Active and Participatory Teaching Methods and Training

Expected outcomes:
- Participants will be able to define and describe different teaching methods
- Participants will be able to demonstrate examples of active teaching and learning strategies
- Participants will understand the aim of group work
- Participants will be able to plan for group work
- Teachers will apply these same rules when they are running training programmes.

Although this section is focussed on the use of active and participatory teaching methods as part of teacher’s skills in the classroom, this section can also be used when training teachers in how to train adults during teacher training sessions. The aim of this section is for teachers to learn training techniques, which can be adapted for use with children or adults. You may only want to try activity 1, 2 and 6 if you are using this section to learn about training techniques for adults.

Activity 1

- Ask participants if they know active and participatory teaching methods. Write their answers on the board.
- Divide participants in groups and give each group one of the teaching methods they have identified.
- Ask the groups to describe the teaching method by:
  - Giving strengths and weaknesses of the method (advantages / disadvantages)
  - Giving the purpose of each method and how it can be used
  - What type of learning would this be good for? (see previous chapter on learning styles)
Activity 2

- Ask participants to prepare a 5 minute lesson, using active teaching methods.
- When all groups have finished, ask each group in turn to give their 5-minute lesson. Ask the other participants if they can tell which active method the group has been showing.
- Let the group present their description and the strengths and weaknesses. Ask other participants if they agree, or have something to add.

Activity 3

**Preparation:** Copy the case studies page 4 on active and participatory teaching techniques.

**Instructions:**
- Divide participants in groups and give each group the case studies.
- Ask participants to read for each case study the two situations, and ask them which one is according to them the most active & participatory.
- Ask them to identify the used teaching methods.

Activity 4

- Ask the participants to think about a training session they are going to be running in the near future.
- Get into small groups and discuss how they could make that training session as active and participatory as possible.
- Then ask the small groups to present their findings to the larger group, and see what the rest of the participants think about their ideas.
- Ask them to rate them, according to how active and participatory they are. (e.g. smiley faces for each active or participatory idea they include, that is relevant to the age of the participants!)
- You could have a competition to see which group can come up with the most active and participatory activity!
Case Studies – Cut out and discuss in groups
Can you think of good follow-on activities?

Calculation

- **Case 1** - The teacher sends the children out of the class to collect small stones. They are still at the early stages of counting numbers. When they come back in the classroom they go and sit in small groups, with a pile of stones in the middle of each group. Each group has a dice, which the children throw one by one. Then they draw the same number of stones as the number of dots turned up by the dice.

- **Case 2** - The teacher shows one finger and says “one”, then shows two fingers and says “two”. She also asks the children to imitate and repeat with her. They continue this up to ten. Then she shows one finger and asks the class “how many?” Some children say one and she writes the number on the board. She continues up to ten. When children cannot say the number she is showing, she says it herself while writing it on the board. When all numbers are on the board, she makes the whole group to read the numbers out loud. Then she asks individual children to read out the numbers from one to ten. She then points out a number and asks “what is this?” Finally the children write the numbers in their notebooks.

Science and Nature

- **Case 1** - The children have been asked to get all kind of leaves from outside. Now that they are back, the teacher initiates a great deal of conversation around the leaves: **Which is the biggest? How many pointed leaves are there? Are all the leaves of the same colour? Which is the smallest leaf?** After this, children are asked to classify leaves into different categories, and there is further discussion.

- **Case 2** - The teacher says “Today we are going to talk about trees”. She then writes the name of the lesson on the board and takes out a chart of pictures of different trees. The teacher talks about some of the trees shown in the pictures and says **“the leaves of … tree are big, while the leaves of … tree are small. Some trees have pointed leaves, for example…”**
She then tells the class that plants are divided into four types and explains the differences. Next, she asks children to go through the lesson and write about the characteristics of grass, shrub, tree and climbers.

Letters

- **Case 1** - The teacher reads out the words given in the lesson. She then writes words on the blackboard and reads them out again, asking children to repeat with her. She reads out words by distinctly pronouncing each letter while pointing to each on the board. It is important to use words that can be sounded out easily such as “cat”, “cap” and “bag” etc. **It is important she says how the letter sounds, and not the name of the letter!!**

  N.B. She says “c”, “a”, “t” spells “cat” not “see”, “ay”, “tee” spells cat!

  The children say the letter sounds slowly first, and then a bit quicker so they can try to merge them together to make the word.

  The teacher draws a simple picture next to each written word, so the children can understand the meaning.

  Next, she asks children to identify letters on the blackboard. Finally she asks children to copy these letters in their book.

- **Case 2** – The children are going to begin the process of learning to read. The teacher asks the children to say their own names and writes them on the blackboard as they do. She asks the children to recognise where their own names have been written, their friends' names, the names of those children who are wearing something red, and so on.

  A considerable amount of shape recognition activity is taking place and will help eventually in the process of children learning to read.

Stories

- **Case 1** - The teacher selects a story from a textbook to read and instructs the children to ask her if they find anything difficult. Some children, who do not have their book, are uncertain about what to do. Finally, they look at their neighbours’ books.

  There is some confusion and the teacher asks what is happening, and put children who have a book together with children who don’t have a book. Some children have already finished reading the story are not very keen to go through it again! Some of them read it fast and feel like looking at stories in the later part of the book. Some children face difficulties with words they do not understand. But they are ashamed or afraid to ask for explanations.
The teacher asks children to write down the answers to the questions that are given in the end of the lesson.

- **Case 2** - The teacher divides her class into groups and says: “Read the following story in groups, underline what you don’t understand, but only if no one in your group is able to explain it to you.” Once this is done, she asks each group to present the underlined words and then asks the class to see if another group can explain the words they don’t understand. She also gives time for the other children to discuss ideas before clarifying the underlined item. Then she goes through the story and clarifies any of the more difficult parts. Finally, the teacher asks each group to think of five questions from the story which she would find difficult to answer!