

Exercise 1: Facilitating Learning

Facilitating learning involves many skills, including listening and speaking, giving directions, questioning, observing and monitoring, encouraging, and intervening. Teachers must learn these skills. Students must also develop these skills, since they too are working with others.

Listening and Speaking Skills

To promote listening and speaking skills with students, teachers should consider doing and saying the following:

To Do	To Say
Model desired behaviors	<i>I hear better when I look at the person speaking.</i>
Reinforce desired behaviors by pointing them out	<i>I use a loud voice so everyone can hear.</i>
Remind students to use good listening skills	<i>Now Arturo and Graciella will share. You will have an easier time hearing what they are saying if you look at them.</i>
Guide students on what they should do if they cannot hear	<i>Raise your hand to let someone know that you cannot hear what he or she is saying.</i>
Restate what a student has said to clarify when needed	<i>Joseph, you said a drawing program would be the best tool. Rema wants to know why you think so.</i>
Respond in ways that are neither positive nor negative	<i>Dana shared one idea. Who wants to share another idea?</i>
Encourage students to elaborate further	<i>What else would you like to add?</i>
Include all the students	<i>Who else wants to ask a question?</i>
Alert students when changing direction	<i>Let us explore another solution.</i>

Giving Directions Skills

Teachers who have good skills for giving directions

- are clear in their intentions and think through their instructions
- wait and ensure that students are quiet before giving directions
- provide directions orally and in writing
- share directions a few steps at a time so as to not confuse or overwhelm students
- model the expected steps for students
- check for understanding to ensure that students know what is expected from them

Observing and Monitoring Skills

Good teachers

- always know what students are doing
- move around the room and listen to students' conversations
- take or record notes
- ask questions
- make decisions about when to intervene
- recognize that each student is special

Questioning Skills

Questioning can be an effective way to extend thinking. To grow and learn, we question. Questioning allows us to make sense of what is around us. Questioning also leads to the ability to create solutions, make decisions, and plan successfully.

Effective questioning strategies include the following:

- Using language that everyone can understand
- Asking questions that have more than one correct answer
- Replacing questions that can be answered with a Yes/No or one-word answer with questions that ask *How...?*, *Why...?*, or *Which...?*
- Encouraging sharing of answers with a partner or small group prior to the larger group
- Calling on students randomly and allowing students to call on other students to respond
- Listening actively to what students are saying
- Avoiding the temptation to interrupt or correct immediately
- Withholding judgments and responding in a nonevaluative manner
- Redirecting incorrect answers
- Having one student summarize the idea of another
- Asking follow-ups such as, *Why? Can you tell me more? What is another example?*
- Inviting students to "unpack their thinking" and share how they arrived at an answer
- Letting students develop their own questions to ask others

Developing 21st Century Approaches

Step 1

What are some other effective questioning strategies? As answers are shared, record good ideas on the lines that follow.

Step 2

Work with a partner. Identify two or three effective questions that appear in the content from an earlier module. Write the questions, where they are found, and why they are effective.

Step 3

Search for a question from an earlier module that you think could be improved. Write the question, where it is found, and why you think it could be improved.

Step 4

Now rewrite the question to make it more effective.

Developing 21st Century Approaches

Step 5

How has your change made the question more effective?

As part of good questioning skills, teachers provide *think time* or *wait time*. Think time (or wait time) is the time between a teacher's question and a student's response. It is also the time between a student's response and the teacher's or next student's response.

Research indicates that most teachers provide only one second of think time when at least three to five seconds are preferred. The benefits of allowing for think time include increased levels of:

- Responses from a greater number of students
- Listening among students
- Accurate and confident responses

Encouraging Skills

Good teachers build relationships with students and recognize the ways in which each student is special. This knowledge often results in a natural tendency to give praise to students. However, good teachers focus on encouragement rather than praise.

Praise advances the notion that work has no value unless it receives praise. In contrast, encouragement conveys respect and belief in students' abilities, and recognizes efforts rather than achievements. Other differences between praise and encouragement can be found in the following table.

Praise	Encouragement
Stresses how other people feel	Stresses students contributions, skills, and areas of improvement
Often focuses on <i>I...</i> statements, such as <i>I am so proud of you!</i>	Often focuses on <i>You...</i> statements, such as <i>You handled that very well!</i>
Cultivates selfishness	Cultivates self interest
Promotes fear of failure	Promotes acceptance of being imperfect
Advances dependency	Advances self sufficiency
Comes with judgment	Comes without judgment

Developing 21st Century Approaches

Some strategies to encourage students include:

- Being positive: *You worked a long time on that.*
- Focusing on strengths: *You used details in your drawings.*
- Encouraging students to strive for improvement: *Since you are not satisfied, what else can you do?*
- Being specific in identifying desirable behavior: *Thank you for being patient!*
- Encouraging effort: *Look at the progress you have made!*

Intervening Skills

Teachers who are effective facilitators carefully monitor students and make decisions about when to intervene.

Teachers intervene to

- provide feedback during project work
- provide confirmation with rationale
- ensure two-way communication
- enable a congenial relation to develop
- improve processes
- ensure fairness
- help clarify
- refocus
- assist in conflicts
- remind groups of ground rules

Teachers consider the following before intervening:

- What to say
- How to say it
- When to say it
- Who to say it to
- Why they should say it

Developing 21st Century Approaches

This page presents several situations in which intervening skills are required of teachers. Identify two or three feedback starters or statements for each situation. Be prepared to share your answers.

The facilitator will assign one group to each situation. Then, as each group reports out, participants can contribute new statements as well. No one correct statement exists for each situation.

1. When you agree with a student... (Example: *Good point!*)

2. When you disagree with a student... (Example: *There may be some other ideas to consider.*)

3. When you need to encourage a discouraged student... (Example: *Let us solve it together.*)

4. When you want to express empathy... (Example: *It sounds so frustrating.*)

5. When you suggest a change... (Example: *Check that you have done all the tasks listed in the Review It section.*)
