

## **Teaching and learning methods for hygiene education**

---

### *Teaching and learning*

- People will learn more easily if the information presented to them is linked to their experiences and builds on what they already know. Always ask questions at the beginning to find out what people know, think and feel about the topic.
- The audience will only pay attention if the content of the teaching is relevant to what they want to know about, is put across in an interesting way and uses a variety of teaching styles.
- Complicated information should be introduced step by step, in a logical organized way. Learning can be helped by well-chosen visual aids. Essential information can be presented in a handout, and the time saved used for discussion.
- Take care not to overload the students with too many new ideas in one session, as there is a limit to the amount of information that can be absorbed at one sitting. Use a range of teaching approaches, such as talks, discussion, exercises and active learning methods. Build in frequent breaks between sessions where people can relax and stretch their legs. Twenty minutes at a time is probably the most people can keep up their concentration.
- Information presented in a teaching session is quickly forgotten. Some further input, either by the student's own reading or reminders by the teacher, is needed for the information to be retained in long-term memory.
- The audience may have enjoyed themselves and express appreciation, but may not have learned anything. The only way to find out whether learning has taken place is by obtaining some feedback - either by asking questions or observing students' performance to see if they have changed.
- Opportunities should be provided for students to practice their newly-acquired skills in a safe, friendly and tolerant environment where they can make mistakes and receive helpful criticism without feeling threatened.

- People learn better if they are allowed to discover principles for themselves and if activities are built into the learning process.

*More active methods* include : practice in real situations with supervision ; practice in class situation, for example role play ; and discussion.

*Less active methods* include : observing a drama or demonstration ; looking at pictures ; studying examples ; paper and pencil exercises ; individual reading.

---

## *Principles of good teaching*

- *Active learning* - make students think and apply the knowledge through a task.
- *Be clear* - use visual aids, speak clearly, use simple language.
- *Make it meaningful* - explain in advance what you are going to teach, explain all new words and ideas, relate what you teach to students' lives and work, give examples, summarize the main points at the end.
- *Encourage participation* - stimulate discussion and involve the group in the learning.
- *Ensure mastery* - check understanding and competence reached.
- *Give feedback* - tell the learners how far they have progressed.

---

## *Participatory learning*

A serious criticism of many health education programmes is that they rely too much on traditional, formal teaching methods where the audience is passive and simply listens. More emphasis is now placed on participatory learning methods and dialogue, such as small group teaching, simulations, case studies, group exercises and role play.

Participatory learning methods have many advantages. The participants are active so they are more likely to remember what was introduced during the session. They draw from their experience. They are allowed to discover principles for themselves and can develop problem-solving skills. Participatory learning methods are especially relevant for those who did not do well at school. Other advantages of using a participatory approach are :

- It makes people think for themselves and less dependent on the teacher ;

- It gives people greater pride in what they can do for themselves ;
- The teacher can discover the beliefs and practices of people in the community ;
- It creates a close feeling between the teacher and the group ;
- It shows the teacher's interest and respect for the opinions of the community ;
- It also makes health education more enjoyable.

---

### *Learning aids*

Well chosen learning aids can help hygiene education activities in many ways. They can be used to :

- Keep the group's interest, arouse curiosity and hold attention ;
- Emphasize key points - when key headings are written out ;
- Allow step by step explanation and sequencing of information ;
- Show how something appears rather than just telling people - for example, what a dehydrated person looks like, the structure of a latrine, transmission routes for diarrhoea ;
- Provide a shared experience for discussion and questions.

---

### **An appropriate learning aid should be :**

- Relevant to the learning objectives ;
- Affordable ;
- Easy to make and use ;
- Well understood by the audience ;
- Interesting and entertaining ;
- Encouraging to participation and discussion.