

Part 4

Lesson Conferencing: The learning community

When teachers engage in lesson observation and conferencing, in the context of mentoring, peer review, or as part of conducting a Learning Study, they not only contribute towards their own professional development, but also to the development of their school as a learning community. In Unit 7 we focus on the contribution lesson conferencing can make to the development of the overall learning community, in the context of conducting a Learning Study. This provides an example of an alternative form of lesson conferencing, where teachers and university colleagues join together to plan, observe and refine a research lesson using Variation Theory as the main theoretical framework. In Units 8 and 9 we return to the more usual form of conferencing, as we focus on two key factors that help to make classrooms into productive learning communities. In Unit 8 we consider the need to cater for pupil diversity and in Unit 9 the importance of establishing the tone of learning and teaching.

Unit 7

Towards establishing a learning community



Introduction

A key feature of a learning community is that it aims to maximize both the pupils' learning and the teachers' learning. The two are intimately related. A common theme underpinning these materials is that all who participate in a lesson conference are potential learners, whether they are a novice teacher, mentor, supervisor, or a colleague conducting peer review.

Ultimately, however, it is the pupils in the school that benefit when teachers critically analyse their classroom practice. In this Unit, we will bring the pupils' views into the conversation as we consider lesson observation and conferencing, as it applies to conducting a Learning Study.

We begin by briefly introducing some key concepts used in Learning Study, which enable teachers to be more 'incisive' (perceptive, insightful, sharp, penetrating) in analysing whether the teaching is maximizing pupils' learning.

The Unit begins by emphasising that collaboration in teaching is not simply restricted to co-lesson planning. In a learning community, teachers plan, observe, review and revise lessons collaboratively. Having made this point, the Unit then includes extracts from a pre-lesson planning, lesson observation and a post-lesson analysis.



Objectives

1. To provide a basic introduction to the concept and practice of Learning Study and its role in helping to establish a learning community in schools;
2. To encourage the view that teacher collaboration in lesson planning is enhanced if it is coupled with lesson observation and analysis;
3. To emphasise the importance of including the learning needs and considering the possible misconceptions of pupils in the process of lesson planning;
4. To encourage teachers to gather pupils' feedback as part of the post-lesson analysis in order to assess their learning, such that this information can be incorporated into subsequent lesson planning.



Learning Study

A basic introduction

Learning Study is a form of action research which aims at enhancing each pupil's learning by precisely identifying the focus of the lesson, which is referred to as the object of learning (學習內容) and clarifying the critical features (關鍵特徵) that pupils need to understand as a prerequisite to their learning.

In addition to the object of learning and critical features, teachers also need to consider three forms of variation:

- First, the pupils' prior understandings and learning needs (Variation 1)
- Second, the teachers' own preconceptions (Variation 2) about the topic and how to teach it.
- Considering all these together enables them to draw up a lesson plan, using variation as a pedagogical tool (Variation 3).

One teacher will teach while the others observe. Having carefully reviewed the lesson, a revised plan will be developed for the second teacher to teach. The process of refinement and improvement will be continued until each participating teacher has taught the same topic. Finally, the whole research process and its results are written up as a case study.

An overview of the Learning Study process is provided in the following diagram.



Video Description 1

In this video, we see a group of teachers reviewing the results of a Learning Study project, undertaken in their school as part of their professional development.



Preparation for viewing

When viewing the clip, consider the professionalism of their conversation, as members of this learning community. Also notice how they discuss their teaching using the concepts of ‘object of learning’ and ‘critical features’. Also, what they say about the advantages of observing each other’s lessons.

Approximately 4 mins



Now Watch Video Sequence 1

Unit 7_Video 1

20 mins



Activity A

Small group discussion

In your small group, share your own experiences of working collaboratively with other teachers in the planning and teaching of lessons. If you have not done this before, what benefits do you think it might bring to your teaching?

In the clip that you have just viewed, the teachers had not only collaborated in the planning of the lesson, they also observed each other teaching and reviewed each other’s lessons. Do you feel that the teachers in the clip had concerns about the process? Do they seem to be open and frank in the comments they are making?

What are the major differences between co-planning of lessons and the kind of full collaboration in teaching practiced in this particular school?

Do you have concerns about being observed while teaching? Do you think these concerns are widely shared with other colleagues?

What could help to ease those concerns?



Video Description 2

Having considered issues of teacher collaboration within the learning community, we now go back to near the beginning of the process of conducting a Learning Study. The teachers have chosen their topic and have now reached the stage of planning the lesson. (*Refer back to the diagram of the Learning Study process provided above.*)

The selected topic is evaporation and in this video clip the teachers are considering the pre-conceptions that their pupils are bringing to this topic, and how they can be addressed when designing the lesson plan.



Preparation for viewing

When watching this video, notice the dynamics of the conversation and how each teacher is able to contribute their own thinking. You may notice that one participant is not a member of the teaching staff of the school. She is from the university sector. This contribution to the Learning Study can be very helpful, in providing additional insights. Nevertheless it is the teachers who know the pupils, and who are therefore in the best position to judge their pupils' learning needs.

Also pay particular attention to the teachers' discussion of the difficulties their pupils are experiencing in understanding this topic. (They had discovered this by conducting a pre-test of pupils' understandings in which they had set some questions based on the pupils' everyday experiences of water disappearing, such as puddles on the playground after the rain and the blackboard drying after being washed.) The learning difficulties that this test seemed to indicate, included:

- misunderstandings about the nature of evaporation;
- guesses about what is happening to the water in the process of evaporation;
- mistaken ideas about the relationship between the Sun and the process of evaporation, believing the water has disappeared because it can no longer be seen, and therefore;
- considerable problems in understanding the nature of condensation.

Notice how the teachers attempt to provide possible reasons for the pupils' misunderstandings, in the way that they are possibly thinking about the topic, and how the overall discussion feeds into the planning of the lesson.

Approximately 5 mins



Now Watch Video Sequence 2 Unit 7_Video 2

20 mins



Small group discussion

Activity B

How would you evaluate the input of teachers in this discussion in term of their perceptions about their pupils' understandings and the solutions they

suggest to ensure that their pupils are able to learn this topic?

Exchange ways in which you personally attempt to take account of the pupils' conceptions, misconceptions and their prior learning when planning your lessons. How do these considerations help you to plan the content and teaching strategies used in your lessons?

Or, if you do not usually consider these issues by yourself or with your colleagues:

- What difficulties can result from not focusing attention on understanding pupils' learning difficulties, as a starting point for lesson planning? List five such difficulties that you would want to discuss in a lesson conference.
- What would be a suitable time in your normal school day to meet with your colleagues and discuss your lessons, as happens in this particular school?
- Are there reasons why this kind of collaborative planning is possible in some schools but not in others?



Video Description 3

The purpose of this video and subsequent activity is to emphasise the importance of bringing the pupils' evaluation of their lesson into the lesson analysis. In the first video extract, we see pupils talking about the lesson which we saw being planned in Video 2. We will then hear from pupils in other schools being interviewed by a researcher and talking about their learning experiences in their lessons.



Preparation for Viewing

When viewing this video, pay particular attention to the issues raised by the researcher and what the children say is important to them.

Approximately 2 mins



Now Watch Video Sequence 3

Unit 7_Video 3

30 mins



Activity C

Small group discussion

What messages came from the pupils in these extracts about their perceptions and learning difficulties, and what can we do about them?

In addition to formal interviews, there are many informal approaches that

can be used to elicit pupils' evaluation of their learning experiences. For example:

1. listening to what the parents' say about their children's reactions to their lessons;
2. other colleagues' involvement during the lesson;
3. playground conversations with children;

And for the younger children:

4. teddy bear speaking;
5. speech bubbles that children fill in ...

What other ideas can you suggest to get children talking about their learning experiences and how would you use the ideas suggested above?



Video Description 4

In this video sequence, we see three extracts edited from the first teaching cycle of a Learning Study on Chinese language:

1. an extract of a Chinese lesson where the focus is on enriching a sentence by adding relevant adjectives and adverbs;
2. an interview with some of the students, one of whom seems to have a view of the lesson which is different from what the teacher intended;
3. a post-lesson conference involving the Learning Study team who address the issue raised by the boy and then take this into consideration as they modify the lesson plan for the next cycle of the Learning Study.




Preparation for Viewing

In viewing this clip, it is important to keep in mind that we are seeing extracts from a Learning Study cycle. The aim of Learning Study is to enhance pupils' learning, and in order to do that teachers need to be 'incisive' (perceptive, insightful, sharp, penetrating) in their observation and analysis of the lesson.

Notice that it is not apparent in the lesson that some pupils may be viewing the lesson in their own ways. This only emerges in talking to the pupils, which then prompts teachers to address the issue in their post lesson conference.

Approximately 7 mins 

Now Watch Video Sequence 4
Unit 7_Video 4

30 mins 
Small group discussion

Activity D

- The teacher used a story in order to teach grammar. In retrospect, do you think this was a good idea, given that the story was very powerful and might have created distraction from the main point of the lesson?
- To what extent do you think the teachers are being ‘incisive’ (perceptive, insightful, sharp, penetrating) in their attempts to understand the issue and re-design the lesson? What evidence would you provide to support your views?
- Are there additional points you would want to make if you are part of this conversation?
- If your small group were the Learning Study team in this learning community, how would you jointly re-design this lesson to ensure maximum learning of grammar for all pupils in your classes? What content would you include, what strategies would you use when teaching the lesson, and what possible distractions and/or misunderstandings might you need to cater for in advance?



Video Description 5


In this final clip, we see teachers in a number of schools discussing the result of their Learning Study projects. Common to all of them, is a sense of professional achievement and joy in the results of their collaboration. They are well on the way to developing their schools as a learning community.

The school learning community is one in which teachers support each other, through mentoring the professional development of new teachers, and enhancing the ongoing professional development of each other through peer review and Learning Study. In each case, development comes through exercising the skills of critical but also supportive comment, based on perceptive and insightful observation and analysis of lessons. In the learning community, mentoring, peer review and Learning Study come together to create a holistic environment of professional development.

Approximately 3 mins 

Now Watch Video Sequence 5

Unit 7_Video 5

20 mins 
Whole group sharing

Activity E

Developing the learning community in our school.

Having viewed these clips, what changes could be made in your own school to enhance the learning community? What problems are there that could stand in the way of this development? How can these problems be overcome?

Unit 7 total time: 140 mins

Unit 8

Catering for diversity in the classroom



Introduction

Pupils vary enormously in their individual learning needs and in their learning abilities. Every classroom is therefore a mixed-ability learning community, even when ‘setting’ or ‘banding’ for ability has occurred. An important aspect of mentoring novice teachers, reviewing the teaching of more experienced colleagues or conducting a Learning Study, is to focus on how far the lesson is catering for pupil diversity.

For example, are all pupils in the class able to keep pace with the lesson, or are some pupils being left behind in their thinking or in the work? Are some pupils spending time just waiting for others to catch up? And how can we be sure that all pupils are being given maximum learning opportunities? What strategies can we use to try to achieve that aim?

In addition, we can ask to what extent all pupils in the class can master the critical features (concepts, ideas, and processes) that will help them to understand the object of learning and proceed further in their studies. One important aspect of this process is for teachers to recognise that pupils have different ways of perceiving and understanding the same phenomenon. The teachers’ role is therefore to:

- be aware of the individual differences of pupils
- clearly identify the object of learning for the lesson being taught
- identify the critical features for teaching the particular topic,
- teach the lesson in such a way that it helps pupils to master the topic, even though they are coming to it from their own individual perspectives.

The purpose of this Unit is not to try to cover the whole issue of pupil diversity, but rather to begin to consider some of the issues from the perspective of a mentor helping novice teachers to cater sensitively for pupil diversity without labelling children.



Objectives

1. To consider, in the context of lesson conferencing, the importance of recognising pupils' individuality in the pre-understandings they bring to the lesson and in catering for their individual learning needs;
2. To encourage mentors and peer reviewers to ask searching questions about the object of learning, the critical features for learning the particular topic and the adequacy of the teaching strategies in terms of catering for pupils' individual differences.



Video Description 1

You are going to watch two short video sequences, each of which raises questions about setting pupil worksheet tasks in a lesson.

- In the first episode, the teacher gave a worksheet to the class and some pupils finished earlier than the others. This issue is raised in the post-lesson conference. Notice the solution provided by the novice teacher.
- In the second episode, we hear the teacher and an experienced teacher discuss how to design worksheets to cater for different levels of pupils' ability.



Preparation for viewing

As we watch these clips, consider what you might say if you were one of the mentors engaged in these two post-lesson conferences, with regard to catering for individual differences.

Keep in mind the curriculum guideline which emphasises the need to 'find appropriate ways to help them [pupils] learn better. Otherwise, the gaps between the high achievers and the low achievers will widen as children move through progressive stages of schooling' (CDC, 2001, p.92).

Approximately 4 mins



Now Watch Video Sequence 1

Unit 8 _Video 1

30 mins



Activity A

Small group discussion


In small groups, consider the solution given by the teacher in the first sequence to the problem that some pupils finish the task earlier than others. How might you respond to her suggestion? Is it really a

satisfactory way of dealing with different pupils' pace of learning? Are the fastest children always the most able?

Then consider:

- Many teachers in Hong Kong design worksheets that cater for different ability levels, by providing additional clues to the questions they set. Are there disadvantages in this approach?
- For example, do you agree that one problem with this might be that it is not actually stretching those pupils' thinking abilities? What else could be wrong with trying to cater for differences by giving some pupils easier tasks to accomplish?
- Are there better ways to cater for different ability levels when designing worksheets that you could suggest as a mentor? Perhaps one important consideration is designing worksheets where some of the questions are open-ended (where they are not presuming one answer). This will allow children to work at their own levels and at their own pace.
- Perhaps, also, we can design questions that actually cater for differences of ability, but appear to focus on differences of interest (e.g. where similar mathematical concepts are taught in a range of contexts that will interest different pupils in the class). Or, where pupils do not have to answer all the questions and can choose which they want to attempt.
- Perhaps the real problem for some pupils is that the worksheet tasks are coming at the lesson topic in ways that do not suit their starting point; their previous learning and pre-understandings. In this case it may not be a problem of different ability levels, but different ways of seeing and understanding the same phenomenon. How can you cater for this problem when designing pupil activities?

In considering the question posed above, you may like to refer to the curriculum guideline which notes that 'teachers can use a diversity of resources (print, human, electronic) rather than focus only on textbooks when designing classroom activities. Teachers can make use of a spectrum of intelligences and multi-sensory experiences to tap the different potential of students, especially lower achievers' (CDC, 2001, p.92).

25 mins 
Whole group sharing

Each small group to report back on their discussion of the questions raised above and any other issues they raised on the use of worksheets in class.



Video Description 2

The novice teacher is attempting to teach the pupils how to play F# (sharp) on their recorders. The method she uses focuses on teaching the pupils the correct fingering. In the post-lesson conference, one of the experienced teachers raises a question about catering for pupil diversity.

(More of the actual lesson can be seen in a 10 minutes extract as video 5 in Unit 6. This may help the facilitator by providing additional information about the lesson.)



Preparation for viewing

When watching the video focus on the extent to which pupils are able to pitch the note, the discussion about pupil diversity and the point about the best use of the teaching aid, raised by one of the experienced teachers in the post-lesson conference.

Bear in mind the curriculum guideline which advises that 'teachers can use a diversity of resources' and that 'teachers can make use of a spectrum of intelligences and multi-sensory experiences to tap the different potential of students, especially lower achievers' (CDC, 2001, p.92).

Approximately 5 mins



Now Watch Video Sequence 2

Unit 8_Video 2

30 mins



Activity B


Small group discussion

With regard to the clip that you have just seen, do you think the experienced teachers are successful in getting the teacher to think deeply about the critical features of her lesson?

What is critical in teaching this lesson, fingering, hearing or visualising the finger positions? What particular individual differences should the teacher cater for in this lesson?

As a subject teacher, consider your own past experience of using a teaching aid that addresses the issue of catering for pupil diversity (try to think of an aid other than a worksheet). Tell your colleagues about the teaching aid, and why you think it was productive or, perhaps, not as productive as you had hoped and intended.

As a subject mentor, in your own subject, suggest what issues you would raise with beginning teachers on the use of multi-sensory experiences in your own specialist subject, and the kind of advice you might give.

20 mins 
Whole group sharing

Each small group to feedback its insights on the use of multi-sensory experiences in its own subject domain. Compare and contrast the responses given by each group.



Video Description 3

In this video, two experienced teachers and one novice teacher are discussing what had happened in the novice teacher's Chinese lesson, on the 'Million Walk for the Community Chest'. Pupils of different ability had been placed in small groups, but some found it difficult to work cooperatively with each other, and one girl appeared to feel very left out.



Preparation for viewing


One important classroom strategy when catering for individual differences is to use group work, aimed at encouraging cooperative learning. But this can also introduce difficulties, because, for example, individuals in the group may come from different social backgrounds or may have very different learning needs. These differences, along with differences of ability, can become much more apparent when pupils are working in small groups, compared with whole class teaching.

In addition, if a teacher creates small mixed ability groups, the less able members of the group may easily become marginalized, because they cannot contribute as much as the others. This can reinforce feelings of inadequacy. In this circumstance, teachers need to do more than just create small groups, in the belief that this will lead to cooperative learning. They need to make sure that the groups are so arranged and group tasks are organized such that all pupils can participate. They also need to closely monitor that this is actually happening in each group.

Mentors need to be aware of these kinds of considerations, and be prepared to make positive suggestions, based on their knowledge of the pupils. In the post-lesson conference that you will see, the mentor raises important questions about group size, the setting of roles for pupils and pupil participation within the group. Is this simply a matter of behaviour management, or is it also intimately related to pupils learning? You may also notice the seating of one of the groups, and how that seems to affect one pupil's ability to participate.


Another key issue that is raised relates to the purpose of teaching Chinese, which is not simply to concentrate on grammar and form, but also to focus on the meaning conveyed in a text.

In watching this video, try to bear in mind the points mentioned above and notice how they are raised by the participants in the post-lesson conference. Note down your reaction to the points that they make in their discussion.

Approximately 5 mins 

Now Watch Video Sequence 3

Unit 8_Video 3

25 mins 
Small group discussion

Activity C

What reaction do you have to the points raised in the Preparation for Viewing for this activity, and in the post-lesson conference that you observed? How can you mentor for these particular considerations, such that the benefits of using group work in catering for individual differences are maximized and the difficulties minimized?

Would you agree that the opportunity to incorporate values and attitudes, as required by the new Hong Kong curriculum, had largely been missed in this lesson, even though the text being studied is about helping others in the community and the way the pupils were grouped in class was intended to encourage cooperative learning?

Share your experiences of using small group activities in your classrooms. What was your main purpose in using the small group approach – was it, perhaps, for classroom management, to help cater for individual differences, or to foster cooperative learning?

What opportunities can small group work provide in catering for individual differences that cannot be so easily catered for in whole class lessons?

Is group work always the best strategy in teaching? Are there limitations in this approach for developing individual pupil's many different abilities?

Unit 8 total time: 144 mins

Unit 9

Establishing the tone of learning and teaching



Introduction

Establishing the tone of learning and teaching is a major factor in creating productive school and classroom learning communities. It therefore needs to be given thoughtful consideration in the pre-lesson conference, when observing the lesson, and in the post-lesson conference.

Tone relates to the ‘atmosphere’ of the learning community. In the classroom, one senses the atmosphere in terms of whether the ‘mood’ of the learning environment is relaxed or tense, happy or threatening; whether it is exciting, invoking curiosity, challenging, homely, and a place where it is safe to be wrong. It is also crucial that pupils and the teacher feel they are working in a caring and harmonious environment, one where there is mutual respect and also a strong sense of enthusiasm for learning.

One important factor in establishing tone is the teacher’s use of voice. Learning to use the voice so that it varies in volume, pace and expression, at just the right moment, to invoke mood, is akin to the skills of the storyteller or raconteur. However, it is not simply a technical skill, but an aspect of the projection of the ‘self’ as teacher. Another factor is the use of body language and facial expressions and the subtle meanings that they convey.

The projection of the teacher’s self is particularly important in establishing caring and respectful relationships in the classroom and opening up the space for pupils’ learning in which pupils feel confident to express their own ideas and are enthusiastic about their learning. Employing the characteristics identified above requires a high level of sensitivity to the pupils, their responses, and the overall dynamics of the learning community. In other words, it requires what may be called ‘pedagogical tact’.

In addition to clips provided for this Unit, you may wish to refer to Unit 5 where the teacher quickly establishes a very positive, warm and active learning environment. The teacher in that lesson is using various techniques to establish the tone of her lesson.



Objectives

1. To encourage, within the context of lesson observation and conferencing, a focus on establishing the tone of the learning environment
2. To begin to recognise and appreciate the many, often subtle, skills required in establishing learning communities that are non-threatening and engender an enthusiasm for learning and in which pupils experience excitement and challenge.



Video Description 1

A novice teacher is discussing her Chinese lesson on the topic of 'Sunrise' with an experienced teacher. She wants to be imaginative in her approach and create a positive tone in teaching this lesson. In the first part of the lesson, she showed some pictures of sunrise, using a PowerPoint file, to help stimulate her pupils' to feel the beauty of 'Sunrise' and better appreciate the Chinese text.



Preparation for Viewing

As you watch this video clip of the actual lesson, see if you can notice any missed opportunities to enhance the tone or mood of the learning environment in the extract that you see. Also, pay attention to the post-lesson conference discussion related to setting the mood of the classroom.

Approximately 3 mins



Now Watch Video Sequence 1

Unit 9_Video 1

20 mins



Activity A


Small group discussion

Reflecting on the video:

- Do you feel that the teacher achieved her aim of enabling the pupils to sense the beauty and wonder of a sunrise experience?
- In what ways did the teacher display pedagogical tactfulness in handling the content of this lesson? What more could she have done to project her 'self' into this lesson?

(You may like to refer back to the Introduction for this Unit to help answer this question.)

- In addition, are there other resources or techniques she could have used to help pupils sense the beauty of the sunrise;
- What skills will you need as an experienced teacher if you are going to raise these difficult but important issues in a lesson conference, especially when the teacher wants to create a particular atmosphere, but is frustrated by the feeling that she is not successful?

20 mins 
Whole group sharing

For this whole group sharing, each small group can feed back their responses to the four questions raised above.

Consider the views presented by each group, especially where there are differences of opinion. See if you can come to a whole group consensus.



Video Description 2


In this clip, we see a P.2 English lesson using the big book approach. Sufficient space has been cleared in the classroom to allow the pupils to sit on the floor close to the teacher.



Preparation for viewing


In this lesson the teacher is going to tell a story, using a big book, and she is therefore going to take on the role of a storyteller. She uses various aids to help with her story telling and, of course her use of voice plays a major part in the lesson. In addition to being a story teller, she is also the teacher, and therefore uses a number of classroom strategies to keep control.

When watching this video try to notice *all* the subtle skills she is using to create the tone of this lesson. Consider, also, the age group of the pupils (P.2) and possible difficulties that can arise in using subtle skills with this age group.

Approximately 10 mins 

Now Watch Video Sequence 2

Unit 9_Video 2

25 mins 
Small group discussion

Activity B

What aspects of this lesson are context-dependant? Where they only apply to this particular classroom, or this group of children, or this topic,

and/or this method of teaching ?


Consider the following aspects and whether these are also context dependant, or whether they can they applied in all lessons?

- providing a warm greeting
- using body gesture to gain enthusiasm and also to emphasise key points of the lesson;
- asking questions to invite participation instead of just getting the right answer from pupils;
- use of eye contact and facial expression to involve all pupils and transmit care and respect;
- creating a sense of mystery and excitement by hiding and revealing the artefacts used in the lesson;
- using the voice - volume, pace, pitch, intonation..... to show approval, gain attention and arouse interest.

These are all skills that can be considered in the lesson conference. They are directly related to establishing the tone of the learning environment.

How can we mentor beginning teachers, particularly when assisting in their lesson planning, so that they incorporate these techniques and subtle skills into the lesson?

(In attempting this, you may like to refer back to the points made in the introduction in this Unit.)

20 mins 
Whole group sharing

Share the results of your small group discussions with each other, particularly your answers to the questions about using these skills in all subjects on the primary school curriculum in Hong Kong.

You may like to work in pairs to demonstrate some of these skills, showing how they could be demonstrated in a lesson conference.



Video Description 3

This video sequence contains short extract from two lessons.

The first is a P.2 PE lesson using hoops. As a warm-up activity for the lesson, the teacher organizes a game where pupils pretend to be mice or rabbits at play, but when the tiger (teacher) appears, they have to find safety in the caves (hoops). She uses this warm-up activity as an imaginative strategy to mentally and physically prepare the children for their lesson, and to lead into the main activity of the lesson which will use hoops for developing body coordination.

The second extract is the beginning of an Art lesson which will result in pupils making their own dinosaurs from clay. The beginning teacher uses a puppet to invoke the pupils' interest in the topic.

(In Unit 6, Video 6 & 7, you will be able to see a 10-15 minutes extract of these lessons. This may help the facilitator, providing additional information about the lesson.)



Preparation for viewing

Setting the tone of the lesson not only applies to the 'normal' classroom setting. It is also important in specialist classrooms (music, art room, IT, etc) and when lessons are conducted outside the classroom, such as PE.

The setting, however, may make a big difference to the way that the teacher needs to go about establishing the tone, for example, by joining in with the pupils as part of the play.

When watching this video, notice how this PE teacher helps to create the tone by participating in the game, and how the newly qualified Art teacher captured the interest of his pupils by using a puppet.

Consider how the tone of these lessons, set at the beginning, could be maintained throughout the lesson, as it was in the English lesson on the big book (Activity A).

Approximately 3 mins



Now Watch Video Sequence 3

Unit 9_Video 3

30 mins



Small group discussion

Activity C


Go back to the introduction to this unit and identify the characteristics that help to create the tone of the lesson. Which of these characteristics are you able to identify in these two lesson sequences?

If you are a PE teacher and are mentoring this novice teacher, how will you balance the concerns you might raise about safety with supportive comments on this teacher's attempt to create a happy and enjoyable

learning environment?

If you now consider your own teaching subject, how are you, as mentor, going to encourage novice teachers to be sensitive to the tone of the lesson?

Make a flip chart list of the various skills you would want to encourage in a teacher of your subject and how you might discuss them in a lesson conference.

20 mins 
Whole group sharing

Finally, as a whole group, share your ideas about the mentoring strategies you can use to encourage sensitivity to the tone of the lesson as a major contributor in enhancing pupils' learning and enjoyment of the lesson.

Unit 9 total time: 151 mins
