**Skill of Stimulus variation**

Student learning largely depends upon 'attending' to the relevant source of information. Psychologists have found that for any learning to take place, the learner has to attend to information. Attention is an essential condition for effective learning.

What will you do as a teacher in order to sustain students' attention? You will deliberately use attention drawing behaviour in the class to draw and sustain students' attention towards what you want to convey. What, when and how much change in behaviour is required for sustaining and securing attention of your student is known as stimulus variation.

The **skill of stimulus variation** involves deliberate change in attention drawing behaviour of the teacher in order to secure and sustain students' attention to what is being taught. The skill of stimulus variation implies attracting and focussing students' attention by changing stimuli in the environment. The variation in the stimuli generates interest among students in their learning and hence helps in their academic achievement.

**Components of the Skill of Stimulus Variation**

1. Teacher movement: You might have observed that the teachers' movement in the classroom draws the attention of the students. This behaviour of the teacher makes the student feel that his participation in instructional activities is being supervised by the teacher. Please remember that your movements in the classroom should always be meaningful and related to the teaching i.e., the movements should have a pedagogic function. You however should avoid the habit of aimless wandering in the classroom.
2. Teacher gestures: Gestures are the movements of the parts of the body (head, hands, etc.), For example, if you are discussing the shape of an object, you can use your hands to show the shape of the object.
3. Change in speech pattern: Change in tone, volume or speed of verbal communication is known as change in speech pattern. Take modulation of voice for example. Sudden variation in voice will attract the attention of the students. You should be able to change your speech pattern at proper points and situations, according to the need of the students(when you want to draw their attention) and the subject (when you want to emphasise a point).
4. Focussing : Focussing can be used when you want to direct your students' attention to a particular point which they are required to observe. Focussing can be obtained through verbal communication or gesture or both.
   1. Verbal focussing : When you want to emphasize some particular aspect during your teaching and direct your students' attention to it, you should use statements like - 'Listen carefully', 'Look at this chart', Watch this experiment'.
   2. Gestural focussing : With the use of gestures only i.e. the movements of head and hand you can attract the attention of your students to a particular point. Even if you underline the point on the blackboard, the students will be attracted more towards it when appropriate gestures are used for this purpose.
   3. Verbal and gestural focussing : When both verbal and gestures focussing devices are used to focus the attention of students, it has more impact on them. For example, when you ask your students: "Look at the diagram" and at the same time draw the diagram on the blackboard or overhead projector transparency, you will be able to help your students properly understand the concept.
5. Change in interaction style : Interaction takes place when two individuals communicate with each other in order to share an idea or feeling. Classroom interaction takes place in three ways:
   1. Teacher-class interaction
   2. Teacher-student interaction
   3. Peer group interaction
6. Pausing: Pausing is used when a teacher introduces silence during his talk. When you are talking and putting questions continuously without giving your students time to think and respond, the students become inattentive and at times non-cooperative. Hence in order to sustain their attention, we should give them some time to think and respond to the questions put to them. This deliberate use of silence is called 'pausing'.
7. Change in sensory focus : When a teacher changes the sensory channel-from listening (verbal speech) to looking (visual display), from speaking to doing, from writing to demonstrating, etc,- it helps maintain the level of attention and motivation of the students. Such changes can be brought about through judicious combination of various means of communication.
8. Student movement: You can change the focus of attention of the students by involving them in physically doing something. You can involve them in experiments, handling apparatus, or dramatization. By doing so, we can sustain their interest in the teaching-learning process.

**Skill of Probing Questions**

Questioning skill is an important skill to be developed by any teacher. It is all the more important for all teacher as questioning stimulates the thinking of the students and gets the concepts clarified and hence has significant contribution to teaching and learning for all subjects. Probing is going deep into the pupils’ responses by asking a number of questions about what they already know and to lead them to the correct response or to remove any ambiguity or misconception, which has led to such responses. Probing is to be done where there is no response, or incorrect response, or partially right response.

**Components and Description of Skill of Probing Questions**

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| **S.No.** | **Components** | **Description of behaviour** |
| 1 | Prompting | This technique is going deep into the pupil’s initial response. This technique is employed when the student gives no response to the correct response with a series of hints or prompts through step-by-step questioning process. Giving hints or clues to lead the student from no response or wrong response to correct response. |
| 2 | Seeking further information | This technique involves leading a pupil from partially correct or incomplete response to the correct response through questioning.  Questions that lead the students from partially correct incomplete response to correct answer. |
| 3 | Refocusing | This technique is employed when the student gives completely correct response. Refocusing through questioning helps the pupils to view the correct response from a different viewpoint.  Questions that help the student to view his correct response in a broader perspective. |
| 4 | Redirection | Directing the same questions to other pupils when there is a wrong response, incomplete response, partially right response, or while prompting or while seeking further information and so on. |
| 5 | Increasing critical awareness | It involves putting questions such as ‘how’ and ‘why’ to increase the critical awareness of the pupils about the correct response. Thus this technique is followed when the students give correct response. |

**Skill of Blackboard Writing**

Blackboard is an important visual aid used by teachers for effective teaching. A teacher makes extensive use of blackboard in his or her daily classroom teaching for working our problems, deriving formulae, proving theorems, drawing figures, constructing geometrical figures and so on. Every teacher should be proficient in the skill of using blackboard. Good blackboard writing leads to the following:

* Clarity in the understanding of concepts
* Reinforcement of the idea which is being verbally presented.
* Conveying a holistic picture of the content.
* Adding variety to the lesson and drawing attention of the pupils to the key concepts.

**Components and Description of Skill of Blackboard Writing**

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| **S.No.** | **Components** | **Description of Behaviour** |
| 1 | Legibility in handwriting | Ø   Distinct letters  Ø   Adequate spacing between letters and words  Ø   Adequate size for the letters  Ø   Different sizes for capital and small letters  Ø   Uniform size for all capital letters  Ø   Uniform size for all small letters |
| 2 | Neatness in blackboard work | Ø   Straightness of lines  Ø   Adequate spacing between the lines  Ø   Avoiding overwriting  Ø   Focusing the relevant matter |
| 3 | Appropriateness of blackboard work | Ø   Continuity in the ideas  Ø   Brevity and simplicity  Ø   Drawing attention and focusing |

**Skill of Set Induction**

The skill of introducing involves establishing rapport with the learners, promoting their attention, and exposing them to essential content.

Learning a new lesson is influenced by the process in which the lesson is introduced.

**Components of the Skill of Set Induction**

1. maximum utilization of previous knowledge of pupils
   1. of the subject
   2. General awareness
   3. Devices and techniques of exploring
   4. Link between previous and new knowledge
   5. Creating situations
2. using appropriate devices
   1. examples, questioning, lecturing, audio-visual aids, demonstration, role playing
   2. According to maturity level
3. maintenance of continuity
   1. sequence of ideas
   2. Logical
   3. Related to student’s response
   4. Linked with teachers’ statement
4. relevancy of verbal or non-verbal behaviour - by
   1. Testing previous knowledge
   2. Utilizing past experiences
   3. Establishing rapport
   4. Pin point aim of lesson
   5. Need & importance of lesson
5. Arouse interest-
   1. Introducing a surprise
   2. Telling a story
   3. Showing enthusiasm
   4. Effectiveness

**Skill of Reinforcement**

Reinforcement is strengthening the connection between a stimulus and a response. There are two types of reinforcement’s i.e. positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement. Positive reinforcement provides pleasant experience or a feeling of satisfaction which contributes towards strengthening of desirable responses or behaviours. The negative reinforcement results in unpleasant experiences, which help in weakening the occurrence of undesirable responses or behaviours.

          The skill of reinforcement can increase the students’ involvement in learning in a number of ways. The skill is used when the teacher reinforces correct responses with a smile, when the teacher praises a good response or encourages a slow learner. Such positive reinforces strengthen desirable responses whereas negative reinforces such as scolding, punishing the students, sarcastic remarks etc. weaken the undesirable response. However, the use of more and more positive reinforcers maximizes pupils’ involvement of learning rather than the use of negative reinforcers. Therefore, the skills of reinforcement involve the teacher to use more and more positive reinforcers and to decrease the use of negative reinforcers so that the pupils’ participation is maximized.

**Components and Description of Skill of Reinforcement**

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| **S.No.** | **Components** | **Description of Behaviour** |
| 1 | Positive verbal reinforcement | Comments like ‘good’, ‘very good’, ‘excellent’ etc |
| 2 | Positive gestures | Facial expression; example; ‘smile’ |
| 3 | Proximity | Teacher moving towards the responding student |
| 4 | Token reinforcement | merit card |
| 5 | Activity reinforcement | Giving a task, the student likes to perform |
| 6 | Negative verbal | Comments like ‘nonsense’ |
| 7 | Negative gesture | Facial expression like ‘frowning’ |