

# In My Classroom

*A Guide to Reflective Practice*

USAID



# In My Classroom

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## A GUIDE TO REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

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**A Note to the User of**  
*In My Classroom: A Guide to Reflective Practice*

*In My Classroom: A Guide to Reflective Practice* is presently in the hands of numerous teachers and teacher educators in Africa and the Caribbean. The authors hope that the materials will be of help in providing ideas for teachers to try in their classrooms. *In My Classroom* also suggests ways of working together in schools and teacher networks. Through the use of reflection and dialogue, the materials ask teachers to analyze their own teaching context and try out new teaching strategies.

As you try out some of the activities in the handbook you may find ways of improving on the activities. Stories that help illustrate the points being made may also be provided to improve the handbook. We welcome suggestions, examples, criticisms, and any other relevant information that would improve the materials.

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# **In My Classroom**

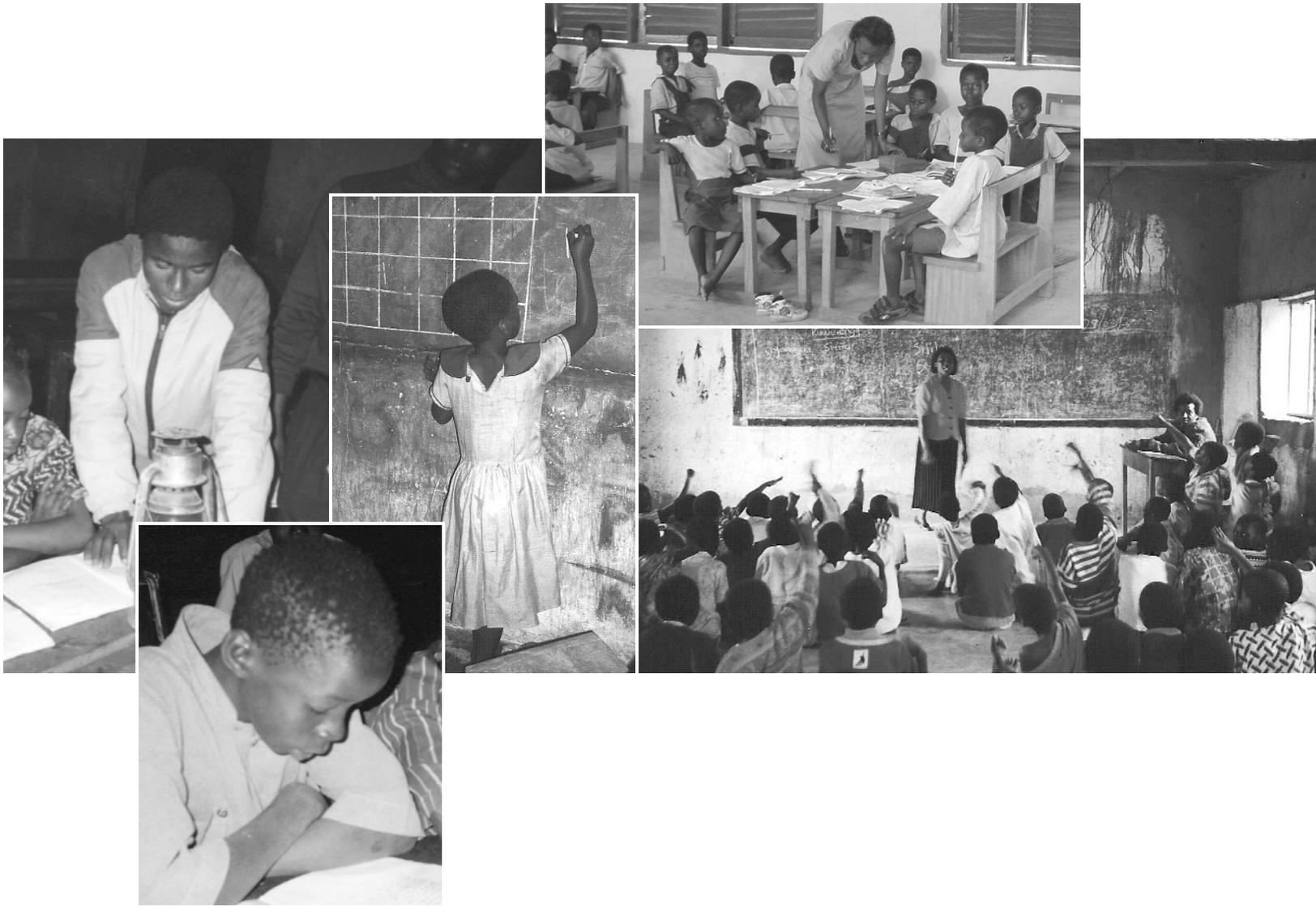
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## **A GUIDE TO REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**

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*Chapter 1. Introduction*

**IN MY CLASSROOM**



# Introduction

***“In My Classroom” is a resource for teachers and other educators interested in professional development. This chapter explains the principles and purposes of this handbook.***

The development of *In My Classroom: A Guide to Reflective Practice* is the result of an urgent need in many countries for relevant and practical materials that help teachers and teacher educators understand and implement learner centered teaching in the primary grades. The materials have brought together ideas from countries all over the world to provide teachers and other educators with up-to-date practices and examples.

*In My Classroom* encourages teachers to work in small groups in peer learning and support activities as a way of promoting professional development among a group of colleagues. Sharing ideas, successes, and challenges with colleagues is a practical way to strengthen the teamwork at each school.

For teachers with little teaching experience and limited training, *In My Classroom* provides some basic information for getting started in some of the teaching skills. For those teachers with greater experience and training, *In My Classroom* will help to develop skills further. A teacher at any stage of development in his or her career can use *In My Classroom* in a meaningful way. Although the materials focus on teaching and learning in the primary grades (1-8), secondary teachers may also find them useful. In addition to teaching strategies, the

materials provide background information that may further extend teachers' knowledge.



Because *In My Classroom* is designed to be used in different countries and in different situations within a country, there is an emphasis on adapting the activities to the local context. The *In My Classroom* materials are not meant to replace existing Ministry of Education training or curriculum materials or to override ministry policies or directives. *In My Classroom* is meant to support Ministry of Education policies by helping teachers and other educators with practical suggestions for carrying out the ministry's policies. *In My Classroom* can be seen as a tool to assist in the

understanding and implementation of local and national policies and curriculum materials. Teachers are asked to use their own syllabus, teachers' guides, and other curriculum materials in working with *In My Classroom* materials to develop tasks, materials, and practices that are relevant to their own situation.

The *In My Classroom* ideas and examples may not be appropriate for every educational or cultural context. *In My Classroom* provides teachers with opportunities to examine the ideas and examples, discuss them with colleagues and others, and guides them through adapting tasks, practices, and materials that may be used effectively in their own context.



## Activity 1

### *In My Classroom*

1. Read the features of *In My Classroom* as described below.
2. With a colleague or group of colleagues discuss each of the features of *In My Classroom*. Do you understand to what each feature is referring? Look through the book to see if you can find examples of each of the features. Rephrase the features another way to help you understand them.

#### SOME IDEAS

##### **Features of *In My Classroom***

- uses concrete examples and suggestions
- supplements existing Ministry of Education materials and policies
- targets facilitators of teacher development (teachers, principals, inspectors, advisors, pre-service tutors, in-service trainers etc.)
- takes the perspective that all teachers have knowledge of teaching and learning
- helps any teacher
- relies on individual reflection, collaboration, and dialogue
- utilizes a variety of activities
- functions in a variety of contexts
- uses an experiential learning approach
- helps teachers think about and reflect on their teaching

## Principles of *In My Classroom*

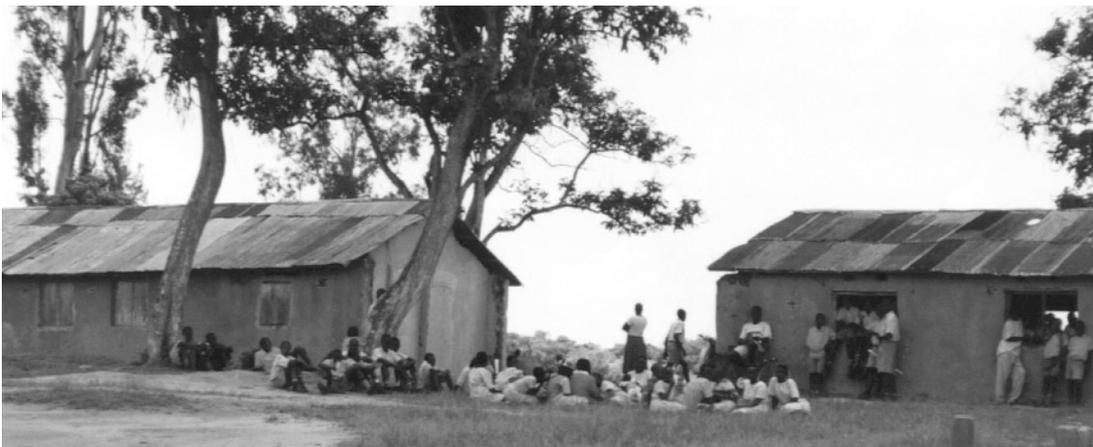
*In My Classroom* is a manual that will help teachers think in new ways about teaching and learning. We believe that teachers and others who use and read this book are interested in changing the way they teach. They want to improve their schools and help communities support children's learning. We believe that most people want to feel good about the work they do every day and that most people want to improve at what they are doing. Teaching is a complex activity, but there is nothing mysterious about it. There are certain basic and learnable activities that make for good teaching.

Ways of working with teachers and adults have been developed that make it easier for teachers to learn from each other and apply new skills. Some of these ways of working with adults are applied in this book. Additionally, a lot has been learned in the area of organizational change. Many of these developments in adult learning, group organization, and change are incorporated into the *In My Classroom* materials. The next section describes the seven principles that are applied to the *In My Classroom* manual.

1. **Appreciative Inquiry.** *In My Classroom* uses the principles of appreciative inquiry as a basis for the development of the activities in each chapter. Appreciative inquiry is a method of figuring out how an organization or group can best undergo positive change. With appreciative inquiry, the starting point of change is acknowledging the strengths and skills you already have. The process of change begins by identifying assets (strengths) rather than problems. You will see that *In My Classroom* activities ask teachers and other educators to identify their strengths and what they are doing that works well.

The next stage of appreciative inquiry, which is also incorporated into many of the activities is the dreaming stage. In this part of appreciative inquiry those involved in the change are asked to think about how they might see their classroom, their teaching, or school in the future.

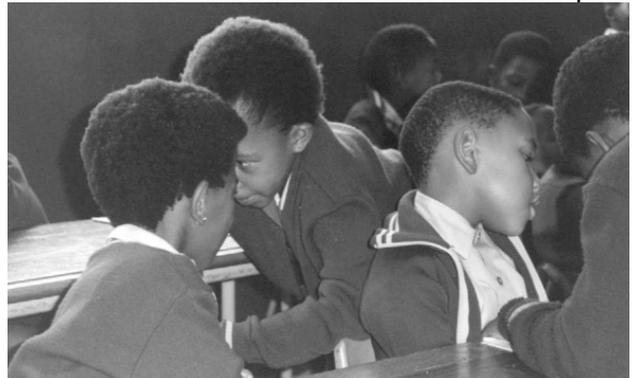
The third stage of appreciative inquiry that you will see in the manual is designing the future. This is where teachers describe what they will do in order to make the changes they want happen. It is the road map or action plan for accomplishing the goals they have described.



2. **Adult Learning.** You will notice that each chapter focuses on activities. Many of the activities include working together with colleagues. We also include a series of discussion questions and actions that will help teachers to analyze their own teaching context in light of the information provided. These materials embody the principles of Malcolm Knowles' theory of how adults learn (andragogy). The assumption has been made that every adult has had life and work experience and has gained some wisdom and insight from these experiences. Teachers, headteachers, district supervisors, and parents have important perspectives about their school's particular situation. These adults offer a rich source of ideas and talents that may be used to help their schools improve.
3. **Experiential Learning.** Adults learn through experience and reflection on that experience. *In My Classroom* asks teachers to try new techniques in their classrooms (experience) and then discuss what happened (reflection) with colleagues. The manual asks the reader or user to also spend time thinking individually about teaching experiences. The many activities in the manual are intended to provide teachers and others with experiences that will lead them to new ways of teaching and thinking about teaching. Teachers are encouraged to carry out the activities and answer the questions for each activity. In this way teachers will gain a deeper understanding of the teaching and learning strategies and ideas presented in this book.
4. **Understanding Reasons for Change.** It is important that adults have opportunities to analyze reasons for change. Most adults resist being told what to do. As adults we make choices about what we will do. For teachers, theory and reasons for implementing new strategies and concepts are an important part of making a decision to try new techniques. Teachers need to understand why a particular innovation is beneficial to the learners.

*In My Classroom* presents some background information that includes research findings from other contexts for many of the strategies, thus providing teachers with reasons for implementing a particular strategy. Some of the background information is included in the "Ideas to Consider" sections. Teachers are also called upon to think of why a particular strategy might be beneficial in his or her context.

5. **Responsibilities for Change Rests with the Individual.** Ultimately, teachers themselves will decide whether or not to apply their new learning to the classroom. They may need to adapt their new skills and knowledge to fit their particular situation. Teachers are the agents of their own change. As people decide to make changes in their teaching, it is helpful to honor the dictum, "know thyself." One of the first steps in changing behavior is to become more aware (conscious) of how one thinks because how one thinks is directly related to how one behaves. Therefore, to change teaching behavior one must also adjust how one thinks (about him or herself, about the teaching process, and about the children).



6. **Power of Dialogue.** The possibility for change is increased if people work together to support one another as they change, rather than if they try to change in isolation from each other. This may sound like a contradiction to the statement above. It takes support and interaction with others to help foster the environment for change. Ultimately however, it is the individual that must decide what he or she is going to do. Paulo Friere, the well-known Brazilian educator, realized the power of dialogue in helping people come to deep understandings. *In My Classroom* promotes dialogue among teachers to generate knowledge. It is through dialogue that people become transformed. In dialogue, people listen to each other, ideas are exchanged, new ones are created, and people are changed. Deep and meaningful understandings result from the transformative process of dialogue.
7. **Constructivism.** *In My Classroom* takes the view that knowledge is dynamic, can be generated and is valuable wherever it is located. The activities in the chapters of *In My Classroom* are based on colleagues working together, listening to each other, sharing ideas, creating innovations, and taking action together. *In My Classroom* provides background information, and other ideas that can be used by the teachers in creating their own answers to questions. Most of the questions posed in the activities in the manual have no single correct answer—there are many right answers.

## Structure of the Manual

*In My Classroom* is meant to be used by teachers, student teachers, inspectors, subject advisors, principals, or others interested in improving educational quality at the classroom and school level. We expect that teachers will work with others. We expect that even if only one manual is available in a school, teachers will work together. In this way everyone is a facilitator. Each person who works with this book will be a facilitator of his or her own learning as well as the learning of others. That is why we refer to facilitators in this book. Everyone is considered to be a “facilitator.”



*In My Classroom* starts out with two chapters that help the “facilitator” understand the purposes and principles of the materials. Chapter One describes the principles of the *In My Classroom* manual, and Chapter Two focuses on how to become a good facilitator. Chapters Three through Seven address specific topics. These chapters are structured in a similar way. The chapter begins with an introduction, and is followed by a series of activities. The activities are accompanied by some information in sections called Ideas to Consider. Each activity engages groups of teachers in discussion of the topic and how

it relates to their own experiences. Teachers are asked to solve problems together and support each other in trying out new teaching strategies. The end of each chapter includes an activity for follow-up or checking on how the new ideas are working out.

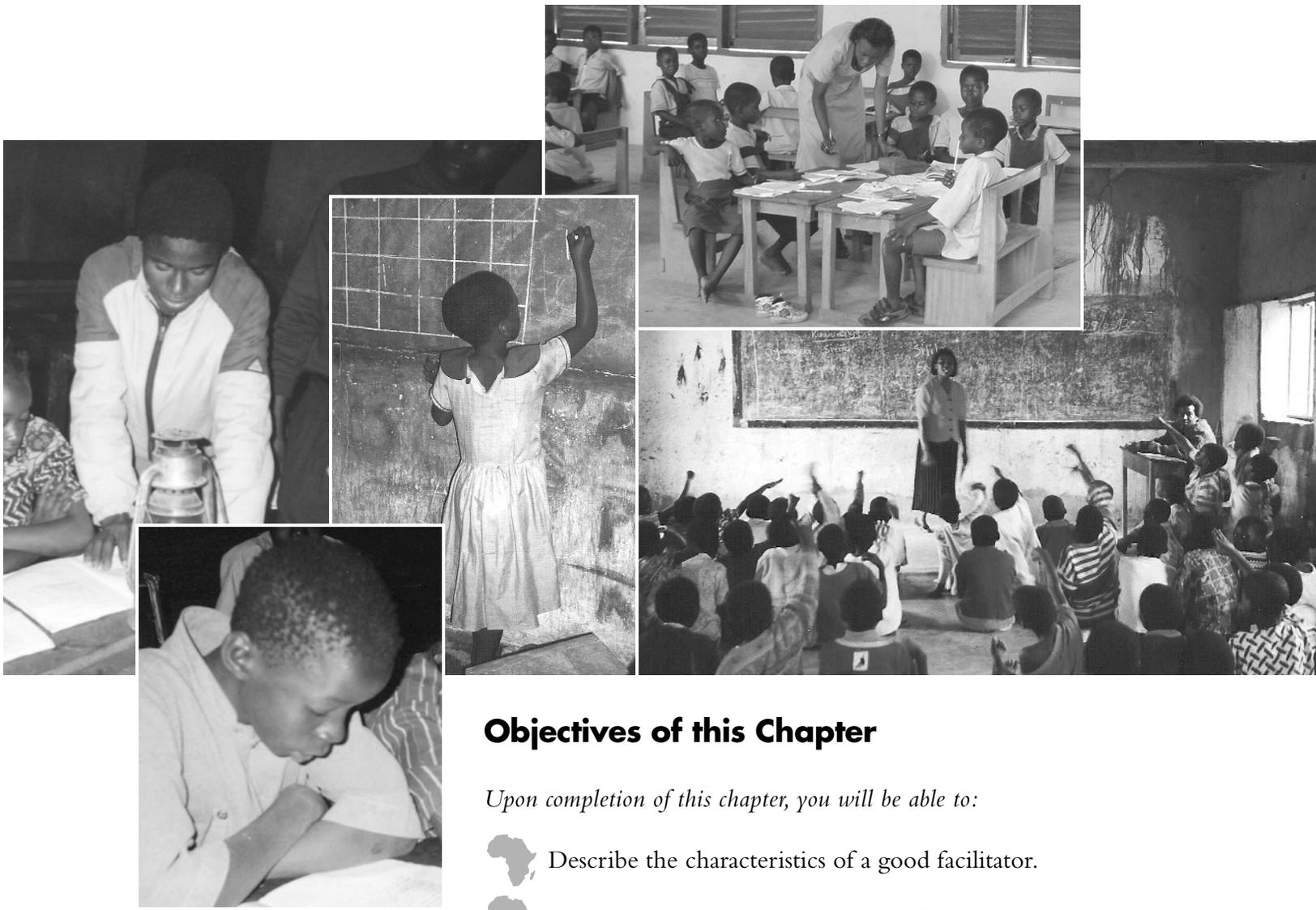
## **Suggested Ways to Use *In My Classroom***

*In My Classroom* materials can be used as a resource for teacher professional development. Some suggested contexts in which *In My Classroom* could be use are:

- professional development for teachers in a school or those in a cluster of schools
- professional development for advisory teachers or inspectors
- pre-service training of teachers
- professional development for in-service teachers
- resource for teacher centers
- resource for curriculum developers

Please remember that *In My Classroom* has been developed for use in a wide range of contexts. It may be used in many different countries, and different kinds of schools, in teachers' colleges, and by school inspectors, advisory teachers, and in-service teacher trainers. *In My Classroom* materials do not define what should be done in each teaching and learning situation. Rather, *In My Classroom* has brought together examples, ideas, and information from many countries in order to illustrate to teachers some good teaching and learning practices. Teachers and others who use *In My Classroom* are then engaged in developing their own teaching strategies for use in their schools and classrooms.





## Objectives of this Chapter

*Upon completion of this chapter, you will be able to:*

-  Describe the characteristics of a good facilitator.
-  Demonstrate at least one technique for participants to get to know each other.
-  Demonstrate strategies for group facilitation.
-  Develop a set of norms for your *In My Classroom* group.

## Chapter 2. Facilitation Skills

# IN MY CLASSROOM



## Facilitation Skills<sup>1</sup>

*Many teachers are asked to help others learn new skills. Indeed more and more teacher educators are being asked to be a ‘facilitator’ rather than a trainer. What does it mean to be a good facilitator? What is the difference between a facilitator and a trainer? How can we set up the conditions for a deep understanding in workshop and other settings? This chapter aims to identify the qualities of a good facilitator and how these qualities can be applied to teacher development activities.*

This guide is designed so that facilitators can work with groups of people in developing their teaching competencies. Anyone can be a facilitator. A principal at a school can be a facilitator with the teachers at her school. A teacher can be a facilitator among a group of colleagues. Teachers can take turns being facilitators for different activities and different topics in the guide. Teacher educators at colleges can be facilitators in their own classrooms. The inspector, subject specialists, and student teachers can all be facilitators and mentors of the teachers. One teacher working on her own can also be a facilitator of her own learnings!



What does it mean to be a facilitator? The term is used in many places with little understanding of its meaning. Let’s take some time to explore the meaning of the word facilitator. When talking about a facilitator we might compare him or her to a trainer. What is the difference between a trainer and a facilitator?

<sup>1</sup>Many important points in this chapter have been adapted from Presentation and Facilitation Skills at <http://p2001.health.org>, Dynamic Facilitation—Transformational Talking by Jim Rough and Associates Inc. at <http://www.tobe.net/topics/talking.html>

## Activity 1

### What is the Difference Between a Trainer and a Facilitator?

1. Think back to your experiences in workshops, in seminars, at teachers' college, and other settings in which you participated in teacher development activities. With a group of colleagues, make a list of all of the qualities or behaviors of a trainer and those of a facilitator. Make a chart like the one below in your exercise book.
2. What do you see as the differences between the two?
3. Can you think of times when training is needed more than facilitation? What are they and explain why you think that? At what times might facilitation be needed more than training?
4. What is the difference between teacher education and teacher training? How are these terms used in your context?
5. What does teacher development mean? Is that term used in your setting? How is it related to teacher education and teacher training?

#### SOME IDEAS

##### **Principles of Facilitation**

The facilitator:

- orients the groups towards the generation of knowledge. That is, he/she helps groups to make lists, categorize issues or strengths, and develop solutions to problems
- makes sure that all participants are safe from negative judgments by others. For example, the facilitator asks participants not to criticize personalities
- helps people express themselves well. For example, if a participant is unclear, the facilitator will ask questions that help clarify the participant's position
- summarizes and reflects to the group what the individuals and group collectively are saying. For example the facilitator records participants' suggestions on a flip chart or makes a verbal summary of what several participants have said
- understands the "group energy" and is flexible in dealing with it. For example if a group is excited about an idea or ready to offer some solutions the facilitator may allow the "group energy" to lead the way, even though something different might have been planned

## Activity 2

### What Makes a Good Facilitator?

1. On your own, think back to a workshop or class that you attended where you learned something new. As you think about that workshop or class make a list of all the ways in which you changed throughout that workshop.
2. Now make a list of all the aspects of the workshop or class that were important in helping you learn something new. When making the list it may help to think about the following questions:
  - a. What strategies did the teacher, (or trainer or facilitator) use that helped you learn?
  - b. What did the facilitator say that helped you learn?
  - c. What was it about the atmosphere or environment (structure of the room etc.) that helped you to learn?
  - d. How did you feel in relation to the facilitator?
  - e. How did you feel in relation to your other colleagues?
  - f. What role did you play in your own learning?
  - g. What role did your colleagues play in your learning?
3. With a group of colleagues, make a list of qualities of a good facilitator.
4. Now with your colleagues, make a list of things to avoid when facilitating a group.

#### SOME IDEAS

##### Qualities of Good Facilitation

- guides discussion
- provides good questions
- promotes dialogue
- does not necessarily promote own ideas or opinions, although they can be offered where it is appropriate
- interested in having participants solve problems rather than providing solutions to problems.
- focus of the activities of a facilitator is on the group activities not the facilitator
- keeps participants on task
- offers strategies for carrying on in group work
- ensures that participants are safe from personal attacks
- tries to show ways that all can benefit
- provides opportunities for all to participate

### Activity 3

#### Qualities of a Good Facilitator

1. With a group of colleagues, discuss each of the qualities of a good facilitator. For each of the qualities listed, you and your colleagues may answer or carry out the following activities:
  - a. What does the quality mean to you?
  - b. Give an example of how a facilitator would demonstrate each quality in a workshop in your location.
  - c. Develop and present short role-plays to demonstrate each of the qualities. (You could also demonstrate what NOT to do as a facilitator.) Hold a discussion after each role-play.

#### SOME IDEAS

##### What is Dialogue?

Dialogue is an important means of communication. In dialogue, people respond to what others have said and offer their perspective on a topic or issue that is being discussed. Dialogue is not questions and answers, nor is it a series of people telling what they know. In dialogue, questions are posed, answers brought forward, discussed, and new questions are raised. In dialogue you may not come up with answers to a particular question, but all who have participated have learned. In dialogue it is expected that all who participate are changed or transformed. That is why dialogue is called a transformative process.

#### SOME IDEAS

##### Guidelines for Facilitators

- Know the content of the workshop.
- Know the participants.
- Know your preferences and biases.
- Prepare well for sessions.
- Inform groups of their tasks and the amount of time they have for each task.
- Model the kind of traits you want the participants to learn (e.g., nonjudgmental, open-minded, fair, creative, flexible, focusing on assets and possibilities, open to learning and personal change).
- If a team is presenting the workshop, demonstrate teamwork. Work together cordially, help each other with tasks, and share responsibilities.
- Be aware of relationships of people in the groups. Help participants avoid rankism (see page 14).

## SOME IDEAS

### **Rankism**

Rankism refers to an individual's position in society and how that position affects the way others see them and how they use their position. Rank is usually a status in society that someone has earned through experience, education, lineage, or some combination of the three. The person gains respect because of this rank and what they are able to do because of it. Rankism comes into play when a person's rank is used inappropriately. For example, if a medical doctor comes to a workshop for teachers, everyone respects that person because of his or her knowledge and skills in medicine. Because she is a doctor of medicine, does not necessarily mean she automatically knows about teaching reading in grade 1 classrooms. In workshops and school settings, rankism can keep some people from expressing themselves because they are afraid to voice their opinion in the presence of others who hold higher rank. While it is important to respect rank appropriately, we should be aware of times when someone's rank is being used to prevent progress.

In some education workshops in Ghana, for example, participants included inspectors, principals, education professors, teachers, and parents. To avoid rankism participants agreed to call each other "sister" and "brother" rather than Dr. so and so, or Mrs. so and so. In this way participants were on equal footing and felt free to express themselves.

## SOME IDEAS

### **Know the Participants**

Getting to know the participants in a workshop, in a class, or seminar requires some effort on the part of the facilitator. Here are some important things you may want to know about your group. Can you think of any other aspects of your group the facilitator should know?

- How many participants are there?
- How many men? How many women?
- Do the participants come from urban areas? Rural areas? Large villages or towns?
- What kind of professional experience do they have?
- What types of children do they teach? What subjects do they teach?
- What are the language abilities of the participants?
- What is the educational and social background of the participants?
- Do the participants know each other? How will you provide opportunities for them to get to know each other (see page 15)?

## SOME IDEAS

### Getting to Know One Another

Here are a few ideas for helping participants to get to know each other.

1. **Introduce Each Other.** Ask participants to pair up with someone they don't know. Give participants about 10 minutes to find out important information about the other person so that they can introduce each other to the whole group. At the end of 10 minutes each person in the pair introduces the other person to the whole group by stating three things about the person in addition to the person's name.
2. **Chain of Introductions.** (For up to 15 people in a group.) Make a circle. Start by having one person say his or her name and hometown (or another important piece of information). The next person in the circle has to say the first person's name and hometown, and then tell their own name and hometown. The third person in the circle has to tell the name and the hometown of the first person, then the name and the hometown of the second person, and then his or her own name and hometown. This continues until all of the people in the group have said the name and hometown of all those before them. This may not work if the group is too large. People may not be able to remember all of the names and the exercise may take too much time.
3. **Introduction Puzzle.** Start by giving each person a small piece of paper ( $\frac{1}{2}$  A4 size). Each person must write three interesting characteristics about herself or himself on the paper. They must not put their name on the paper. After each person has completed the task, collect the papers and put them in a box or similar container. Mix up the papers so they are not in any particular order. Then have each person select a paper from the box. After everyone has a paper, the group is given the following instructions:

Find the person who matches the characteristics on the paper by interviewing one person at a time. Ask questions that can be answered by "yes" or "no." If the person you are asking does not match the characteristics on the paper, move on to another person.

When you think you have matched the characteristics on the paper with the person, ask the person's name and put it on the paper. When everyone has matched their paper with the person it describes, take turns introducing each other by telling the name and their three characteristics.



## SOME IDEAS

### **Strategies for Facilitating Groups**

1. **Brainstorming.** Good for generating ideas from the group.
  - Be clear about the issue or question to be brainstormed.
  - Record all ideas as they come up.
  - Record the speakers exact words (or summarize with the speakers' permission).
  - Accept all ideas.
  - See each idea as "fertilizer" for new ideas.
  - Sort out ideas according to criteria generated by the group.
  - Avoid being critical of ideas.
2. **Response Rounds.** Good for getting everyone to participate. Participants given time to respond to question or exercise individually (quietly) in writing if necessary. Participants then respond along one by one. If someone is not ready to respond they can "pass." Continue until there are no more responses. Summarize each round if necessary. All responses are recorded.
3. **Buzz Groups.** Allows all to participate. Give a clear task or topic to discuss. Divide large groups into sub-groups of 2–5 people. Set time limit. Group chooses recorder and reporter. Have sub-groups report to larger group. Ask larger group to sort out sub-group responses (e.g., common themes, similar responses, opposing responses, stellar ideas etc.)
4. **Group-Centered Discussion.** In some group discussions, you can ask participants in the discussion to orchestrate the flow of the discussion. Instead of the facilitator or the "chair" calling on the next person, the last one to speak acknowledges the next speaker. This puts the emphasis on the opinions and ideas of the participants rather than on the facilitator.

## Activity 4

### Developing Group Strategies

1. With a group of colleagues, discuss other group strategies you know about or have tried in other workshops.
2. Write out each strategy and add it to your list.
3. Develop a new strategy for group participation based on the group strategies you know and those presented here. Try it out among yourselves.

#### SOME IDEAS

##### Reporting Out

- Inform groups ahead of time if they are going to report out to the whole group at the end of the exercise.
- Give guidelines for what is to be reported.
- Let participants know how much time they will have for reporting out and stay on the schedule.
- Make sure reporters are concise and clear.
- Allow time for clarification.
- If time is available, allow questions and discussion during and/or after each group.
- If there is limited time and each group is reporting on the same topic or exercise, don't allow groups to repeat points that have been mentioned in previous groups.

## SOME IDEAS

### **Setting Norms**

Just as it is important to set classroom rules so that learners know what to expect in the learning environment, it is also important to set norms (or rules) for working with adults in workshop, seminar, meeting, and other settings. By setting norms in the beginning of a workshop or meeting a lot of misunderstandings can be avoided. Norms can vary depending on the purpose of the workshop, the cultural context, the length of time for the workshop etc. In some cases you may find it useful to post norms on the wall for all participants to see. Here are some things to consider when setting norms.

**Time.** Are you going to start on time? If not how long will you wait for others? If you are going to start on time, what about latecomers?

**Products.** Are participants expected to complete something? What are the expected products? What is the role of each person in the production.

**Roles.** What are the roles of all of the participants and facilitators? Are all people clear on their roles?

**Respect for others.** How will respect for others be manifested? What does it mean in the workshop context to show disrespect? How will the group avoid disrespect?

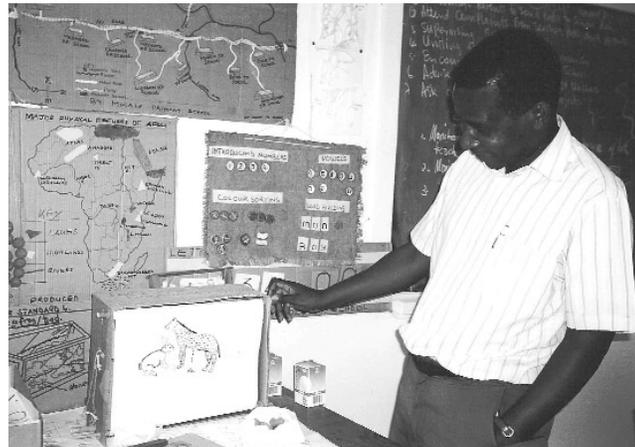
**Participation.** Who is expected to participate and how will they demonstrate participation? What role will the facilitator play in providing equal opportunities to participate? Here are some norms of participation that have been used by others in workshops and other adult learning settings.

- Self-monitor if you tend to talk too much. Allow others a chance to express themselves by not "taking the floor" too much.
- Listen with an open mind and heart.
- Engage in dialogue with others, don't just tell what you know.

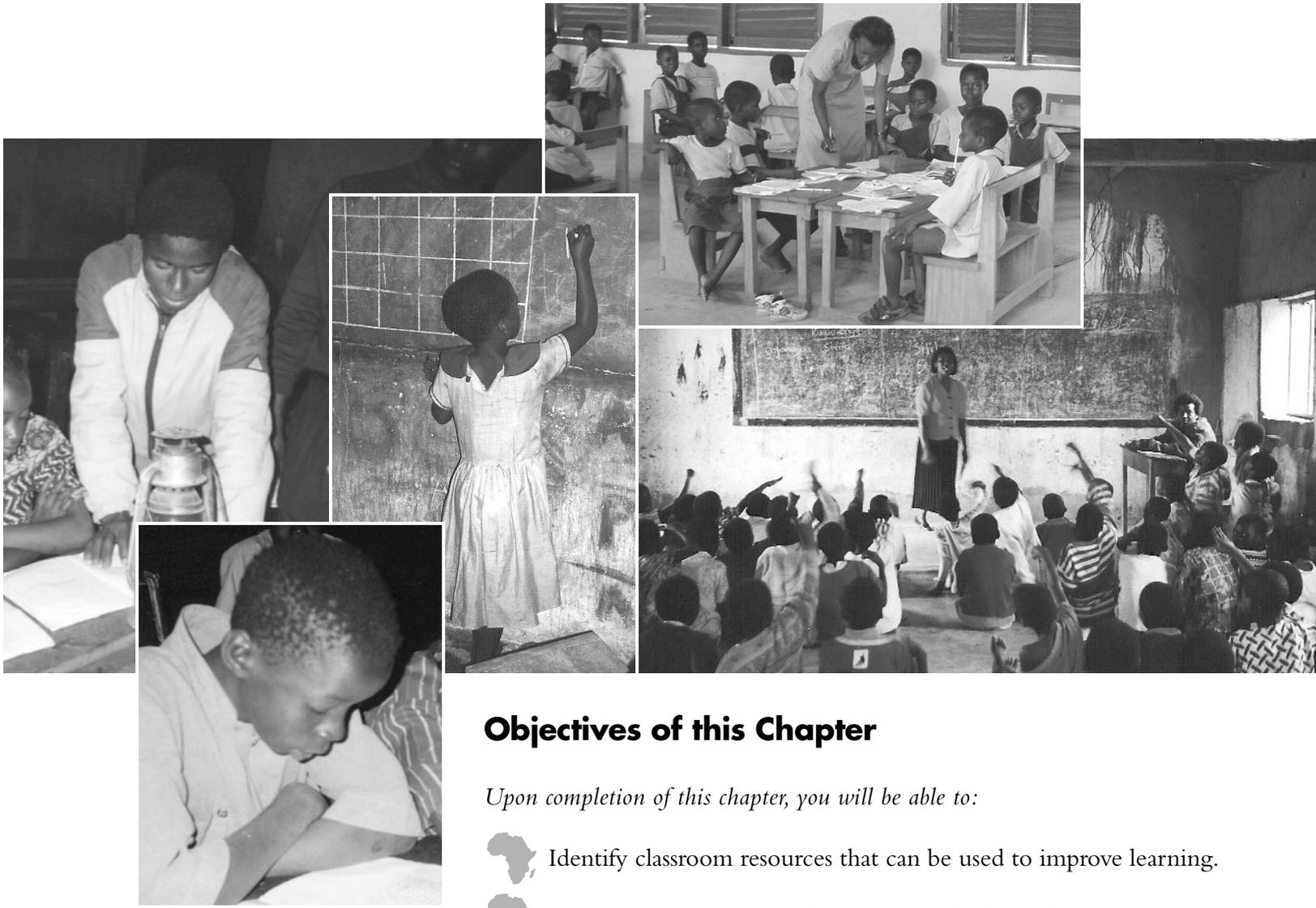
## Activity 5

### Developing Norms

1. Norms may be written or unwritten. If they are not written, are they explicit (that is, does everyone know them because they have been discussed and agreed upon)? Or are the norms implicit (they are understood but have not been discussed or stated)? Do you have norms in your groups and other workshops? Make a list of them with a group of colleagues, who have also been in the group (or workshops). Are those norms explicit (talked about and discussed) or are the norms implicit (not talked about but understood by most people anyway)?
2. Develop a set of norms for your groups for working through this guide. (The norms may shift from time to time so make sure you and your colleagues provide time to reexamine the norms periodically.)







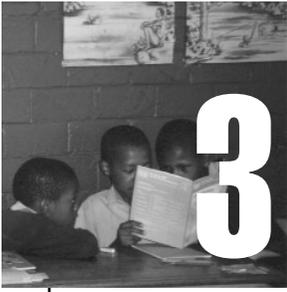
## Objectives of this Chapter

*Upon completion of this chapter, you will be able to:*

-  Identify classroom resources that can be used to improve learning.
-  Know how resources can be organized for better learning.
-  Prepare a plan to improve learning in your classrooms.
-  Manage resources in special environments such as multigrade classrooms.

## Chapter 3. Classroom Management

# IN MY CLASSROOM



# 3 Classroom Management

*The way teachers organize classrooms influences student learning.  
Your skill in managing classroom resources contributes to the improved  
academic performance of your students.*

The box below provides a definition of “classroom management.” To manage resources well means to organize them in a way that they cost-effectively produce the results expected. Classroom management is a very important aspect of good teaching. This chapter offers some ways of improving classroom management techniques.



## **What is classroom management?**

Classroom management is usually understood to mean the way teachers organize the space, time, and human resources available to them to increase student learning.

## **Activity 1** **Looking Back**

1. On your own, think back to your school days and identify one of your best classes. Now write down a few notes in answer to the following questions.
  - a. How was the class arranged?
  - b. How was the class managed?
  - c. What were three things that you liked about that classroom?
  - d. What were the main problems in that classroom?
  - e. How were they handled by the teacher?
  - f. How did you feel as a learner in that classroom?
  - g. Describe some of the learning activities in that classroom?
  - h. What were the rules and procedures in those classrooms?

- i. Why was that particular classroom so different from others?
  - j. Was there any misbehavior in your classroom? If yes, describe it.
  - k. Why were those behaviors considered “misbehaviors”?
2. Now share these notes with a group of colleagues. Take turns telling about your best classroom.
  3. In your group, write a list of all the things that you think make a well-managed classroom. Describe how the class would be set up.

## Activity 2

### Classroom Resources

1. List the resources available to a teacher to help children learn.
2. Imagine an excellent class and a very poor class and describe how the resources in the lists might be used in each to create poor or excellent learning environments.
3. Educators recognize several important resources that are available to classroom teachers. Review the section below that lists some of these resources. For each resource listed, describe how the resource is used in your own classroom.

#### SOME IDEAS

##### Resources

- time for instruction
- space in which to locate learning activities
- instructional aids such as books, posters, blackboards, etc.
- interactions with students to present concepts, to offer practice, to guide learning

## Activity 3

### Time

The amount of time available for learning and the way it is organized should be one of the main concerns of teachers. A number of school systems have increased the amount of time devoted to instruction.

1. With a group of colleagues, make a list of all the ways time might be important in your classrooms.
2. Review the ideas in the section on time below that summarizes the practices related to time that have influenced learning in other countries.
3. With a colleague, discuss each of the time issues and how each one effects learners, you as a teacher and your school.
4. The time strategies section below summarizes the strategies other countries have taken to extend or better organize instructional time. Discuss each strategy to see if it would be useful in improving teaching and learning. Say how you might adapt each strategy to improve learning at your school.

### SOME IDEAS

#### Time

The following are practices regarding time that may affect learning:

- daily, weekly, and yearly schedules of school days and holidays
- absences and tardiness of teachers and students
- noninstructional activities in the school day such as attendance taking, breaks, moving from class to class, sports, etc.
- the amount of time during instruction when children are engaged
- the extent to which the curriculum is covered

### SOME IDEAS

#### Time Strategies

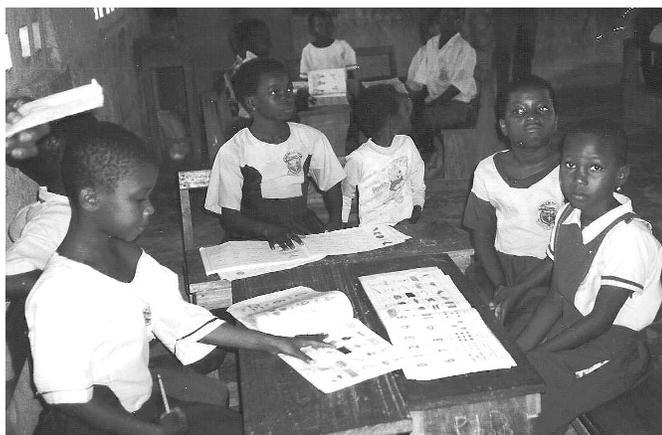
- scheduling longer school day, more school days in year
- providing lunch and rest break at school with afternoon studies
- discussing with parents ways to help their children arrive at school on time
- monitoring by community members of school attendance
- keeping administrative and other non-instructional tasks to a minimum
- adapting schedules to community activities and reducing holidays
- assigning homework practice
- recruiting volunteers for tutoring and substitute teaching
- developing curriculum materials that allow students to move along at their own pace

## Activity 4

### Learner Attendance

School absenteeism is a predictor of repetition. Students who are absent from school do not receive instruction from the teacher, may not have access to textbooks, and miss opportunities to learn from their peers. That is why students who have a high rate of absenteeism are more likely to repeat grades. School attendance determines the time spent in learning the intended outcomes. Most learning of the curriculum takes place within the classroom, so those students who attend school regularly have a better chance of learning the curriculum.

1. With a group of colleagues, brainstorm all the reasons why children are absent from school.
2. Identify the students that are often absent in your classroom.
3. Make a profile of two or three of these students. Here are some questions that will help you make a profile.
  - a. Is the child a boy or a girl?
  - b. What reasons does the child give for being absent?
  - c. What reasons do the parents give for the child being absent?
  - d. How far from school does the child live?
  - e. How does the child come to school every day?
  - f. What home or work obligations does the child have?
4. What are some of the ways you help the learner to avoid absenteeism in school? Brainstorm a list with some colleagues.
5. What strategies would you use to help those learners you profiled above to have higher attendance in school?
6. Have learners keep track of attendance in their class and make monthly graphs of attendance.
7. Role play a discussion with parents on ways to keep the child from being absent from school.



## Activity 5

### Managing Instruction

Instruction is effective if it produces the intended learning. This activity helps you examine how you organize your teaching.

1. Describe the steps you use in teaching a lesson. Compare your steps with your colleagues.
2. Review the section “Managing Instruction” below that summarizes some research findings of practices used by effective teachers to improve learning in other countries. Answer the following questions:
  - a. What would an orderly classroom with few distractions look like? Describe this classroom in detail.
  - b. Before teaching begins what kinds of things do you do to prepare? Do think you are a well prepared teacher? Why or why not? How could you be better prepared?
  - c. What types of teaching strategies do you know about? What types of strategies do you use in your classroom? Are there some strategies you know about but do not use? Explain.
  - d. Give an example of a learning objective from one of your classes to a group of colleagues. Ask the group to determine if it is a clear objective or not. If it is not how can it be made clear?

#### SOME IDEAS

#### Managing Instruction

Effective teachers:

- achieve an orderly environment with few distractions
- use an orderly sequence to teach lessons (usually specifying learning objectives, reviewing skills needed to learn the new materials, presenting the new concepts, providing various kinds of practice, and assessing what learners have gained)
- create clear, well-defined learning objectives (curriculum requirements)
- organize instructional aids and assessment in direct support of learning objectives rather than treating them as independent components
- use a variety of teaching methods and practice tasks
- pace lessons appropriate to students' abilities to learn
- establish a system for continuously assessing learning, reflecting on your teaching, and improving results

## Activity 6

### Lesson Plans

How do you manage instruction in your classroom and how do your lesson plans relate to the ideas in the section on “Managing Instruction”?

1. What is the format of your lesson plans? Are you clear about what each part requires?
2. Would you change the format of your plans to make instruction in your classroom more effective in increasing student learning? If so, ask each group to share their ideas with the whole group.
3. What have you learned about lesson planning that you can apply in your classroom? And how will you share it with other teachers in your school?

## Activity 7

### Engaging Students

Effective teachers actively engage students in learning. They ensure enough instructional time and check to make sure students are engaged as much of the time as possible in learning tasks. The more time they spend learning, the more a student will learn. Research shows that the number of engaged hours in the school day is more important than the length of the school year. The amount of engaged time a student spends in class depends on the way teachers organize instruction.

1. With a group of colleagues, brainstorm, what it means to have learners engaged in learning.
2. Reflecting on your own classroom, how much of your lesson time would you say are students engaged in learning? (e.g. 30 out of 40 minutes.)
3. When students are not engaged, what are they doing? What are the reasons for students’ lack of engagement? Describe ways in which you might engage more students, more of the time.

## Activity 8

### Time-On-Task

This activity helps teachers find out how much time learners spend on learning tasks. By recording the activities in a classroom during a lesson and who is involved in those activities, you can get an idea about how much time learners spend on the learning tasks. This is called “time-on-task.”



1. Make an arrangement with a colleague to observe each others' lessons. It may be helpful to think of this activity as getting feedback from a friend about your teaching. This is not an evaluation!

### Time-On-Task

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Students in Class \_\_\_\_\_

Time into the lesson	Start of Lesson	After 5 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes
Teacher/students	Number of students engaged 15	Number of students engaged 2	Number of students engaged	Number of students engaged
What is the teacher doing?	Giving instructions to learners.	Asking learners questions.		
What are the students doing?	Opening exercise books.	Answering teacher's questions.		

2. Make a chart like the one below in an exercise book. Make enough columns so that you can keep track of what is happening in the lesson up to the end. If the lesson is 40 minutes long, your last column should be 40 minutes (or the end of the lesson). Note that the table below is divided into 5 minute intervals.
3. While observing your colleague's classroom use the chart above to record your observations.
4. Every five minutes during the lesson, write down what the students are doing and what the teacher is doing. At the top, write down the number of students who are actively engaged in the lesson. A student is actively engaged if they are listening, talking to other students about the topic, reading, writing, calculating, answering a question, drawing, making something related to the topic, or practicing what they have learned. An example is filled in for the first two columns.

#### SOME IDEAS

##### Learner Participation

Students should have the opportunity to participate in classroom discussion and be able to ask and answer questions. If some students are systematically excluded, their motivation and capacity for learning is likely to decrease. Teachers who always call on students in the same pattern are more likely to call on all students, but they may lose the attention of students whose turn has gone or will come later. Teachers who call students randomly keep the students alert, but may overlook some students.

5. After the lesson summarize your results by answering these questions:
  - a. How much time was used by the teacher talking?
  - b. At any one time what was the maximum number of students engaged in the lesson?
  - c. What were the main activities of the students during the lesson?
  - d. Which activity did learners engage in for most of the lesson?
  - e. Do you think the learners were actively engaged in the lesson for the whole lesson? Why or why not?
6. When were learners the least engaged in the lesson? What are the reasons for that?
7. Based on this observation what would you do differently if you were teaching this lesson again?
8. Switch roles for another lesson. Let your colleague observe your lesson. Repeat the steps above.

**SOME IDEAS**

**Time-On-Task**

Here are some ideas for increasing student engagement or time-on-task.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher comes prepared for class.</li> <li>2. Teacher uses a variety of teaching and learning strategies.</li> <li>3. Learners are given time to practice what they have learned. Role plays, show and tell, and story-telling allow students to apply new information.</li> <li>4. Learning tasks require all students to be involved.</li> <li>5. Learners have enough time to engage in the learning task.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Learning tasks are based on the objectives of the curriculum.</li> <li>7. Learning tasks are appropriate to the developmental level of the children.</li> <li>8. Learning activities are paced to meet the learning needs of students.</li> <li>9. Drinking water, toilet facilities, and shelter are adequate so children can focus on learning.</li> <li>10. Teaching and learning materials are used appropriately.</li> <li>11. Independent study and seat work can be completed before moving on to other tasks.</li> </ol> |
|--|--|



## Activity 9

### Questioning Techniques

1. Which of the questioning techniques listed in the table below do you use? Order the techniques from 1–8, with a 1 for the technique you use most often, and an 8 for the technique you use least often.
2. Which technique for calling on learners do you most commonly use?
3. How does that work for you?
4. How does it relate to the ideas in the section on “Learner Participation” on page 28?
5. What would you change in your techniques to increase student engagement?
6. How will you apply these techniques in your classroom? How will you share what you have learned with other teachers?

<b><u>SOME IDEAS</u></b>	
Questioning Technique	Rank Order
a. Asking a question and waiting for the whole class to respond in chorus.	_____
b. Calling on a student by name and waiting for a response.	_____
c. Calling on the first person to raise his or her hand.	_____
d. Calling on learners after giving them a few seconds to think.	_____
e. Alternating calling on boys and girls.	_____
f. Calling on learners by alphabetical order in my register.	_____
g. Calling on learners by going around the room from desk to desk in order.	_____
h. Learners asking questions of each other.	_____

## SOME IDEAS

### **Learner Participation**

Teachers can encourage every student to participate in learning by using every-student-response techniques. This engages students and encourages them to pay attention. Here are some suggested techniques. What others can you think of? Make a poster for your staff room showing these techniques.

1. When asking students true/false questions, ask all students to put thumbs up for true responses and thumbs down for false responses.
2. When going over a list of words, ask the students to read aloud as in choral speaking.
3. When going over a list of words, ask students to underline, circle, or cross certain words in their exercise books.
4. Ask all students to write down their answers, then call on some students to read their answers aloud.
5. Give students enough time to think before calling on students. Ask learners to keep their hands down after you ask a question until you give them a signal to raise their hands to be called on. Try giving students three seconds after asking a question before they should raise their hands to be called on. This gives learners time to think. Those learners who are not usually the first to raise their hands may have more of chance to give a response.
6. When you want to call on a particular student, do not name the student before you ask the question. If you name the student, only that student will pay attention. Ask all the students to begin thinking of an answer before you name the student.
7. Tell learners to be prepared to ask questions. Give them time to think about what they want to ask. They can work in pairs to come up with questions.



## Activity 10

### Peer Teaching

Involving students in teaching other students is an effective technique to increase learning. This is sometimes called peer teaching. One of the best ways to learn something is to teach it. Students in the same grade may be of different ages and of varying abilities. Teachers can use these differences for the benefit of everyone by involving students in group learning. Teachers can organize learning groups in pairs, in small groups, and in cooperative groups.

1. With a group of colleagues, list the different ways you group learners together. For each way of grouping learners describe the purpose or benefits of that particular technique.
2. In peer teaching, students with a particular skill or knowledge help others learn that skill or knowledge. In some schools, for example, older children read to younger children. What are some ways you use peer teaching in your school? With a group of colleagues, list the positive and negative aspects of peer teaching.
3. With a partner, look through your syllabus or curriculum. Identify lessons or topics that might be suitable for peer teaching. How will you organize learners for peer teaching?

#### SOME IDEAS

##### **Group Work**

Group work is a way of organizing learners so they teach one another and learn from one another. Group work also involves cooperative efforts, develops leadership and communication skills, and builds self-confidence. It is important to consider the learning objectives when putting learners in groups. When setting up groups, you may consider these questions.

1. Will the learning objective be achieved by grouping learners?
2. What type of group will work best for the learning activity? (pairs, three in a group, small group, large group)
3. What is it you actually want the learners to do in the group?
4. What is the best way to make up the group? (girls in groups and boys in groups, boys and girls together in groups, skilled learners with unskilled learners, learners with the same ability, etc.)
5. What do you expect the pupils to learn in the group?
6. Are there enough materials for each group to have their own set? How many groups will you be able to make with the amount of materials you have?
7. Will the instructions be given before the learners are in groups, or after? Will the instruction be written or oral?
8. What will the teacher be doing during the group work? (going from group to group, working with one group while the others work, etc.)
9. How will you assess the learners in groups?



## Activity 12

### A Learning Environment

A sound classroom management plan includes elements that create a positive learning environment. Such a plan would detail how the teacher would:

- arrange the classroom, students, and materials in a way in which the physical environment promotes learning.
  - establish rules and procedures for the orderly conduct of the day.
  - deal with discipline problems that arise.
1. On your own, draw a picture of the arrangement of your classrooms, write out the classroom rules, and tell how you keep an orderly classroom.
  2. Present your plan, classroom rules, and ways of maintaining order to your colleagues. Ask for questions, comments, and suggestions for improvement.

#### SOME IDEAS

##### **Classroom Arrangement**

The physical arrangement of a classroom will not, by itself, guarantee effective management. However, thoughtful arrangement can contribute to the learning outcomes the teacher intends to achieve. The most important element is to select a classroom arrangement that is consistent with learning goals and instructional objectives.



If the instructional approach calls for cooperative work, the classroom can be arranged with clusters of students. For pair work, students can remain at their desks. It is important to try to allow space for learners and teachers to move around the room.

If the instruction consists primarily of presentations, demonstrations, and teacher-led discussions with the whole class, students should be arranged in rows or half circles where they can see the teacher and the blackboard.

Even in classrooms with little or no furniture it is important to arrange the seating of the learners so that it contributes to learning.

3. What are your major challenges in creating a learning environment? For each challenge you list describe a way of overcoming the challenge.
4. With a group of colleagues, make a list of the assets (strengths) and improvements you would like to make regarding the learning environment. For each improvement you want to make, tell how you will accomplish your desired change. You might make a table with three columns (Assets, Improvements, How to Improve). Share your table with your principal, subject advisor, or other educators who can assist you in implementing your plan.

## SOME IDEAS

### Learning Environment

**The seating arrangement** can have an impact on learning. In a classroom that is arranged in rows there is a tendency for the teacher to direct more attention to the students seated in the front. Researchers have found that in many classes, students who sit at the back of the class tend to be less attentive and achieve at lower levels than students who sit in the front. Low achieving students who are moved to the front may improve their level of achievement.

**Class rules** are general standards of behavior for everyone in the classroom. Involving students in establishing rules and procedures increases their participation, builds trust, and encourages them to take an active role in applying the rules. For a clear understanding of what is meant, teachers should work with students to identify and prepare detailed explanations of the rules. If the classroom rules are stated positively, it will be easier to enforce. An example of a positive rule is: Respect each other. (Instead of saying no hitting each other, or no talking while another person is talking.)

**Procedures** are standards of behavior that relate to routine activities in a classroom. They guide students in how to behave socially and academically. For example, how does a student excuse him or herself to go to the toilet, signal a desire to ask or answer questions, change to the next subject lesson, prepare for the start of a lesson, move out of the classroom for a lesson outside, pass out textbooks, get into groups, and collect assignments.

**Daily routines** are tasks and activities that have to be carried out every day for the class to run smoothly. This would include such things as cleaning of the classroom, opening and closing windows, collecting and passing out textbooks and other materials, and cleaning the chalkboard. Giving the responsibility to learners for these tasks in an equitable way is important for modeling practices such as responsibility for cleanliness and order, equal participation in tasks, and good organizational skills. For younger learners, it is important that they learn classroom routines so that they can be free to concentrate on other aspects of learning.

## SOME IDEAS

### **Chalkboards**

- Hang the chalkboard so all learners can see clearly.
- Make sure that chalkboards are the right height for learners and teachers to write on them.
- If possible, position the chalkboard so the glare does not prevent the students from seeing.
- Be aware of the condition of the blackboard so that writing on the blackboard is legible.
- Check the availability of chalk and dusters.
- Make sure that no mistakes are left on the board without being either crossed out or erased; so visual learners do not retain incorrect information.
- Divide the chalkboard into sections so students can follow what is being written.
- Write big enough and clear enough so all learners can see.

## SOME IDEAS

### **Some Routines**

- organizing chairs and desks
- sweeping the classroom floor
- opening and closing windows
- cleaning the chalkboard
- updating the calendar
- collecting and distributing textbooks and other materials
- helping the teacher with attendance register
- leading other students in preparing for lessons

What others can you name?

## Activity 13

### Activity Chart

Make a classroom activity chart for use in your classroom.

1. For this activity you will need a large piece of poster board or a carton box (a good size would be around 1 m X 75 cm), some additional poster board or carton boxes to cut up into small rectangles for student names, scissors, and a marking pen. You will need some tape or blue tack to stick the names on the chart.
2. On a scratch piece of paper, prepare a draft of your daily activity chart. In the TASKS column list all the routine tasks that learners may be involved in. It might look something like the example below:

Daily Activity Chart						
TASKS	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Learner's Names
Sweep floors	Ali					James Kwesi
Open and close windows	Charity					
Collect and pass out books and papers	Isaac Maria					Evelyn Aster
Cleaning the chalkboard	Tebogo					
Updating the calendar	Desta					

3. Ask the learners (or help the learners to) make a card with their name on it.
4. Prepare the large poster board or carton box to look like the draft you have made. Make it large enough so that learners can easily see the chart from their desks. Make it colorful and attractive by using crayons or different colored marking pens. Learners can decorate their name cards.
5. Hang the chart on the wall in a prominent place in the classroom so all can see it clearly.
6. Explain to the learners how to use the chart. Here are some ideas for using the chart:
  - a. Learners make a list of tasks and how often they should be done.
  - b. Learners make a roster of the learners for each task for a one-month period.
  - c. Learners place their name card on the tasks they carry out.

## SOME IDEAS

**Rapport.** Social interactions among teachers and students play an important role in developing a learning environment. This relationship between students and teacher is called rapport.

**High Expectations.** Teachers who have high expectations for their students give their students confidence and a motivation to learn. Classrooms are places where learning beyond academics can and should go on. Through their language and actions, teachers can help children develop a healthy respect for learning and their abilities to succeed in school and in life. When children believe in their own ability to succeed, they are likely to be more successful.

**Independence.** Teachers who encourage students to assume responsibility for their own learning help children by providing lots of opportunities where they can apply the knowledge they have acquired to new problems. These children tend to do better on tests and feel more self-confident in their ability to do school work.

**Team Spirit.** Teachers who provide learning activities that require team building, and who verbally recognize good team spirit foster a positive atmosphere in their classrooms.

## **Activity 14**

### **Classroom Management in Multi-Grade Classrooms**

Managing instruction in multi-grade classrooms (classrooms where one teacher teaches children from 2 or more grades) is similar in many ways to managing single-grade classrooms. However, instructional organization in a multi-grade classroom requires multiple groupings. This section discusses flexible classroom arrangement that accommodates such groupings.

In multi-grade classes, instructional organization is characterized by flexible grouping and individualized instruction. In a typical multi-grade classroom, where multiple activities are likely to occur at the same time, the classroom arrangement needs to be flexible to allow for individual teacher instruction, small group work, and student independent study. Some multi-grade classrooms have designated areas where students can engage in self-directed learning activities.

1. If you are a multi-grade teacher, describe your strengths in managing your classroom.
2. Make a list of the areas where you would like to have some improvement. With a colleague or group of colleagues brainstorm some strategies for improving the management of your multi-grade class.

3. Try some of the strategies in your classroom and keep a journal of what you did, why you did it, how it worked or didn't work and what you might try next. In your journal, be free to write what you are thinking and feeling.

### SOME IDEAS

#### **Silent Signals**

Effective teachers deal with disruptive behavior by developing certain practices to check misbehavior without interrupting classroom instruction. Some teachers use silent signals with students to communicate nonverbally when they feel the students are interfering with the lesson. What other actions can you think of?

- Touch your watch.  
(When a student is wasting time)
- Touch your ear.  
(When a student is not listening.)
- Touch your mouth.  
(When a student is talking out of turn.)
- Hold up your pencil.  
(When a student should be writing.)
- Hold up a book.  
(When a student should be reading.)
- Look at the student.  
(Make eye contact.)
- Walk near the student.
- Touch the student's desk or shoulder.
- Call on the student to respond.
- Speak to the student after class.
- Move the student to a different desk.
- Hold a parent-student-teacher conference.

### SOME IDEAS

#### **Learning Centers**

Learning centers in classrooms are special areas where students can engage in self-directed learning activities. They are usually furnished with manipulatives, books, and materials that help a child learn a topic or subject. Some educators suggest organizing special areas of the classroom around subject areas such as language, math, and science.

Collecting resources in one area saves time in locating materials and encourages children to learn on their own. Learning centers can be rearranged or changed as often as needed to support the learning activities. The number of centers can change over a period of time, adding a center at a time as your students become more comfortable with small group, self-directed learning activities.

Children can move to work at a learning center if they need additional practice or assistance on a topic or if they have finished other work and are ready to move on to new topics.

## **SOME IDEAS**

### **Managing the Classroom Environment**

- Before dismissing the class for recess, have the students get out materials needed after the break. When the students come in, you can begin the lesson.
- Start your lesson promptly.
- Let learners know what is expected at the start of the lesson (books open, pencils and exercise books ready etc.).
- Make sure you have all the materials for the lesson.
- Establish procedures for lining up, giving out materials, sharpening pencils, etc.
- Finish lessons on time.

## **SOME IDEAS**

### **Arranging the Multi-Grade Classroom**

- Consider the learning activity and the noise that is likely to occur.
- Use furniture to define boundaries of different work areas.
- Choose the area for teacher's resources: table, bookshelf, and chalkboard.
- Specify student learning centers and label each area.
- Consider traffic patterns that permit students to move from one center to another with minimum disruption.
- Accommodate age differences and keep in mind developmental characteristics of the students.
- Assign places where students can store their belongings.
- Make simple rules and behavior standards all children can understand.

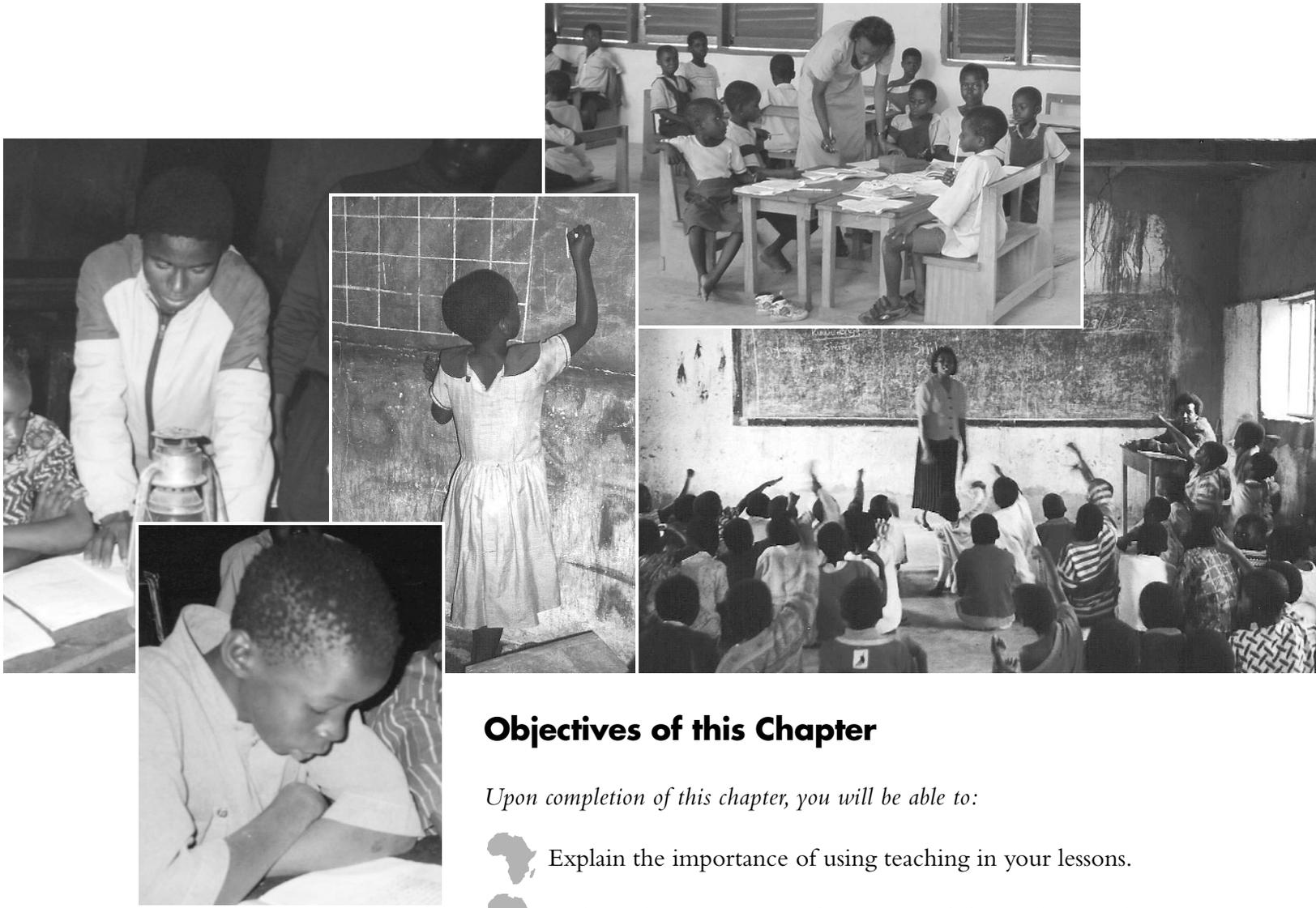
## Follow-up

### **Activity 15** **Making an Action Plan**

Try out some of the strategies you have learned in this chapter in your classroom. Here are a few suggestions.

1. With a colleague, develop a plan for better classroom management. Develop the strategies so they work well in your situation.
2. Keep a journal of the strategies you have tried and how you feel about them. Meet with a colleague, your principal, or a subject advisor to discuss your classroom management. Use your journal to help guide your discussions.
3. When you feel confident with some of the classroom management strategies you have developed for your classroom, share your ideas with some colleagues at your school or a neighboring school.



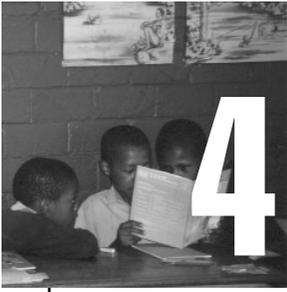


## Objectives of this Chapter

*Upon completion of this chapter, you will be able to:*

-  Explain the importance of using teaching in your lessons.
-  Make and use various teaching aids with limited materials.
-  Use teaching materials to help children learn the given curriculum/syllabus.

# Chapter 4. Teaching and Learning Materials IN MY CLASSROOM



# 4 Teaching and Learning Materials

*Making and using teaching and learning materials is an important aspect of good teaching. Even in classrooms with few resources, teachers can use locally available materials to improve student learning.*

We know that learning takes place in an exciting and active environment. In this chapter we will find out how teaching aids can help to make learning fun and interesting. We will discuss manipulative teaching aids, materials that the teacher can hold and use, and manipulative learning aids, materials that learners can hold and use during the lesson.

Teaching aids are materials that are used to help learners learn. Teaching aids can be used as part of teacher instruction, classroom practice, or assessment. It is important to understand that teaching aids can be used to help your learners better understand the curriculum or syllabus.



## Some Definitions

**Teaching Aids.** Materials that we use in instruction, during the lesson to help our learners better understand the topics we teach. These aids are used mainly by the teacher.

**Learning Aids.** Materials that the learners hold and move around during the lesson practice or assessment. These aids are used mainly by the learner.

**Manipulative.** Something to hold, touch, and move around. It helps to demonstrate a particular aspect of a topic being taught. It helps learners to go beyond memorizing knowledge to understanding the concepts or ideas being taught.

## Activity 1

### Importance of Teaching and Learning Aids

1. Read the following ancient proverb. Have you read this before?  
 I HEAR AND I FORGET  
 I SEE AND I UNDERSTAND  
 I DO AND I REMEMBER
2. On your own take a few minutes and think about how you learned something as a result of actually seeing the thing you were trying to learn. Write a few short notes about that experience.
3. Now, take a few minutes and think about something you learned because you actually were involved in doing that thing. What was it you learned? Write a few short notes about that experience.
4. With a group of colleagues, share the learning experiences you described in numbers 2 and 3 above.
5. After you have shared your experiences with a group of colleagues, discuss the meaning of the proverb above. Make a list of what it means for teaching and learning.
6. Can you add anything to the proverb to make it more meaningful? Do you have a similar proverb in your mother tongue or local language? What is it? Does it have the same meaning?

#### SOME IDEAS

##### **Learning by Doing**

Children learn by doing. It is important that we use teaching aids and activities in which children are engaged in learning, not just sitting and listening to talk. Active learning, especially in young children, has been found to be very effective for most children. Group work, discussions, singing, playing games, drama, making models, drawing, observing, showing, and demonstrating are all ways of active learning that require some type of teaching aid.

The five senses (tasting, smelling, seeing, hearing, and touching) can easily be used to help learners better understand the lesson. When teaching about food in class, for example, bring small amounts of that food to class. Allow the children to touch it while keeping their eyes closed, and tell you how it feels (e.g. smooth, rough). Allow them to smell and see it, again telling you what they find (e.g., brown, white). And lastly, allow them to taste it and then the class can discuss what they have found (e.g., sweet, cold).

7. In groups, prepare a song, dance, or poster to demonstrate the meaning of this proverb. Share your song, dance, or poster with the other groups.

### **SOME IDEAS**

#### **Teaching Aids with Few Resources**

Even with few resources you can still have a classroom with teaching and learning aids. It is important to understand that teaching and learning aids can be made from materials found in your community. You can reuse bottles, bags, string, boxes, etc. to make aids for your learners. Also, you can use materials from the environment; for example, grass or hay, seeds, stones, sand, soil, leaves, sticks, plants, bones, and even insects. You do not have to spend money to have teaching/learning aids in your room. Just look around your community and use what you find. Be creative!

You can also bring in objects from home or the local area when studying those particular topics. For example, if you are studying about communication, bring a radio to class. If you are studying about care of the teeth, bring an animal skull with teeth to class.

### **SOME IDEAS**

#### **Learners as Teaching and Learning Aids**

The most important teaching and learning aid that every teacher has in the classroom is the learner him/herself. One of the best learning aids is the learner's body. You can help the learner with counting by showing her/him how to use fingers to count to 10, by 2's. You can even put kids in pairs so they have more fingers to count on! They can count by 5's or 10's if the group is large enough.

Once the learners are able to count on their fingers, you can then use stones or bottle tops as counters during your mathematics lessons. You can pass these objects out to each student (or small group), or if there are not enough objects you can simply show them to the students while counting aloud. One stone, (show them the stone), plus one stone, (show the second stone) equals two stones (show both stones together in one hand). Be sure to write this on the board as you are saying it.

Also, student work can be displayed on classroom walls. This gives students a chance to see and read others' work. Learners will also feel proud that their work is displayed. It is important that student work does not contain negative feedback by the teacher.

## SOME IDEAS

### **The Missing Materials**

The following story is based on actual events in a number of schools in different countries.

Ms. Motumo had just been appointed a school inspector in her district after 10 years as a grade 3 teacher and another 7 years as a school principal. One of her first tasks as an inspector was to find out what types of teaching and learning materials were available at the schools in her district. The district office needed to know this information in order to prepare a budget and place orders for the coming school year. What she found was truly surprising.

In school after school that she visited, the teachers said that they had no teaching and learning materials. They said that they didn't have textbooks or they did not have enough textbooks to let the learners use them. They could only use one copy for their own lesson preparations. When Ms. Motumo went to the classrooms she noted that the teachers truly did not have many teaching and learning materials in their classrooms. Walls of classrooms were bare, learners desks contained only exercise books, and if bookshelves and cabinets were in the classroom, they were usually empty.

Ms. Motumo knew from her experience as a principal that teaching and learning materials were indeed scarce. But she knew that the district had provided some materials to schools over the past few years. Where were these materials? On her tour around the schools with the principals she came up with a similar situation at each of the schools. The materials were indeed at the school! In almost all of the schools piles of books sat unused and dusty on bookshelves and cabinets in the principal's office or staff room. Equipment and materials were in boxes under desks, and beakers and science equipment were used for drinking glasses and pencil holders.



At Ms. Motumo's former school she had her teachers develop a system for storing, using, and maintaining the teaching and learning materials. As a result, her teachers were very familiar with the

materials and used them often. She also knew that some damage of the materials was inevitable but that is the price to pay for learners gaining a deeper understanding of the things they were learning. She also knew that the use of these books and materials in her school made the learners very interested in learning!

## Activity 2

### Using and Storing Materials

In the story of the missing materials on the previous page, Ms. Motumo found that some of the schools in her district had many teaching and learning materials but they were not being used by teachers. They were stored in boxes and cabinets instead of with the teachers and students.

1. With a group of colleagues, make a list of all the reasons why you think the books and materials may not have been used in those schools visited by Ms. Motumo. For each reason you list describe how you might turn the situation around into one where the materials are being used. You may want to use a table like the one below.

#### Increasing the Use of Teaching and Learning Materials

Reason why teaching and learning materials might not be used	Ways of increasing the use of teaching and learning materials in the school

2. On your own, think about the teaching and learning materials in your school. Answer the following questions:
  - a. What types of teaching and learning materials are available at your school?
  - b. How are they stored and protected from damage?
  - c. Are the materials easily available to teachers to use in their classrooms? Why or why not?
  - d. Describe three ways you might make better use of the teaching and learning materials at your school.

**SOME IDEAS**

**Utilizing Teaching and Learning Materials**

A beautiful textbook or globe is absolutely worthless if it is never used. In schools where resources are scarce it is important to take good care of teaching and learning materials so that they last a long time and many learners get to use them. If the teaching and learning materials last a long time but no one has used them it has served no learning purpose. Remember—if it is not being used, no one is learning from it! Here are some tips about storage, sharing, and displaying materials for you to consider.

Storing	Sharing	Displaying
Use plastic bags to hang materials such as flash cards, bottle caps, and sticks.	Set up routines with learners so they know how to borrow and use materials.	Hang posters on a string along the wall with clothes pegs. Cover posters with clear plastic to protect them.
Use shoe boxes to make kits of materials for groups of learners.	Teach learners how to protect and properly use the learning materials. Make sure learners know safe handling of all materials.	Use carton boxes collected from shops to make posters and flash cards instead of expensive poster paper.
Write down the number of materials before they are handed out to learners. Ask learners to collect and count the materials at the end of the lesson.	Check the number of materials before class to see how many groups of learners you will have. If you have 10 thermometers and 40 learners, then you can have four learners per group for 10 groups each using one thermometer.	Glue pre-made posters to carton boxes so they last long and can be stood up along the wall or on the chalkboard. If the materials are few, ask the learners to sit on the floor or in semi-circles around the material for demonstration purposes.
Get learners involved in the storing and care of the materials. Make up a schedule so that all learners are responsible for collecting the materials from their storage place and returning them when you are finished.	When organizing groups put one person in charge of collecting materials, another for making sure all learners get a chance to use the materials, and another to put the materials away.	Make sure all learners can see the materials. If you are displaying a poster, make sure it is visible to all learners. Check visibility yourself by walking around the classroom to view the material from different places in the room.



## Activity 3

### Using Stones and Bottle Caps

1. Collect small stones and bottle caps. Place them in separate containers such as plastic bags, tins, carton boxes, or baskets.
2. The table below lists a number of uses for each of the objects. Using your curriculum or syllabus materials, identify a curriculum objective or competency that can be addressed using bottle caps or stones. Describe an activity that would use bottle caps or stones for each objective.

#### Using Bottle Caps and Stones

Syllabus Objective	Description of Activity
Count by tens to 100 using objects	In groups of three, learners place 10 stones on the ground. They draw a circle around each group of 10 stones. Learners continue making groups of 10 stones until they have 100 stones. Learners from one group come to count a neighboring groups' stones and vice versa.
Classify groups of objects	Groups of learners are given some bottle caps from different types of bottles or drinks. They are asked to make two piles, with each pile having the same kind of bottle caps in it. Learners explain to the class the reason for grouping them the way they did.

**SOME IDEAS****Posters**

Good posters for the classroom can be made by keeping the following points in mind.

1. Make letters, pictures, and symbols big enough so learners can read the poster from the back of the classroom. Write neatly.
2. Use bold lettering by using a thick marking pen, crayon, or paint brush.
3. Use the whole space of the poster but don't crowd it with too much writing or with too many pictures.
4. Plan out the poster by using a pencil to determine where the writing and pictures will be. Try to avoid cutting words up when they don't fit on a line.
5. Use a variety of colors if they are available.
6. Use carton boxes to make posters that will last longer. Glue plain paper on top of the carton box if you want a white and/or clear surface.
7. Laminate the posters or cover with clear plastic to make them last longer.
8. Display posters by:
  - hanging them from strings on a peg on the wall
  - pegging them on a string across the room
  - sticking them on the wall with blue tack or prestick
  - leaning them against the chalkboard on the chalk tray.

## **Activity 4**

### **Tins and Sticks**

1. You and your learners can collect tins and bring them to school. You can also collect sticks (or grass) to put inside the tins. On the outside of some of the tins write "ones" and on some others write "tens" using a marking pen. Ask learners to count out groups containing 10 sticks. Tie the bundle of 10 sticks together with a string, wire, or rubber band.
2. Have students collect 14 pieces of straw (or grass). Then have them count the straws into one group of tens. They should tie the group of 10 with string and place the new group in the "tens" tin. The last four pieces can be placed in the "ones" tin. Make sure they write out: one ten plus four ones equals fourteen. ( $10 + 4 = 14$ ). Once they understand how the tins work you can do more difficult problems such as 2 "tens" plus 3 "ones" equals 23.

## **Activity 5**

### **Measuring Sticks**

Measuring is an important skill for learners to have. You can begin with learners measuring objects in the class with their hands, fingers, length of step, etc. Once they have done this they can move on to an actual measuring stick.

1. You can use straight sticks, cardboard, or even old cloth or string. Using a measuring stick, cut out one meter in length (or 50 cm or 20 cm sizes). Mark one edge of the cloth or stick in centimeters with a pen, and continue until you have a meter. Be sure your marks are clear and large enough to read.
2. After you have demonstrated the process of making the meter stick for the learners, ask groups to make their own based on the models made already. Each group makes enough for each member of the group to have a meter stick.
3. The measuring sticks (or strings, etc.) can be used to measure each other's legs, arms, height, etc. They can also be used to measure the length of objects in the room (desk, door, window) or even the room itself.

## **Activity 6**

### **Dice**

Once learners know how to count on their fingers they can easily begin to use dice. Dice can be used with younger learners to help with addition or subtraction or with the older learners to play multiplication games.

1. Use a block of wood, cardboard, or a large nut from a tree to make a small block with six sides. On each side draw a different number 1–6. You can write the word (three), draw the number (3) or use symbols (★★) (three stars).
2. Give groups of learners (three or four in a group) two dice.
3. They can throw one, then the second, and then add the two numbers together. Learners write the addition problem in their exercise books. This can also be done with subtraction.
4. Older learners can do the same game but use multiplication instead of addition or subtraction.
5. Young learners throw one die and say and/or write the name or symbol to match what is showing on the die.
6. In a small group try to think of other ways to use dice in your classroom. Try one of these new ideas in your class this week and report back to the group what happened. Did the learners enjoy the lesson? Did it help them learn?

## Activity 7

### Clocks

It is important for learners to be able to tell time. If you have a clock on the wall of your classroom or a few paper clocks for them to use it will help them to see how a clock works and how to tell time.

1. Use a big piece of cardboard to cut out a circle. Also, cut out two hands for the clock—be sure that one is larger than the other. If possible, make the hands a different color so they can be easily seen. Attach the hands to the center of the clock with a paper clip or wire. Write the numbers 1–12 in large writing around the edge of the clock. If you have enough cardboard, make a few smaller size clocks for the learners to use in small groups.
2. Teach the learners the hours of the day and show them where the hands go for the proper time.
3. Tell a story with the clock and have the learners move the hands each time you say a new time. (I wake up at 6:00, at 7:00 I walk to school, etc.)
4. Teach the hour intervals as well as half hour (7:00, 9:00, 8:30, 4:30).

## Activity 8

### The Alphabet

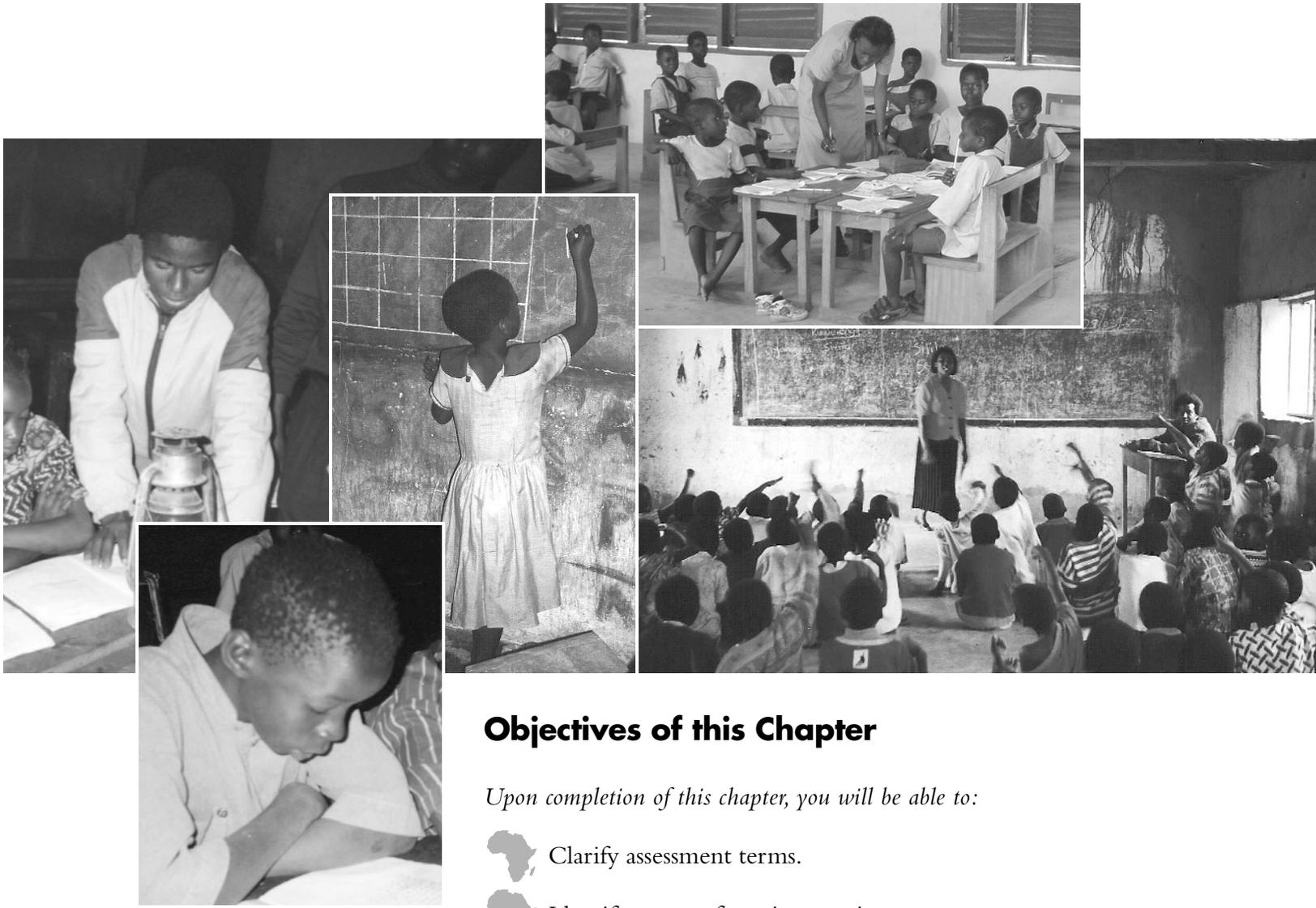
If you have the alphabet posted on the wall in your classroom you are doing two things to help the learners. First, you are allowing the learner to see all of the letters and help commit them to memory, and second you are giving them a reference. In other words, when you are teaching them how to write those letters you can tell them to look at the alphabet on the wall if they are not sure how to write the letter D.

1. To make the alphabet for your classroom it is best to have the same number of pieces of cardboard as there are letters in the alphabet. With a marking pen write each letter in upper case as well as lower case on the cardboard. If you have room, try to draw a picture of something that begins with that letter. Drawing a picture will help the learners remember the letter and sound. Hang all of the letters, in order, on the wall of your classroom.
2. Learners can read the letter to you as you point to it.
3. Point to a letter and the learners have to come up with words that begin with that letter.
4. Learners name the picture of each letter.
5. Learners draw their own picture for the letters and post them under your alphabet.

6. Learners use it as a reference when they are writing at their desks (they look up to find the letter)
7. Learners use it to help them remember the alphabet song.
8. Can you think of any other teaching activities using alphabet letters? What have you tried in your classroom? What have you seen other teachers do? How can using these ideas make you a better teacher?

### **Follow-up**

1. With a group of colleagues, plan a teaching and learning materials development workshop with teachers or at your school or teachers at a nearby school.
2. Before the workshop collect materials that you will need to produce the teaching and learning aids. You can work in pairs of teams and when the materials are complete show them to each other and describe how they can be used in the classroom.



## Objectives of this Chapter

*Upon completion of this chapter, you will be able to:*

-  Clarify assessment terms.
-  Identify reasons for using continuous assessment.
-  Develop different types of continuous assessment activities for the classroom.
-  Develop grading and scoring tools.
-  Demonstrate an understanding of the need for keeping continuous assessment records.
-  Develop performance and product assessments for the classroom.

## Chapter 5. Continuous Assessment

# IN MY CLASSROOM



# Continuous Assessment

*Continuous assessment, or classroom based assessment, poses problems for teachers in almost all countries in the world. It is not an easy topic for teachers to understand or to implement. Most teachers have not been trained in carrying out continuous assessment in the classroom.*

In this chapter, you will find practical ways to carry out assessment of learners in your classroom in an ongoing or continual way. This chapter will also help you understand the main concepts of assessment and the importance of carrying out continuous assessment.

## Activity 1

### What is Assessment?

There are many words used to describe the different types of assessment. And the meanings for those words are different from place to place and even person to person. It is important to come to some understanding with your colleagues about the meanings of the assessment words.

1. With a group of colleagues, brainstorm a list of all of the words that you use that are connected to assessment—not necessarily the words listed in the book, but the words that you and others use in relation to assessment. (Remember: the rules of brainstorming say all suggestions are acceptable; there is no incorrect response and no critical comments are allowed. It is helpful to move quickly when brainstorming so as to keep the momentum flowing. Make it a brain-storm and not a brain-breeze! See Chapter Two for more on brainstorming.)
2. After brainstorming the list of assessment words, sit in pairs or small groups and discuss and write out the meaning of each word. Present your words with their meanings to the other groups for discussion.

## Activity 2

### How Do You Assess?

1. With a colleague or a group of colleagues discuss the following questions:
  - a. What are the different ways learners are assessed at your school? Give examples to show what you mean.
  - b. What does the word assessment mean to you?
  - c. How is this carried out in your classroom?
2. Compare the meaning of assessment that you have with the one described in the definitions box below. How do they differ?



#### Some Definitions

**Assessment.** Assessment is a way of observing and collecting information and making decisions based on the information.

**Continuous assessment.** Continuous assessment refers to making observations periodically to find out what a student knows, understands, and can do. Specific tasks are given to the learners based on what has been taught. We observe the learners doing these tasks and make a judgment about how well they are doing. Continuous assessment is ongoing and helps the teacher to find out what the learners have learned. Some other terms that are similar to continuous assessment are: classroom based assessment, running records, and teacher grading.

**Evaluation.** An overall judgment of student learning based on continuous assessment (and sometimes exams). Evaluation usually comes at the end of a semester, term, or year.

**Testing.** Testing is one way of assessing learners on a continuous basis. Tests usually come at the end of a topic or unit to find out what a student has learned. Testing can include a wide range of question types, but the most common are multiple choice, true and false, essays, and matching.

**Exams.** Exams are usually carried out at the end of the year or cycle (at the end of primary school, for example). Students do not often get feedback on their performance on the exams apart from knowing what grade they got. Exams are usually written in the same way that tests are written.

**Assessment tasks.** Activities given to learners to find out what they know and can do. An assessment task is one in which the teacher is checking to see if learners have met the objectives of the syllabus, lesson or curriculum. Children often learn a lot from good assessment tasks. Examples of assessment tasks are writing a story or paragraph, making a model, solving problems, and role playing.

## **Activity 3**

### **Why Use Continuous Assessment?**

Continuous assessment is a way to ensure that all learners have opportunities to succeed in school. By using continuous assessment the teacher can adapt his or her instruction to the needs of the learners so that all will have the chance to learn and succeed. By continually observing the learners to see what they know and can do, the teacher can make sure that no learner fails. Everyone is given a chance to succeed when continuous assessment is used well.

1. Close your eyes and recall the classroom in which you teach. After opening your eyes, draw a map of the classroom with the names of the learners as you remember them at their seats. Now pick a subject such as maths, reading, or science and assign a “grade” to each learner from memory. Do not look at your record books for the marks of each learner. Just write down their grade next to their name. Answer the following questions after you have finished writing down their “grades”:
  - a. What information in your head helped you to assign the grades?
  - b. Are you confident in your marks?
  - c. Do you think your grades are fair and accurate?
  - d. Do you think you know your students abilities well?
  - e. What would help you in being more confident in assigning grades at the end of the year or term to your learners?
  - f. What is the value of continuous assessment?

## SOME IDEAS

### **Why Teachers Use Continuous Assessment**

There are many reasons for using continuous assessment in your classroom. Some of them are described below.

#### **What students know and can do**

Continuous assessment is done by the classroom teacher to find out what a student knows, understands, and can do. The teacher uses continuous assessment to find out if the learners are learning what has been taught.

#### **Confidence**

By assessing learners continuously in different ways a teacher can be confident in her knowledge of what the learners know and can do.

#### **Show what they know**

All learners get a chance to show what they know in continuous assessment because there are different types of assessment activities. Learners are asked to show what they know in different ways.

#### **No one left behind**

Because continuous assessment is ongoing, the teacher can catch learners' mistakes and misunderstandings before it is too late. The teacher can find new ways to teach learners who are not learning.

#### **Improves teaching**

Good continuous assessment tasks tell the teacher whether the teaching of that particular topic was effective.

#### **Remediation and enrichment**

Continuous assessment can tell the teacher which students are falling behind in

their understanding of particular topics. Looking at the assessment task of a learner can help the teacher to find out where the problem is for those particular learners. The teacher can then design new learning experiences for those learners. Learners who are fast may need additional lessons or activities to keep them engaged in learning.

#### **Informs students**

Receiving ongoing feedback about their learning through feedback from teachers on continuous assessment tasks helps learners to know if they are learning or not. This knowledge can help learners know what to focus on in their improvement efforts.

#### **Informs parents**

Parents want to know how well their children are doing in school. The teachers' reports based on continuous assessment help parents to know about their child's progress on a regular basis, not just at the end of the year.

#### **Evaluation**

Trying to determine whether a student should pass to the next grade or not is often a difficult task. Relying on an exam to tell us what students know and can do may not provide us with a well-developed picture of the learner. With well-designed and frequent continuous assessment carried out throughout the year the teacher has a strong base from which to evaluate a learners' overall progress.

## Activity 4

### Improving Assessment Practices

1. Look at the reasons for using continuous assessment below. With a colleague or group of colleagues discuss each purpose. For each purpose answer the following questions:
  - a. Are you using continuous assessment in your school for this reason? Why or why not?
  - b. How can you improve your continuous assessment practices to improve the students' opportunities to learn? Describe three things you may do in your classroom or school.

#### SOME IDEAS

##### **Opportunities for Success**

When more of the school age children are given a chance to attend school (as is happening these days in many countries), the range of abilities of the learners in a classroom is much larger. In the past, tests were used to find the best students and pass them on to the next grade or level. These days the emphasis in many countries is on getting all learners to succeed in school. By having all learners succeed the country will benefit by the increased skills and knowledge of the people.

Continuous assessment is a way to ensure that all learners have opportunities to succeed in school. In most classrooms there is a range of learning abilities and speeds. By using continuous assessment the teacher can adapt his or her instruction to the needs of the learners so that all will have the chance to learn and succeed. By continually observing the learners to see what each student knows and can do the teacher can make sure that no learner fails. Everyone is given a chance to succeed when continuous assessment is used well.

## Activity 5

### Continuous Assessment or Exams?

1. With a group of colleagues, discuss the table below, comparing exams and continuous assessment. Answer the following questions with your colleagues:
  - a. What are some other ways in which exams differ from continuous assessment?
  - b. Which form of assessment is used most in your school? In your classroom?
  - c. What are the benefits of each type of assessment? Give reasons for your answer.
  - d. How do exams influence your teaching? If your learners did not have exams, how would your teaching be different?
  - e. How does continuous assessment influence your teaching?

#### SOME IDEAS

##### **Continuous Assessment**

##### **Exams**

Ongoing in the classroom throughout the year

Usually at the end of a unit, semester, term, year, or cycle

Many different tasks

One exam or few tests per subject

Carried out by teacher

Can be administered by someone other than the teacher

May be developed by teacher

Often written by persons other than the classroom teacher

Marked by teacher

Often marked by persons other than the classroom teacher

Teachers use assessment results to improve his/her teaching

Teacher doesn't always know learner weaknesses from the exams

Are connected to the syllabus being taught

May not always be connected to what is taught

## Activity 6

### Role Play

Create and perform a song and dance, or poem, or role-play that demonstrates to parents and other community members the reasons why you use continuous assessment. Perform it at the next parents' meeting.

## Activity 7

### Remediation

Think about a class that you teach. Think about two or three students who are not doing well in that class or subject. Write the answers to the following questions in an exercise book:

1. How do you assist those students when they do not learn something that you have taught?
2. What do you say to them about their performance?
3. Do you know the reasons why they do not succeed in your class? If so, what are they?
4. Think about each child carefully and think about what may be causing them to fall behind.
5. If someone is falling behind others what does that mean? What are the reasons for someone being falling behind?
6. How would you change your teaching to help learners who need more assistance?
7. What do you do if learners are not learning after repeated reteaching?

#### SOME IDEAS

**Remediation** carried out by teachers is a way of helping those learners who are not learning the knowledge and skills at the same pace as others in a class. Those learners fall behind others and need additional help. Teachers who use remediation know that all learners can succeed if given the right chances. Teachers who use remediation also know that not all learners learn in the same way or at the same speed. Remediation provides learners who are falling behind with alternative ways to learn knowledge and skills.



## Activity 8

### Enrichment

Think about the students in your class or one of the classes you teach. Answer the following questions in an exercise book.

1. Which students seem to be ahead of others in your class? Write their names.
2. Why do you think these learners are ahead of others? List the reasons. (“Putting your hand up first” is not a reason. That is what a learner does to show she may know the answer to a question. What is it about these learners that puts them ahead of others?)
3. As the teacher, how do you relate to those learners? How do you interact with those learners?
4. List three questions you might ask the learners who are ahead of others.
5. Do you treat the fast learners differently than the slow learners? Why or why not?
6. Do learners who are ahead of others get bored in your classroom? Why or why not?
7. Describe three things you can do to keep learners who are ahead interested in learning and moving along in their educational achievements.

#### SOME IDEAS

**Enrichment** means to “make rich.” Enrichment activities in the classroom make learners richer in knowledge and skills. Many learners grasp ideas and skills easily and would benefit from further intellectual stimulation. Instead what happens in many classrooms is that the learners who are a head of others are ignored by the teacher while the other learners are helped. Sometimes the teacher teaches to the learners who grasp ideas easily because they are the ones always participating in class. In this case the other learners may fall behind.



## Activity 9

### Feedback

1. On your own write down the different types of feedback you give to learners. For each type of feedback tell how the learners benefit from the feedback.
2. Share your descriptions of your feedback with a group of colleagues.
3. As a group make a list of feedback that is positive (helps learners) and feedback that is negative (does not help learners or is harmful to learners). You might make a table like the one below to help you. For each type of feedback explain why you think it is helpful or harmful.

Helpful Feedback	Negative Feedback

#### SOME IDEAS

**Feedback** refers to the information teachers give to learners about their performance on an assessment. Feedback will provide students with constructive comments and suggestions about how they may improve. Feedback can also acknowledge the learning and thinking that has been shown in the assessment exercise. It can contain written or verbal communication to the student about their work. The feedback should contain suggestions on how to improve as well as acknowledgment of effort. Here are some things to consider regarding providing learners with feedback.

- Feedback to learners from the teacher tells the student how to improve.
- Feedback is instructive.
- Learners can see their own progress.
- Learners start thinking about the quality of their work.
- Learners come to know something about themselves.
- Learners develop a positive feeling about themselves.

## Activity 10

### Teacher Benefits

There are many benefits for teachers when doing continuous assessment. Teachers can learn a lot about what the learners know and they can also learn about their own teaching.

1. With a group of colleagues, carry out a round robin to list the benefits to teachers of continuous assessment. List all of the benefits on the chalkboard or on a paper. (Remember, in a round robin, each person around the table or around the room gives a response. If someone is unable to respond they say “pass.” Keep going around the room until there are no more responses from any of the group members.)
2. Now cluster the benefits you have listed according to some similarities they have.
3. On the chalkboard and in your notebooks record the clusters and tell why you grouped them that way.

#### SOME IDEAS

##### **Why Children May Not Be Learning**

1. Learners have not learned the skills required to do the task. For example, students will not be able to write paragraphs or stories if they have not mastered writing complete sentences.
2. The instruction in this particular skill was not clear to that student.
3. The instructional method may not be the right one for the learner.
4. Learners may need more time to practice and understand.
5. The student may not be motivated.
6. The student may not be ready developmentally.
7. The student may have emotional, physical, or mental problems.

## Types of Assessment

There are many different kinds of assessment activities that can be given to learners to find out what they know and can do. Assessment activities have different purposes and may ask learners to do different things. The table below shows some of the different types of assessment activities and how they are usually used.

<b>SOME IDEAS</b>			
<b>Types of Assessment Activities<sup>1</sup></b>			
Activities Commonly Used for Exams and Testing		Activities Commonly Used for Continuous Assessment	
Selected Response Questions	Brief Constructed Response Activities	Constructed Response Activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple choice questions</li> <li>• True and False</li> <li>• Matching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fill in the blank</li> <li>• Short answer</li> <li>• Label a drawing</li> </ul>	<b>Performances</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral presentation</li> <li>• Dance/movement</li> <li>• Science activity</li> <li>• Athletic skill</li> <li>• Dramatic reading</li> <li>• Role play</li> <li>• Debate</li> <li>• Song</li> <li>• Practical test</li> <li>• Interviews of learners</li> </ul>	<b>Products</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illustration or drawing</li> <li>• Invented dialogues</li> <li>• Making models</li> <li>• Essay/composition</li> <li>• Report</li> <li>• Project</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from McTighe, J. and Ferrara, S. (1998) *Assessing Learning in a Classroom*, Washington DC: National Education Association. The table lists the types of tasks that are commonly used for exams and those for continuous assessment. In fact, tests and exams could and sometimes do use some of the continuous assessment activities listed and tests can be part of continuous assessment.

## Activity 11

### Constructed Response Assessment

1. With a group of colleagues, look at the type or activities listed in the Constructed Response Tasks columns in the table of Types of Assessment Activities and answer the following questions.
  - a. Which of the activities have you used in your classroom?
  - b. How did you use each activity? As a learning activity or an assessment activity? Or both?
  - c. Tell how you assessed learners on any of the activities.
  - d. Which of the tasks could be used as a teaching and learning activity? If you used any of these tasks to teach learners, how would you assess them on the same topic or skills?
  - e. With a group of colleagues, brainstorm other teaching and learning activities that could be used to assess learners.
  - f. Make a list of assessments that you use that could be teaching and learning activities.



#### **SOME IDEAS**

##### **Assessment is Part of Good Teaching**

Good teaching activities can be good assessment activities. Good assessment activities can be good teaching activities. Teachers can integrate assessment into lessons so that learners feel the assessment is part of learning. When this happens, learners may feel more comfortable about assessments.

## Activity 12

### Constructed Response

From the table of the Types of Assessment Activities on page 66, you can see there are two main types of assessments. One is the selected response and the other type is the constructed response. Most teachers are familiar with selected response assessments. Many teachers also use the brief constructed response questions. Here is an assessment taken from the Namibia Grade 4 primary curriculum. This assessment could have a number of different responses. Learners have to construct their answer. They do not choose an answer from a list.

**Using the words from the list on the chalkboard,  
write three sentences that describe how  
roots help plants and the soil.**

(Words listed on the chalkboard)

erosion	store
collect water and mineral	survive
salts	food
stability trap	transport system

1. In a group of colleagues each person writes down three sentences as requested in the assessment example from Namibia.
2. Share your three sentences with your colleagues in the larger group.
3. How many different sentences did you come up with?
4. How many of the sentences are correct?
5. Are there any incorrect answers?
6. What does this tell you about constructed response answers?

#### **SOME IDEAS**

Many questions and assessment activities have more than one correct answer. When writing constructed response answers, students may not all have the same answers but they may all be correct. There can be more than one correct answer. Teachers have to be aware of that and be prepared to accept more than one answer. This does not mean the teacher has to accept incorrect answers. It means the teacher should be able to judge from a variety of answers which ones are correct.

## Activity 13

### Multiple Correct Answers

1. Working on your own, write down an assessment you gave your learners that could have more than one acceptable response. Write down the assessment and two or three different, correct responses.
2. Share these in your group of colleagues.
3. How is it possible to have more than one correct response to a question?
4. Develop another assessment that can have multiple correct responses for a subject you are teaching in your classroom.
5. After trying it out with learners, answer the following questions.
  - a. What did you like about this assessment? Why?
  - b. What was the attitude of the learners in this assessment?
  - c. How did you mark the responses? What did you look for in the response?
  - d. Where there any responses that were incorrect or unacceptable?
  - e. Did you find any difficulties with this kind of assessment? Describe them.



## Activity 14

### Performance Assessments

1. Read through the table below that describes performance assessments.

<b><u>SOME IDEAS</u></b>	
<b>Type of Performance Assessment Activity</b>	<b>Example of Performance Assessment Activity</b>
Oral presentation	After a visit to the village shopping areas, groups have to make an oral presentation to the class telling what they learned.
Dance/movement	After reading a story, learners are asked to make movements that describe how one of the characters in the story feels.
Science activity	In pairs, learners have to classify a group of objects into two distinct groups and tell why they grouped them the way they did.
Athletic skill	Learners have to demonstrate the ability to dribble a football 50 meters while weaving around five objects placed in their path.
Dramatic reading	Learners may dramatize a story or parts of a story they have read to show their understanding of it.
Role Play	Learners may act out parents explaining and showing children how to keep their bodies clean. Some learners are the parents, some are the children.
Debate	Teams of learners debate whether there should be a village clean up day.
Song/poem	Groups of learners write and sing a song (or read a poem) telling about their community.
Practical test	Pairs of learners have to measure the length, weight, and temperature of a set of objects set up around the classroom and record their answers on paper.
Interviews of learners	The teacher interviews individual or small groups of learners with maths objects to find out what they understand about angles.

2. What experiences have you had with performance assessments as a student? Write a few notes about this and then share your ideas and how you felt about it with some colleagues. What experiences have you had as a teacher with performance assessments? Write a few notes about this and then share with your colleagues?
3. How do performance assessments benefit learners?

## Activity 15

### Designing Performance Assessments

To make good performance assessments keep in mind that the learners are going to *perform*. The learners are going to demonstrate or show in some way what they know and can do. Oral reports, role-plays, and dramatizations in social studies, languages, and science are ways of asking learners to perform and show their knowledge and skills. The table below gives some examples of performance assessments and describes each one.

1. With a group of colleagues, look through your school curriculum. Find a learning objective or competency on which you would like to assess your learners. You want to find out what the students, know, understand, and can do in regard to the learning objective or basic competency you have selected.
2. Using the table on page 70 or your own ideas, develop a performance assessment for the objective you have chosen.
3. For the assessment make sure you provide the following information:
  - a. At which point in teaching the unit or topic will you ask the learners to do the assessment activity?
  - b. What instructions will you give learners regarding the performance assessment? You may consider the following:
    - Do you want learners to work with a partner, in groups, individually?
    - How much time they are given to prepare?
    - How much time for presentation?
    - What are the guidelines for the task?
    - Do the learners need examples or demonstrations to help them get started?
    - How will you score the performance? (This topic is actually covered later in the chapter.)

## Activity 16

### Product Assessments

Product Assessments can be described as tangible (can be touched with the hands) objects created by the student that can be viewed by the teacher. Some examples of product assessment are listed in the chart below.

1. After reading through the chart below provide an example for each type of product assessment based on your curriculum. Some of the examples may be some you have already used. Others may be some you might use in the future.

<b>SOME IDEAS</b>	
<b>Type of Product Assessment</b>	<b>Description and Example</b>
Illustration or drawing	Learners draw a picture showing the way they felt during the recent harvest.
Invented dialogue	Learners write a dialogue or conversation between two people or things. Learners imagine and write a dialogue between the roots and the soil about how they work together.
Models	Learners make a model of the village when studying their community.
Essay/composition/story	Learners tell or write a story about what they did during the holiday.
Report	Learners visit a fish farm. At the farm they see fish, how they are fed, grown, and harvested. They take notes, draw pictures, and collect written information. When the learners return to the classroom, they work on writing guided reports.
Projects	Lengthy piece of work involving several tasks and skills. An integrated project on transportation might include writing or reading a story about a train (language), drawing a map of the railway system in the country or region (social studies), making a model of trains (science), calculating the cost of a train ride (maths), and making a chart of the different uses for trains (information skills/social studies).
Journals	Learners write for 15 minutes at the end of the week about what they learned in science class.

2. What other types of product assessments can you think of?
3. Try developing a product assessment for your learners on some topic from your school curriculum.
4. For your assessment tell how:
  - a. It is related to the curriculum objectives.
  - b. You prepared learners to do the product assessment.
  - c. Learners responded to the assessment.
  - d. The learners found the materials they needed.
  - e. You gave a mark or grade for the assessment.
  - f. You will change this assessment for the next time that you use it with learners.
5. Make a plan for sharing the assessment strategy with colleagues at your school or another school.

## **Activity 17**

### **Self-Assessment**

Learners can assess themselves. By learning how to assess themselves learners gain an understanding of their own progress on a particular task, learn how to be critical and analytical, and engage in metacognition—thinking about thinking. Involving students in assessing their own work also increases student responsibility for learning and improves student-teacher collaboration.

1. Look at the assessment rubric on page 74 for an assignment where students were asked to write a letter to the community leaders suggesting that the community hold a clean-up day around the community.
2. For the letter, students would give themselves a grade on each of the 10 aspects of the letter. The teacher would also give the learners marks.
3. With a group of colleagues, discuss the pros (advantages) and cons (disadvantages) of having students assess their own work. Make lists of each.
4. With a group of colleagues, discuss the kinds of challenges you think you would face in asking learners to assess their own work?
5. Try designing an assessment of your learners that has a self-assessment component in it.
6. How will you inform learners of their role in the assessment?
7. How will you use their marks to give a final grade?

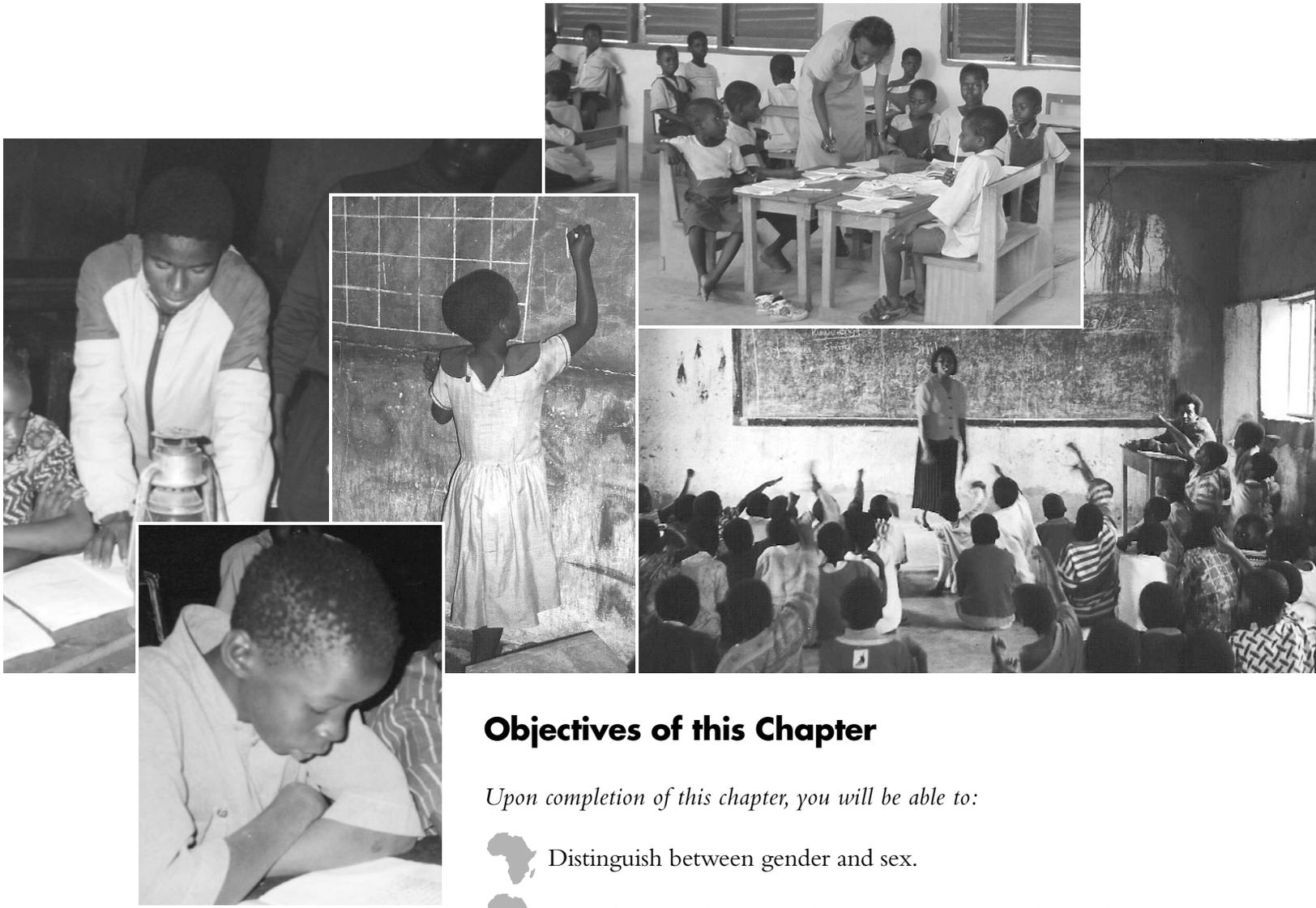
### Assessing Letter Writing

	Assessment Points		
	Points Possible	Self	Teachers
1. The first paragraph clearly represents your opinion.	5		
2. You presented four reasons why there should be a town clean-up day.	5		
3. Each reason is explained.	5		
4. At least two ideas for how to operate the clean up day are given.	5		
5. Each idea for how to operate the clean up day is explained.	5		
6. Ideas are presented in a logical order.	5		
7. Vocabulary is used correctly.	5		
8. Vocabulary is used to appeal to the audience.	5		
9. The writing stays on the topic.	5		
10. A strong ending sums up your position.	5		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>		

### Follow-up

Keep a journal of assessment activities that you have developed and tried with your learners. For each assessment activity in your journal you may answer the following questions:

1. Did the assessment tell you about what students know and can do?
2. Did the assessment take a long time to prepare? Why or why not?
3. Was the assessment related to the curriculum? How?
4. Did the assessment take learners a long time to complete? Was that acceptable or not? Why or why not?
5. Would you use this assessment again with your learners? Why or why not?
6. If you use this assessment again, what would you do differently?
7. What other comments can you make about the assessment?



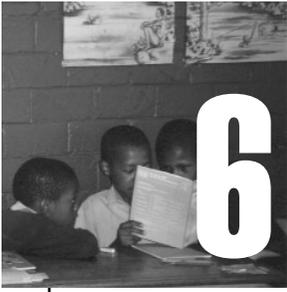
## Objectives of this Chapter

*Upon completion of this chapter, you will be able to:*

-  Distinguish between gender and sex.
-  Identify the different social roles boys and girls play in their society.
-  Identify the impact of gender expectations on the performance and attendance of boys and girls.
-  Recognize some of the impacts of teacher-student interaction on student learning.

## Chapter 6. Gender Issues

# IN MY CLASSROOM



# Gender Issues

*Awareness of discrimination based on gender has increased worldwide. In schools gender discrimination continues consciously and unconsciously. This chapter helps you to identify some unfair practices in your schools as well as strategies for dealing with them.*

Boys and girls come to school at the same time, they are in the same classroom, learning the same subjects, taught by the same teacher, yet the learning outcomes often differ. What are the factors that come into play? What is it in the school environment, in your classroom environment, and in the way teachers teach (behavior and attitudes), and at home that affects the performances of boys and girls?

## Activity 1 Daily Profile

Boys and girls have different roles in society. They perform different activities and chores at home and in school that have an impact on their attendance, performance, and retention in school. Within your local social/cultural context, what roles are assigned to boys and girls?

1. Make an activity profile for boys and girls. Think about all the activities boys do, and all the activities girls do. Using the table below, make a list of all these different activities and chores. (Refer to the lists of chores on the next page if you need to.)

Daily Profile		
Time	Activities of boys	Activities of girls
Before school		
During school		
After school		



**Some Definitions**

**Gender roles** refers to the different activities and positions men and women have based on social expectation, traditional beliefs, and norms. Gender roles are shaped by culture and as such can change over time. The roles boys and girls play in society, including in school, have an impact on their learning.

Refer to this list for ideas on activities for the chart on page 76.

**SOME IDEAS**

**Chores Outside of School**

- farming chores
- marketing
- gathering wood
- fetching water
- washing dishes
- baby-sitting
- cooking
- pounding grain
- preparing food for cooking
- running errands
- building houses
- cleaning latrines
- selling foodstuff
- caring for the ill
- caring for the elderly
- caring for the disabled
- herding animals
- washing clothes
- ironing clothes

**Personal**

- bathing
- eating
- playing
- sleeping
- studying
- homework
- watching TV
- reading
- visiting friends and relatives
- listening to the radio

**School Chores**

- sweeping classroom
- cleaning blackboard
- sweeping school environment
- running errands
- cleaning latrines
- clerical work
- garden work
- preparing sports fields
- disposing of waste
- monitoring other students
- cooking
- cleaning classrooms
- collecting materials from office or storeroom
- repairing school structures
- fetching water

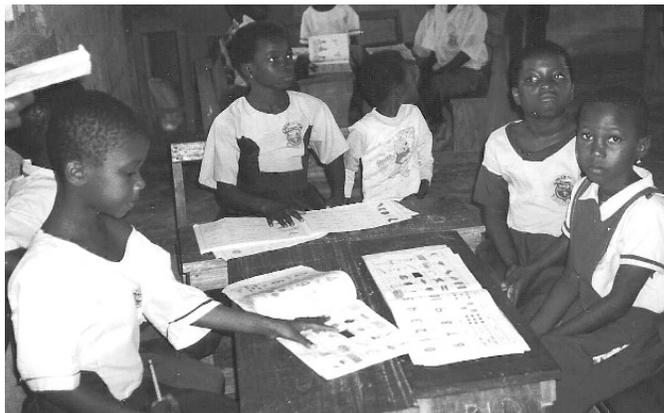


2. Analyze your lists of activities that boys and girls do. Discuss the following questions with a group of colleagues.
  - a. What chores or activities do boys do before school?
  - b. What chores or activities do girls do before school?
  - c. During school, what chores do boys do?
  - d. During school, what chores do girls do?
  - e. Who does more work, boys or girls? Explain your answer.
  - f. Is this arrangement fair? Why or why not? Do you think the arrangement of chores and activities can be changed?
3. Describe three things you can do as a teacher to distribute equal workloads to boys and girls.
4. Describe three things you can do as a teacher to convince parents that assigning equal work to boys and girls helps all children in school.
5. Describe three things you will do to help other teachers provide equal chances for boys and girls to learn.

## SOME IDEAS

### **Who Does More Work?**

It was found in Malawi that girls spend 30 minutes extra in schools to do domestic chores. They arrive earlier to sweep school compounds and classrooms, fetch water, clean toilets, and water gardens. They also stay later after school to clean up. During class periods, girls are called to run errands for teachers. At home, it was found that girls do more domestic work, thus leaving them little time to do homework and study and less time to sleep. *Girls had 3 hours per night less sleep than boys.*



## Activity 2 Seasonal Labor

There are many factors during the different seasons (rainy and dry seasons) that affect the learning experiences of boys and girls. Both are required to do agricultural work and off-farm work during the different seasons, but the division of labor between boys and girls during these seasons can affect their attendance and performance. Within your local social context, what kinds of labor are assigned to boys and girls during the different seasons?

1. Make a chart like the one below in an exercise book or on the chalkboard. Write in the months for the rainy season and for the dry season where you live.
2. Make a listing of the tasks or chores that boys and girls do in the different seasons. Use the chores list on page 80 to help you. Add others that may not be on the list.

Daily Time Use Chart			
Season	Months	Boys' Task	Girls' Task
Rainy Season			
Dry Season			



## SOME IDEAS

### Chores

- farm planting and transplanting
- weeding
- hoeing
- digging
- watering crops
- harvesting
- collecting farm produce
- selling in the markets
- fishing
- clearing land
- protecting crops from animals
- collecting firewood
- repairing drainage systems
- transporting produce to home and market
- felling trees
- animal herding
- milking animals
- fetching water
- building roofs and mud housing
- building storage facilities
- making baskets
- repairing buildings
- collecting wild berries and plants
- hunting
- making charcoal
- applying fertilizer

3. Consider these questions for discussion:

- a. Was it easy to complete this table? Why or why not?
- b. Who spends more time at work in each season? Explain your answer.
- c. Who works harder in each season? Why do you say so?
- d. Who does the most severe work, boys or girls, and in which season?
- e. How does the time spent on labor affect attendance and performance in school?
- f. Is your school schedule and calendar arranged so that children can help out at home and still attend school? Give examples to support your answer.
- g. Can your school timetable or calendar be rearranged to better support children's attendance and performance at school? What suggestions do you have?
- h. Describe three things you will share with other teachers about what you learned from this activity.

## Activity 3

### Healthy Learners

Most children come to school hungry and tired. They do not have sufficient food and often times, the nutritional value of their meals is low. Those that come from poor backgrounds seldom have sufficient food intake. It has been documented that girls often eat less than boys and they also often eat less nutritious food than boys. Furthermore, the amount and type of food eaten also varies according to the different seasons. When in school, some children do not have any lunch. They are often tired, listless, and lacking concentration, which affects their performance.

1. Make a plan with some colleagues to watch what children are eating during break time. After making observations and taking notes, answer the following questions:
  - a. What types of food do you see?
  - b. Do some children have advantages over others? Describe this. What can you do as a staff to address this?
  - c. Which children have little or no food? Do you notice anything in their behavior in class that might be related to the lack of food?
2. Does the scene in the school yard during break change depending on the season? How?
3. What does your school do to address the issue of student hunger?
4. Are there any other changes you could make at school based on your observations of children in the school yard?

#### SOME IDEAS

##### **Children's Work at Home**

In Gambia, because of the heavy agricultural work done by boys and girls, the timing of the school calendar was changed. As a result, the enrollment rate for boys and girls dramatically increased.



## SOME IDEAS

### **School Feeding Programs**

Schools in Guinea, Ghana, the Gambia and elsewhere have developed school feeding programs and this has dramatically affected attendance and performances of students, particularly girls. Here are some things schools have done to address hunger:

- Parents are encouraged by the Parent Teachers Association to prepare breakfast for learners before school.
- Parents pay a fee to the school board to hire local people to cook food for learners.
- Local food vendors are given a monthly subsidy by the school board to sell nutritious food to learners at lower cost on the edge of the school campus.
- The local community contributes food surplus to the school for learners' meals.
- School boards have fund-raising activities such as concerts and school market days to build a school kitchen or canteen.

Can you think of others?



## Activity 4

### Health and Disease

During the rainy season, malaria and other sicknesses affect the attendance and performance of students. In many rural areas with poor households, boys generally receive more health care than girls. This has an impact on their learning and performance. Is this true in your context?

1. Draw a seasonal calendar showing month, climate, and diseases that are common in those seasons in your area.
2. Look at the different seasons (rainy, dry, harvesting, etc.) in your calendar and consider the following:
  - a. What diseases are more common during the different seasons?
  - b. Who is absent from school more frequently due to illness, boys or girls?
  - c. How does illness affect learning?
  - d. What form of treatment is available in your area?
  - e. Who receives treatment the most, boys or girls? Why?
  - f. How does the season affect walking to school? Who is most affected, boys or girls? Why?
  - g. What is the rate of absenteeism for boys and girls?
  - h. What three things have you learned from this activity?
  - i. Describe three ways you are going to change your teaching or how your school can change to accommodate these seasonal influences on learners.
  - j. Describe three things you will do to help other teachers understand what you have learned.

## Activity 5

### School Environment

There are many factors in the school environment that affect the participation of boys and girls. Poor physical layout of a school, lack of playground for children, and lack of water and latrines all affect student learning. The following activities will help you as a teacher identify what the different factors are, and various solutions that can lead to quality teaching and learning for all boys and girls.

1. Draw a map of the school environment.
2. Make a checklist like the one below in your exercise book.
3. Walk around the school environment and directly observe the condition of the school with this checklist in hand.

#### Observing the School Environment

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1a. Fences:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Walls <input type="checkbox"/> Sticks around school <input type="checkbox"/> None  | 6. Students carry preschool siblings? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  |
| 1b. Secure doors/windows:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> None  | 7. Water provided by:<br><input type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> Boy <input type="checkbox"/> Girl <input type="checkbox"/> Not provided |
| 2a. Play field: Separate space for boys or girls?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  | 8. Library: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No<br>Number of books: _____  |
| 2b. Boys monopolize fields:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  | 9a. Latrines: <input type="checkbox"/> Boys <input type="checkbox"/> Girls  |
| 3a. Agricultural gardens:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  | 9b. Water near latrines: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |
| 3b. Who works in gardens?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Boys <input type="checkbox"/> Girls  | 9c. Doors to latrines: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |
| 3c. What types of work do boys do in the garden?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Watering <input type="checkbox"/> Digging <input type="checkbox"/> Planting <input type="checkbox"/> Weeding  | 9d. Latrines private? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  |
| 3d. What types of work do girls do in the garden?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Watering <input type="checkbox"/> Digging <input type="checkbox"/> Planting <input type="checkbox"/> Weeding | 9e. Who cleans latrines?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Boy <input type="checkbox"/> Girl <input type="checkbox"/> Caretaker                                 |
| 4. Domestic chores on school grounds/classrooms:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Boys <input type="checkbox"/> Girls   | 10a. Food available: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |
| 5. Child vendors on ground:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  | 10b. If yes, then:<br>Cost _____ No Cost _____  |
|  | 11. Nonschool related people on campus:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |
|  | 12. Number of classrooms: _____<br>Class areas: <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoors <input type="checkbox"/> Other        |

4. Consider these questions:
  - a. What is the general condition of the school?
  - b. Are there enough latrines for boys and girls?
  - c. Is there enough water for boys and girls?
  - d. Do boys occupy play areas more than girls?
  - e. Identify things that influence student learning and participation in school (e.g., lack of fences, lack of latrines) For each one tell how it affects learners.
  - f. Identify unsafe places on the map. Tell why you think the places are unsafe.
5. What have you learned from this analysis?
  - a. What is in your school environment that deters boys and girls from learning?
  - b. Who is affected most by the conditions of the school, boys or girls?
  - c. What can you do to bring about change?
  - d. Develop a plan to share with other teachers what you have learned from this activity.

### **SOME IDEAS**

#### **Fairness**

Questions for discussion.

- If there are no latrines, where do boys and girls go to use the toilet? How long does it take them?
- When they take too long, are they punished for being late?
- Who gets punished more, boys or girls? Why? Is this fair?
- Do boys and girls use the same latrines? If so, do they have privacy?
- If there is no water in the school compound, where do students go to fetch water? Which children fetch water? Is the system fair?
- If there is no security fence, what prevents outside distractions or outsiders from coming into the school ground?
- What prevents younger children from wandering off? Who is called to bring them back? Boys or girls? Is this fair?

## Activity 6

### Teacher-Student Interaction

Teacher-student interaction sends a powerful message about who succeeds and who fails in the learning environment. Studies in Africa have identified gender biases in teacher-student interaction, which may affect girls' and boys' participation and performance in education. It has been shown that teachers tend to interact more with boys, give boys more time to answer questions, and give more positive feedback to boys than they do to girls.

1. For this activity, teachers should invite a colleague to observe student-teacher interactions using the checklist in their class. Later, reverse roles.
2. The colleague will make tally marks (III) on the checklist each time a particular student-teacher interaction is observed.
3. After the lesson, sit down with your colleague and discuss the following questions:
  - a. What differences do you notice between boys and girls?
  - b. Who gets more positive feedback, boys or girls?
  - c. Are there differences in the kinds of feedback that boys and girls get? What are they?
  - d. Are there differences in the feedback given to girls/boys based on subject matter (math, English, home economics, metal/wood work, etc.)? Why do you think this is?
  - e. Does a teacher's feedback send a message to boys/girls that they can do better/worse? Explain your answer.
  - f. Does the teacher make negative comments to the students about their learning abilities? If there is negative feedback, who receives it most, boys or girls?

### Checklist of Student-Teacher Interaction

Period observing \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: make a tally mark each time you observe one of the interactions below. If the interaction is between teacher and boys, make a mark in the column for boys, etc.

Categories	Boys	Girls
Teacher asks question	___	___
Student answers correctly	___	___
Student answers incorrectly	___	___
Teacher gives positive feedback	___	___
Teacher gives negative feedback	___	___
Teacher gives no feedback	___	___
Student asks question	___	___
Student leads discussion	___	___
Student to student interaction	___	___
Student engaged in learning	___	___

## Activity 7

### Responding to Boys and Girls

Gender bias refers to the way we favor boys or girls because they are boys or girls, not because of who they are individually. Most people have biases that they have learned through experience and what they have been taught. In this activity you will get a chance to examine your gender biases in the classroom.

1. Ask a colleague to observe one of your lessons. While observing, he or she should fill in the chart below. Do you respond differently to boys than to girls?
2. When a girl gives a correct answer in your class, what do you say? List your words in the top half of the “girls” column. Do the same for the “boys” column.
3. When a girl gives an incorrect answer in your class, what do you say? List your words in the bottom half of the “girls” column. Do the same for the “boys” column.
4. Review the lists you have made with your colleague. What do the lists say about your gender biases? How do your gender biases affect the way you interact with students? How do the gender biases affect student learning? Do you find any unfairness in this? Tell why or why not.
5. Hold a discussion with some colleagues about the gender biases you have discovered, if any. What strategies can you use in your classroom and school to address the gender biases? How will these strategies contribute to fairness at school?

<b>Responding to Boys and Girls</b>		
	What you say to boys	What you say to girls
Correct Answers		
Incorrect Answers		

## Activity 8

### Calling on Learners

1. Give 10 beans to each student in class.
2. Ask learners to put one aside each time you call on them. At the end of the class period, record the beans of the boys separately from the girls. How many times did you call on boys in the class? How many times did you call on girls in the class?
3. Are there any learners with no beans aside? If so what does this mean to you?
4. What does this activity tell you about the way you interact with girls and boys when asking them questions in class? How do you think a learner's participation is influenced by the amount of times you call on them in class?
5. Discuss your findings with a group of colleagues. What strategies can you use in your classroom to promote greater participation of both boys and girls?

#### **SOME IDEAS**

##### **Avoiding Negative Gender Roles**

When a gender role is negative it means that there is some unfairness connected with that role. Someone benefits and another is harmed or kept from growing and developing when there are negative gender roles. An example is when girls are teased and embarrassed for speaking loudly and clearly. This reinforces the role of girls as passive and quiet in society and within the classroom. Thus an intelligent assertive girl can end up discouraged, weak, and passive. If you want to avoid reinforcing negative gender roles, here are some things to consider:

- Avoid making negative comments to all children.
- Do not allow children to speak negatively about others or tease other children.
- Talk positively about society's role models.
- Present girls and boys, men and women in different roles.
- Have high expectations for all learners in the classroom.

## Activity 9 Career Expectations

Teachers' expectations of students also shape the way they teach and the way students learn. It is common knowledge that having high expectations of learners increases their performance. What teachers expect of learners influences the way learners see themselves. What kind of expectations do you have for your learners?

1. Make two columns on a page in your exercise book. Put "girls" at the top of one column and "boys" at the top of the other column. List all the possible career choices that you as a teacher expect for boys under the "boys" column. List all the possible career choices that you expect that girls could have under the "girls" column. Use the list of careers below to help you. List other careers as you think of them.
2. What do you notice about your expectations for boys and girls? Answer the following questions about your lists.
  - a. What careers are valued most by your society?
  - b. What careers pay the most money?
  - c. What careers require the most education?
  - d. What careers are presently male dominated? Why?
  - e. What careers are presently dominated by females? Why?

**SOME IDEAS**

**Some Careers**

pilot	engineer
nurse	flight attendant
teacher	policeman
doctor	lawyer
professor	secretary
homemaker	fireman
seamstress	construction worker
typist	firewood collector
president	cook
fisherman	headteacher
carpenter	

**SOME IDEAS**

**Gender Sensitization**

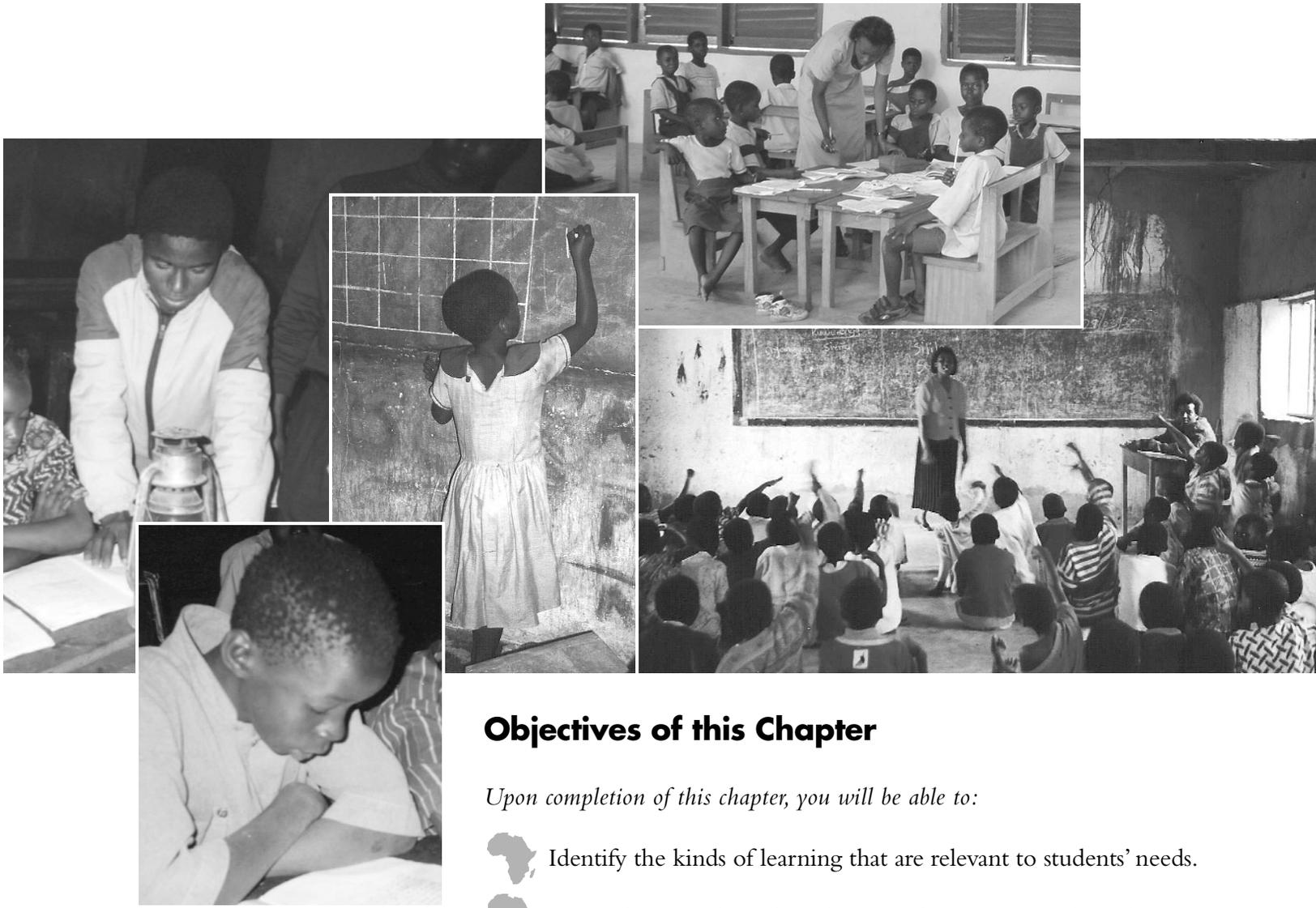
In Uganda, Guinea, Mali, and Ghana, teachers that underwent gender sensitization training are more responsive to girls in class. Both male and female teachers called on girls more frequently and provided more positive feedback. They also allowed both students equal time to answer questions and they used more encouraging words to all students. As a result, the performance rate of girls increased.

3. Describe the career expectations you have for boys, and for girls. Why do you say what you do? Share this with a colleague.
4. How does your expectation of boys and girls affect the way you teach? Do you treat boys and girls fairly in regards to your expectations about their careers? Why do you say so?
5. If you want to change your career expectations for boys and girls, what might you do differently in your teaching? Discuss this with a group of colleagues.

### **Follow-up**

After you have completed some of the activities in this chapter, prepare a workshop for another group of teachers in your school or a nearby school who did not carry out these activities. In your workshop, ask the participants to carry out one or two of the activities you have tried. Make sure you use some of the facilitation skills described in Chapter Two. At the close of the workshop ask the participants to complete a short evaluation of the workshop. Some questions you can ask in the evaluation are:

1. What was the most important thing you learned in the workshop?
2. How will your teaching change as a result of this workshop?
3. What part of the workshop was not clear to you?
4. Which aspect of the workshop will you need more help with?
5. Would you like more workshops on this topic?



## Objectives of this Chapter

*Upon completion of this chapter, you will be able to:*

-  Identify the kinds of learning that are relevant to students' needs.
-  Use techniques that relate classroom learning to students' lives.
-  Assign tasks to students that encourage them to apply new learning in their daily lives.
-  Prepare a plan for their classroom instruction that makes learning relevant to their studies.

## Chapter 7. Life Skills

# IN MY CLASSROOM



## Life Skills

*Life skills programs are instructional programs that combine practical information and skill development so students can solve their own daily life problems. These programs often include health, nutrition, first aid, and other content relevant to the local area.*

Students become motivated to learn when they see value in what they learn and feel confident that they can learn. Students may find it hard to understand why they need math, reading, or science, for example, when the textbook doesn't provide examples of how the content applies to their needs in the local context. Teachers can motivate their students to learn by showing how schoolwork is relevant to them.

One way to make learning relevant is to build life skills into the instructional program. Good life skills materials can develop learners' ability to analyze their needs, seek information that relates to those needs, and solve problems. Students who are capable of using their learning to solve problems tend also to become more confident of their abilities to learn.

This chapter provides examples of life skills activities used by creative teachers to encourage students to see their learning as a means of solving problems. It proposes simple approaches to make learning meaningful to students.



## Activity 1

### Motivating Learners

In this activity think about your own experiences motivating learners and getting them interested in learning. If you have never taught, think about the ways in which teachers motivated you to learn more.

1. On your own, think about how you get learners interested in learning in your classroom. Make a list of the ways you do this. Discuss these motivating techniques with a group of colleagues.
2. Make a list of all the ways that you and your colleagues arouse interest and motivate learners toward learning. Which of these ways are the most effective at getting children interested in learning? Why do you say so?
3. With a group of colleagues, brainstorm more ways to improve student motivation at your school.
4. Review the “Strategies to Motivate and Interest Students in Learning” below and answer the following questions.
  - a. Are these the same strategies you identified?
  - b. What else would you add to the list?
5. Make a poster for the staff room to share with your colleagues at your school or another school showing ways to improve student motivation.

#### **SOME IDEAS**

##### **Strategies to Motivate and Interest Students in Learning**

- Show enthusiasm for what you are teaching.
- Use concrete examples from the local context.
- Show your own curiosity and interest in learning.
- Assess the needs of students for various kinds of information.
- Find ways of rewarding all students for hard work.
- Provide opportunities for students to use learning in their daily lives.
- Ask students to apply new learning to local situations and problems.
- Use a variety of instructional approaches to collect information.
- Provide students with a reasonable degree of control over their own learning.
- Create positive expectations by specifying clear instructional objectives.
- Build confidence by providing opportunities for students to attain intended outcomes.

## Activity 2

### Relevant Curriculum

The curriculum can be made more relevant to students' lives by utilizing resources available in the community. For example, community members can be asked to contribute their expertise and skills, and teachers can use local materials as simple as sticks and stones to illustrate math concepts (see Chapter Five). Local events such as weekly markets can be used to illustrate points, and students can be asked to describe local problems involving health, child care, etc. that can serve as problem-solving issues for classroom research. Efforts that involve the community in the school and the school in the community will enrich the learning experiences of all participants.

1. With a group of colleagues, list topics in the curriculum that you feel are closely connected to learners' lives. For each topic describe its relevance to learners' lives.
2. Now make a list of topics that are not very relevant to learners' lives. Describe why you think the topic is included in the curriculum. How can you teach the topic to make it more relevant for your learners? Refer to "Making the Curriculum Relevant" on page 95 for help with this.



## SOME IDEAS

### **Making the Curriculum Relevant**

- Role-play situations that require mathematical skills in the market place such as measurement, buying, selling, percentages, profit, loss, etc.
- Use local names, goods, and prices so children can relate to the problem.
- Try to select texts and stories that learners can relate to. Characters in a story may be of a similar age, ethnic group, culture, environmental context, etc. When stories and texts seem too far removed from the learners' experiences, use interpretive questions such as: *What would you do if you were the main character in the story? What do you think would happen to (Mrs. so and so in the story) if this story took place in your village or town?*
- Replace textbook examples of foods for local ones when teaching about nutrition.
- Compare unfamiliar textbook examples of plants, animals, and geographic features with local examples when teaching science and environmental topics.
- Use local environmental issues to help learners understand issues that are unfamiliar to them.
- Prepare reading and comprehension materials so children can seek information that meets their needs on illness prevention, clean water, nutrition, first aid, child care, farming, manual skills, etc.; these materials might be taken from newspapers or prepared by teachers or local experts.
- Use farming activities to make geometry meaningful to rural students. Ask them to measure areas, perimeters, volumes of water containers, amount of fertilizers, etc.
- Ask students to consult community members and write what they learn about occupations, family histories, recipes, folklore, etc.
- Prepare a map of the community on the school wall with students and involved community members using measurement techniques and other learned skills.

## Activity 3

### Relevant Reading

1. Read the example of Relevant Reading in Mali below.
2. With a group of colleagues, identify reading materials at your school that are not very relevant to your learners' lives and experiences. Say why each reading material is not relevant.
3. List the resources available in your community that might be used as reference materials by teachers and students to prepare relevant reading materials.
4. Write three reading passages that contain information useful to students; they should make sure that the passages are interesting and use examples from the local context.

#### SOME IDEAS

##### **Relevant Reading in Mali**

Students feel reading and comprehension skills are relevant if they are used to seek information about topics that interest them. In Mali, the Girls' Education Project of the Ministry of Education developed a reading program on life skills for primary grades 4 to 6. The reading program was based on needs expressed by Malian parents.

The content of the reading and comprehension passages were drawn from different sources including materials published by UNICEF, WHO, Red Cross, Peace Corps, and other printed materials such as *Where There is No Doctor*, and materials on first aid, and nutrition.

## Activity 4

### Supportive Classrooms

Classrooms impart important socialization messages to students. Positive, supportive classroom environments promote the development of self-confidence in students and enable them to handle the challenges of learning.

Many teachers use whole group discussion as a tool to build a sense of classroom community. Some teachers offer an opportunity for each student to speak without interruption. Students may be asked any number of questions, such as what they think of the topics explored in the class. Those who do not wish to respond may choose to “pass” and may contribute later. Some teachers pass “talking sticks” or any object to designate who will speak and remind students to speak in turn and listen carefully to what others have to say. The learner with the talking stick may pass it to another learner to speak. What are some other ways to support learners in their growth and development in your classroom?

1. Read “Supportive Classrooms” on page 98 for ways to promote a supportive classroom environment.
2. List techniques that you already use to promote learning through student interactions with teachers and other students. For each technique you list, write a short description of it.
3. Review the interactive methods in “Interactive Learning” below and determine whether they are appropriate in your own classroom environments. With a colleague, discuss ways you might try some of these techniques in your classroom, if you have not already done so.

#### SOME IDEAS

##### **Interactive Learning**

- group discussion
- think-pair-share
- storytelling
- role-play
- dance, song, poetry, group drawings
- round robin
- roundtable
- games
- play
- group projects

## SOME IDEAS

### **Supportive Classrooms**

Use a variety of methods to develop positive and supportive classroom environments where students feel free to express themselves.

- Permit interaction among the students by giving all children opportunities to speak and listen, encourage learners to ask questions, use praise instead of ridicule, and structure learning experiences so that learners may share ideas.
- Set firm boundaries of social behavior. One way to do this is make a list of class rules with the students. Rules should be stated positively (e.g. Respect each other.)
- Model receptive and respectful behaviors when interacting with others by being fair to all learners, being consistent, following through with what you say you will do, listening to all learners, and speaking and acting respectfully to all learners.

### **Follow-up**

Make a list of the techniques you intend to use in your classrooms to make learning relevant to students' needs. For each technique tell when you will carry it out, who will assist you, what materials you will need, and what kind of preparation you must do before you try out the technique. It might be helpful to make a table to chart your new methods.



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