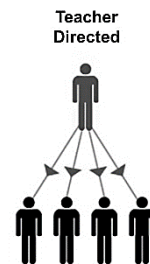
In this category of methods, both the teacher and the learners have to fit into the content that is taught. Generally, this means the information and skills to be taught are regarded as holy, sacred, or very important. A lot of emphasis is laid on the clarity and careful analysis of content. Both the teacher and the learners cannot modify or become critical of anything to do with the content.

4. INTERACTIVE/PARTICIPATIVE METHODS

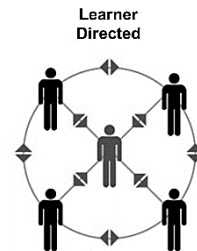
This fourth category borrows a bit from the other three methods without laying emphasis on either the learner, content or teacher. These methods are driven by the situations, such as age group, number of students and teacher ratio, classroom size, event, etc. They require a hands-on approach and a clear understanding of various mixed factors of the situation.

In summary, three types of methods commonly used in instruction are:

1. Teacher-centered methods:



2. Learner-centered methods:



3. Content-focused methods:



4. Interactive/participative methods:

SPECIFIC TEACHING METHODS

There are a number of specific methods which can be drawn from in the course of classroom instruction. It is important that any method chosen, should not be random, but needs to be governed some criteria. Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages, no method is completely perfect. It is recommended to combine methods, always focusing on the target audience.

1. LECTURE METHOD

Lecture method of teaching is the oldest teaching method applied in educational institution. This teaching method is one-way channel of communication of information. Students' involvement in this teaching method is just to listen and sometimes write some notes if necessary, combine the information, and organize it. A lecture is an oral presentation of information by the instructor.



A lecture gives facts, which include principles, concepts, ideas and all *THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE* about a given topic.

In a lecture the instructor tells, explains, describes or relates whatever information the trainees/learners are required to learn through listening and understanding.

Lectures are teacher-centered. The instructor is very active, doing all the talking. Trainees on the other hand, are very inactive, doing all the listening. Though lectures are very popular, the lack of active involvement of trainees limits its usefulness as a method of instruction.



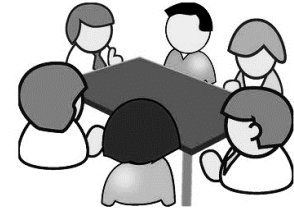
The lecture method of instruction is recommended for trainees with very little knowledge or limited background knowledge on the topic. It is useful for presenting an organized body of new information to the learner. To be effective in promoting learning, the lecture must involve some discussions with a question and answer period, to allow trainees to be involved actively.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD LECTURE

1. A good lecture should not be too long where it exceeds the learner's attention span. (up to 25 minutes)
2. A good lecture should address a single theme.
3. The instructor should have a clear, logical plan of presentation. (A useful principle in any instruction is to go from the *KNOWN* to *UNKNOWN*; from *SIMPLE* to *COMPLEX*, or from *PARTS* to a *WHOLE*.)
4. In a good lecture technical terms or new vocabulary words, are carefully explained.
5. Familiar examples and analogies are given.
6. A good lecture establishes fluency in content.
7. A good lecture uses illustrations, visual aids, and examples.
8. A good lecture builds on existing knowledge.
9. A good lecture uses various approaches.
10. A good lecture allows for questions to follow the presentation.

2. THE DISCUSSION METHOD

Discussion involves two-way communication between participants. In the classroom situation the instructor and learners all participate in discussion. During discussion, the instructor spends some time listening, while the learners spend sometimes talking. The discussion is a more active learning experience for the learner than the lecture.



In a discussion, people share experiences, ideas and attitudes. Because it encourages involvement, discussions may contribute to desired attitude changes. Discussion may be used in the classroom for the purpose of lesson development, making learners apply what they have learned, or to monitor learner feedback.

CONDUCTING A DISCUSSION

Discussion sessions can be led by the instructor, or can take place in groups. In either case, the goal is to meet the lesson objectives by allowing the learners to:

- a) Relate relevant personal experiences or events which have occurred.
- b) Contribute ideas or personal opinions.
- c) Apply what has been learned to familiar situations
- d) Solve problems or create solutions.
- e) Express what had been learned.

All discussions must be guided by the instructor. It is the instructor's responsibility to see that the objectives are met. If it is not properly guided, a discussion can create confusion by adding inappropriate or unimportant topics rather than clarifying the lesson.

3. THE DEMONSTRATION LESSON

A demonstration lesson is a planned performance of an occupation skill, scientific principle or experiment. While teaching the instructor show how things are done placing emphasis on efficiency, usefulness, and various uses.



TEACHER PREPARATION

1. Rehearse your presentation in advance of the lesson, not exceeding 15 minutes.
2. Anticipate any difficult steps, possible interruptions etc.
3. Prepare all materials, tools, equipment, visual and teaching aids in advance.
4. Have all materials within reach and conveniently arranged.
5. Remove all unimportant materials.
6. Check material condition, lighting, visibility, student grouping, and proximity to electric, gas and water outlets.
7. Plan to use a skill or method to the best advantage; work from simple to complex, one step at a time.

PRESENTATION

1. Make sure all students can see and hear the lesson.
2. Be enthusiastic, professional, effective but not dramatic.
3. Relax; use any mishaps or humor to YOUR advantage.
4. Observe all safety rules and procedures.
5. Keep eye-contact with the class; ask and encourage class questions.
6. Explain WHY and HOW: use the techniques of SHOW and TELL.
7. Use a medial summary to strengthen your explanation.
8. Demonstrate the correct way only. First impressions are important, therefore, make them correct ones.
9. Always summarize the steps and emphasize key points a second time.

**PRECAUTIONS**

- a) Avoid interruptions; keep demonstration smooth and continuous.
- b) Never demonstrate on a student's material.
- c) Work towards one aim.
- d) Allow time for possible student participation.

4. BUZZ GROUPS

Another method of instruction is the buzz group. During a longer session, the entire group can break into sub-groups to discuss one or two specific questions or issues. The room soon fills with noise as each sub-group 'buzzes' in discussion. If appropriate, after the discussion one member of each group can report its findings back to the full class/group.

Buzz groups can be in pairs, trios, or more depending on the activity. People turn to their neighbors for a quick buzz, or form larger groups of three or more. This allows almost everyone to express an opinion.

While they are buzzing, participants are able to exchange ideas and draw on their wide collective experience. It may provide a good opportunity for instructors to reflect on the content of the given lecture. A good buzz session will generate many ideas, comments and opinion, the most important of which will be reported back.

**BUZZ GROUPS HELP INSTRUCTORS**

- Draw your breath
- Assess the classroom mood, by listening to some of the discussions
- Change pace of the session
- Encourage students to reflect on what they have learned
- Answer questions or clarify content

DISADVANTAGES

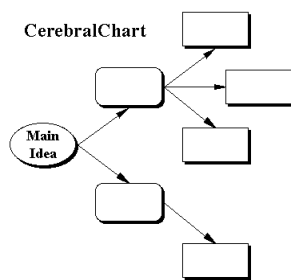
- Unfamiliarity with buzz groups
- Time requirements
- Need for leaders or facilitators within each sub-group
- Need to have tables and chairs arranged for quick and easy discussion

5. BRAINSTORMING

The purpose of a brainstorming session is to discover new ideas and responses very quickly. It is particularly a good way of getting bright ideas. It differs from the buzz groups discussion because the focus is on generating as many ideas as possible without judging them.

Participants are encouraged to let ideas flow freely, building on and improving from previous ideas. No idea, however crazy, should be rejected. These ideas are listed exactly as they are expressed on a board or flipchart, or written on bits of paper.

The combination of swiftly generated ideas usually leads to a very animated and energetic session. Even the more reserved participants should feel bold enough to contribute. The purpose of listing responses is to collect existing experiences and thoughts.



After a brainstorm session, the ideas can be discussed further and evaluated. (Example: listing the best options in a systematic way.) Ideas can be grouped and analyzed so that they belong to the group rather than individuals.

Unlike a buzz session, a brainstorm session can work well with a large group and usually takes less time. It is best to limit the time for large group brainstorms, as you might lose the attention of some participants.

6. ROLE PLAYS

In role plays, participants use their own experiences to play a real-life situation. When done well, role plays increase the participants self-confidence, give them the opportunity to understand or even feel empathy for other people's viewpoints or roles, and usually end with practical answers, solutions or guidelines.





Role plays are useful for exploring and improving interviewing techniques and examining the difficulties and potential conflicts of group meetings. They help participants to consolidate different lessons in one setting and are good energizers. Role plays provide the opportunity for the instructor and the participants to raise and assess new issues.

DISADVANTAGES

- Can be time-consuming
- Success depends on the willingness of participants to take active part
- Students may feel a role play is too exposing, threatening or embarrassing (This reluctance may be overcome by careful explanation of the objectives and the outcome.)

If we don't teach our children to follow Christ, the world will teach them not to.

-Anonymous