Approaches to teaching EMS: The teacher-centred approaches

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Chapter objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Explain the teacher-centred approach and understand when to use it in teaching EMS
- Discuss which teaching strategies are appropriate by using the teacher-centred approach
- Differentiate between teaching methods, strategies and techniques
- Select appropriate teaching methods for EMS lessons
- Understand the generally accepted elements of good teaching and learning experiences in teaching EMS.

Case study: Dolly the novice teacher

Dolly’s teaching dilemma is how to best utilise the teacher-centred approach for teaching EMS in her classroom. She is a novice EMS teacher, teaching Grade 9s. She completed her undergraduate degree last year. She started this year highly motivated and wants to implement the teaching methods, strategies and techniques she learned last year. This will ultimately motivate her EMS learners. But after two months in the profession, she realised a real-life classroom is totally different compared to her teaching practice experiences. She is struggling with the following issue: ‘As a new teacher, I am not always sure which teacher-centred method to use to transfer new knowledge, skills and content to learners in my classroom.’

Dolly is not alone; most beginner teachers will experience this dilemma at one time or another. She has realised that EMS is a subject that constantly demands different approaches in order to make the subject relevant to learners. Her teaching philosophy is: ‘I am eager and willing to do things differently in my classroom in order to empower my learners with relevant knowledge and skills. When I was a student teacher at university, I learned about many types of approaches and methods to apply in the classroom but when I started teaching, I preferred talking and chalking. When I do the talking alone, I feel in control of the class.’ She asks herself: ‘How can I best make appropriate use of the teacher-centred approach?’.
**Introduction**

Chapter 1 helped you to understand EMS better and in Chapter 2 you learnt about the main theoretical influences that have shaped teaching and learning over the years. You will remember we indicated that in recent times, constructivism has gained considerable popularity and currency. Educationists, theorists and researchers generally agree that learning is an *active process*. We mentioned that effective teachers usually draw from multiple theories of teaching and learning when planning teaching and learning experiences. In this chapter we will describe the teacher-centred approach in more detail.

**5.1 A conceptual understanding of the teacher-centred approach**

Learning processes should be either teacher-centred or learner-centred (participatory and activity-based). These are the two concepts (amongst others) that are most prevalent in literature about teaching and learning. These concepts are sometimes understood and interpreted very narrowly. However, they are rich concepts that the EMS teacher needs to comprehend in order to apply them effectively in teaching.

The approach to teaching is therefore as important as the content. In the opening case study, Dolly had decided to use a teacher-centred approach in her EMS classroom. In both of the above-mentioned approaches the teacher and learner have specific roles to play and must take on certain responsibilities before, during and after the lesson.

For the purpose of this chapter, a teacher-centred approach to learning is one in which the teacher plans lessons that are controlled by the teacher, who is in a position of authority. It means the teacher is the main focus in acting out the lesson plan to achieve lesson objectives. In this approach, the teacher remains in control of the knowledge (what is to be learned) and the learner remains a passive listener (only responding to instructions by the teacher). Learners are seen as ‘empty vessels’ and teachers control what is learned and why it is learned. The teacher’s role in this approach is to transfer the knowledge needed by learners to progress to another grade. In this approach, the most common methods used are telling, lecturing and **direct instruction**. Teachers employing this approach assess progress by using class tests and examinations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.1 Changing roles in the teaching and learning process</th>
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<td><strong>Role of the teacher in a lesson planning, development and implementation</strong></td>
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Table 5.1 depicts the changing roles of teachers and learners. The teacher can decide what his/her role in EMS lessons should be, ranging from being completely dominant to being facilitative, or there could be variations within a single lesson. We have observed that effective teachers are able to intuitively move seamlessly between these extremes on the continuum, moving between explaining, taking control and directing learning to overseeing, consulting and facilitating learning. Similarly, learners could experience phases in an EMS lesson where they are required to listen to explanations and instructions as well as phases where they are actively engaged in the learning experiences constructed for them.

There is a vast body of research that has focused on what the appropriate mix or blend should be for different subjects (Vakalisa, 2011:28). A key finding is that the blend or mix cannot be the same for every teacher even if they are teaching exactly the same content in EMS. The blend or mix for teaching and learning is usually determined by teacher personality and competence, the nature of the knowledge and skills to be taught, the resources available and the needs of the learners. You must be able to justify the educational soundness of the teaching methods chosen. In other words, you must be able to offer a clear and convincing rationale for why your selected teaching methods will enable learners to learn the new knowledge and skills.

Let us now briefly discuss the difference between a teaching method, strategy and technique as used in teaching EMS effectively.

Stop and reflect

Look at Table 5.1 again and reflect on the way in which you were taught when you were a secondary school learner. Are you teaching by using the same methods as those by which you were taught? Do your teaching methods reflect the skills and values that will equip learners for the real world when they leave school?

5.2 Differentiate between teaching methods, strategies and techniques

Literature defines teaching as the deliberate goal-orientated action of a teacher who is trying to promote certain learning (Jacobs, Vakalisa, & Gawe, 2011:45; Killen, 2009:133). Moreover, Vakalisa (2011:64) adds that the teacher must have sound knowledge and skills of teaching methods, strategies, techniques and classroom management skills in order to create a conducive learning environment that will accommodate a diverse learner population. The EMS teacher deliberately decides beforehand on a plan of action which includes the teaching method to be used to achieve the specific lesson objectives. This means you as a teacher must decide what method, why this method and how the method you choose will be appropriate for teaching the EMS topic in your class.
5.2.1 Teaching methods

A teaching method is a predetermined (intended) process or a way of acting out (teaching) a specific method. This includes activities by the teacher for achieving the desired lesson objectives. You can use the following methods:

- The cognitive teaching approach: The teacher presents the topic, for example, poverty, in a structured, intended and organised manner and the learners listen passively and consume the content. The teacher informs, tells, shows, asks and corrects when presenting the lesson. As EMS student teachers, you will probably use this approach when you are teaching the subject because it is a teacher-centred approach.

- The affective teaching approach: The teacher may use this approach as a discovering of new knowledge and skills (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2011:176), for example, by giving the Grade 8s a research project, entitled ‘Doing a SWOT analysis of local retail business’. The groups can employ interviews, observations and surveys to collect data for the project. The teacher plans lessons for learners to explore, experience, and observe a real-life situation because it is a teacher-centred approach.

- The psychological approach: The teacher presents the topic in a structured, intended and organised manner and the learners are actively involved in the topic and demonstrate specific skills, for example, the teacher teaches the topic ‘How to determine the market equilibrium price of a consumer good’. After presenting the lesson, Grade 9 learners complete an activity from the textbook. They must use the information provided in the tables to draw the market price.

5.2.2 Teaching strategies

Teaching strategies are methods of instruction to help learners learn the intended lesson content and be able to develop achievable goals in the future. When teaching the EMS curriculum, the teacher follows the CAPS document according to his/her own teaching plan. For example, to implement a teaching strategy on the topic ‘Market Equilibrium’ as prescribed in CAPS, you could first explain how to use the information presented in a table of market supply and demand and then draw a graph for this type of market structure. You will use this strategy most when teaching the subject because you will want to empower your learners with problem solving, collaboration and practical presentation skills. Let us pretend you decide to teach the lesson topic ‘National Budget on economic growth and redressing of economic inequalities’. You decide to plan for a week (four periods per week) on this topic. After your lesson presentation, learners will be placed in small groups to complete a research project. You decided beforehand to use the small group work method as a learner-centred
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approach. Relevant learning materials such as the Minister of Finance’s budget speech (video recording shown in class), newspaper articles and EMS textbook will be provided for this research project. This lesson is structured for in-class activities as well as for homework. Small groups will use the information provided as well as perform Internet searches on the topic after school hours. This teaching strategy will get learners collectively involved and sharing ideas and information in their project. Group members must take collective ownership of their learning. After a week, groups will present their findings to the rest of the groups for comments and assessment.

5.2.3 Teaching techniques

A teaching technique is a specific way in which the teacher approaches his/her lesson based on what and how activities are planned and implemented in the lesson. A technique is based on how a method or strategy works, for example, how to apply the large class method in your class.

There are two specific tools the teacher can consider, namely:

- **Mind mapping** which is a visual display of ideas connected to a main concept. This technique uses a diagram that connects ideas around a central concept, an idea map. The technique assists in arranging concepts or information to be understood, explored, and in creating new ideas. Figure 5.1 is an illustration of a mind map. In this example, the theme of Entrepreneurship and the lesson topic of the business plan is illustrated. The Grade 9 class is provided with this topic as in the diagram.

![Figure 5.1 Illustration of a mind mapping technique using EMS topics from CAPS](image)
The EMS teacher plans the topic ‘Starting a car wash business’ using the EMS syllabus objective of developing a business plan. The Grade 9 learners are instructed to use mind maps to illustrate their business plans to the rest of the class.

- **Brainstorming** is a technique for thinking, sharing and creating of new ideas to solve a problem. This technique is a learner-centred approach to thinking and creating new ideas to solve a particular problem, either by working individually or in groups. The class can think, discuss an idea, share and decide on the best possible solution for the problem. For example, in a Grade 8 class learners might decide to group themselves and interact about a specific task. The groups are provided with a topic from the EMS syllabus such as ‘The role trade unions play in relation to the South African economy’. Groups can read the learning material provided or they can download some material from the Internet. They can search for content, share ideas, decide on the best outcome and on how they will present their views on the topic.

Before you continue with the next section, complete the activity below.

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**Activity 5.1**

Read the case study, then answer the following questions:

1. Explain in your own words the concept of a teacher-centred approach.
2. According to the case study at the beginning of the chapter, Dolly as a beginner EMS teacher is facing a dilemma regarding the planning and implementing of the appropriate teacher-centred method in teaching her subject. What suggestions could you formulate to help Dolly select the most appropriate teacher-centred approach in teaching her subject?

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Next we will suggest ways to select appropriate teaching methods for your EMS lessons.

### 5.3 Selecting appropriate teaching methods for your EMS lessons

There is a wide range of teaching methods available, but this does not mean that you have to master and use all of them. It is important for you to assess your own strengths and to constantly seek out ways to add to and refine your teaching methods, but remember that it is the teacher’s prerogative to decide which approach is best suited to teaching a specific EMS topic.
5.3.1 Teaching methods appropriate for the teacher-centred approach

The following methods are suitable for a teacher-centred approach to teaching:

- Direct instruction method
- Whole class discussion
- Teaching large classes as a method
- Question and answer method
- Textbook method
- Economic cartoons as a method.

5.3.1.1 Direct instruction

Direct instruction is a teaching method in which the teacher takes the dominant position during the presentation of the lesson and learners only listen, with the exception of responding to questions asked by the teacher. The teacher presents the curriculum content to learners through a lecture or demonstration and in that way directs the learning process.

For example, the Grade 9 term two topic of Price theory is ideal for using the lecture method when introducing new concepts such as demand and supply and the graphic illustrations thereof.

A benefit of direct instruction is that it is useful for teaching a body of content with well-defined concepts or skills. There is a high degree of teacher direction and control of learning environment and there can be effective time management. Teachers can find ways to involve learners more and this will improve their confidence. Learners will, however, be mostly passive in this type of lesson because of the way it is structured. In most classrooms, direct instruction is used in conjunction with other strategies, and the challenge for most teachers is to get a balance between the different strategies.

5.3.1.2 Whole class discussion

This is a planned, systematic conversation between the teacher and learners. It is a discussion in which information is shared. It involves communication between learners and is influenced by how they respond to each other. This method is useful when the teacher wants to reflect on a particular lesson or particular economic issue and is an excellent way of making learners think. The challenge is in how to engage the whole class in the discussion. The best way to engage learners in a whole class discussion is to post properly prepared high-order thinking questions. If this method is not properly planned and structured by the teacher, it can be difficult to engage the whole class. A benefit of whole class discussion is that learners are free to voice their opinions on a particular issue and the issue can be dealt with in detail. A negative of this strategy is that your more verbally outspoken students can dominate the discussion,
which may lead to some learners not participating. The discussion can also get out of hand if controversial and emotional issues are dealt with and there are opposing views, for example, affirmative action. This method depends on the teacher having thorough subject knowledge.

5.3.1.3 Teaching large classes

The numbers of learners per classroom is a great concern to most teachers. If the class size (learners–teacher ratio) is big, then it will be a challenge for the teacher to be effective unless the teacher has the necessary classroom management skills. Teachers with large classes face specific challenges. Some teachers give up their teaching career simply because they feel they do not have the necessary classroom management skills to teach these classes effectively. The perception of most teachers is that the smaller the classes, the more effectively they will teach and the better learners will learn. The Center for Teaching Excellence, University of Maryland (2008) conducted research on large classes. The results revealed that class size does not automatically correlate with student learning. The main finding of this research study indicated that teacher competences played a major role in determine the quality of the teaching and learning and not per se class size.

Teachers can overcome the challenges of teaching large classes by, following the suggestions of Jacobs, Vakalisa, and Gawe (2011:204), UNESCO (2006) and of the University of Maryland (2005). Teachers need to plan and set clear objectives for their classes. In order to do so, they need to create a learning friendly classroom environment specifically for large classes. Teachers must take cognisance of the following aspects before they start teaching large classes:

- **Classroom environment:** The layout and size of the classroom as well as the learning environment where teaching and learning will take place is of utmost importance.
- **Plan, organise the physical structure of the classroom:** Plan to organise the physical environment. Learner desks and teacher seating should be placed in a way that accommodates the large class before teaching starts, otherwise it may interfere with the teacher’s movement during the lesson.
- **Plan, prepare and present lessons:** Well-planned lessons will ultimately help in how to teach large classes effectively.
- **Decide on appropriate teaching approaches and methods:** In large classes, teachers can use a combination of different teaching methods. Teachers who teach large classes must assess learners frequently to establish whether learners have obtained the desired knowledge and skills.
- **Plan and design applicable assessment tools:** Teachers need to plan well in advance and provide assignments, tasks, tests and examinations.
• Give timeous constructive feedback on tasks or assignments: Teachers must provide constructive feedback about completed assignments, tasks and tests to learners, parents and to the school management team. It is very important to reflect on teaching large classes and make the necessary adjustments to future lessons.

The following strategies can be applied to ensure that effective teaching in large classes is maintained:

• Establish a basic set of rules for large class discipline and control. Before you start teaching, set specific rules and regulations for your class at the beginning of the year. Do not come up with these rules on your own, let the class decide and agree collectively. Let it be the class who determine the rules and regulations that will direct them regarding procedures and expectations for acceptable behaviour.

• Set clear expectations for your class. At the beginning of the lesson set specific expectations about what you expect from the class regarding tasks and assignments.

• Reflect from time to time on large class rules and expectations. If you realise that certain rules are not working, set aside time for your class to reflect on the rules and expectations.

• Provide the parents with a copy of the large class rules. After you and the class have agreed on the rules, regulations and expectations by signing it as a contractual agreement, provide the principal, senior management team, school governing body and parents with a copy of the rules.

• It is a good practice to remind your class from time to time about the rules and your expectations. (Jacobs, Vakalisa, & Gawe, 2011:178; Killen, 2009:102).

5.3.1.4 Question and answer method

This is the most frequently used method and every teacher is expected to master it. The teacher needs to develop the ability to ask questions that arouse learner attention and to deal appropriately with the answers of learners. There are two categories of questions:

• Reproductive questions. The emphasis is on memorisation, on the accurate reproduction of what has been said. These questions require little intellectual activity, are characteristic of traditional teaching and are indispensable in the sense that they form a basis for productive questions, for example, list five items known as invisible exports.

• Productive questions. These questions require thought and present a challenge to learners. They should be able to apply knowledge, analyse material and make decisions. During the school year they provide teachers with a unique assessment instrument. For example, explain why a lack of productivity is a contributory cause of inflation.
Questions have certain functions when asked during the course of a lesson:

- During the actualisation of existing knowledge. Here the teacher establishes the level of the learner’s knowledge and understanding, which depends on their familiarity with the subject matter. The questions asked during this phase partly determine the further development of the lesson. Existing knowledge is arranged and put into perspective by these questions. In other words, the questions serve as links with familiar work.
- During the statement of the problem. The questions should generate interest in the new theme, especially since they will reveal gaps in the learners’ knowledge. Identifying with a problem is the largest single factor in the successful presentation of a lesson.
- During the exposition of new subject matter. The purpose of questions is to stimulate thought, encourage participation, retain interest, discover misconceptions and recapture the attention of inattentive learners. It encourages learners to become active partners in the discovery of knowledge.
- When checking the absorption of new subject matter. The main points are accentuated and learners are given the opportunity to prove that they have mastered the subject matter. This makes error analysis more profound; in fact it approaches remedial teaching. Learners are stimulated to further thought (Jacobs, Vakalisa, & Gawe, 2011:198; Killen, 2009:126).

**Stop and reflect**

Do you make use of Bloom’s taxonomy to ensure that you ask reflective questions? It is very important to prepare questions in advance of the lesson so that a variety of cognitive level questions are used.

Asking questions that provoke thought and challenge learners to respond is an important teaching tool. Successful questioning should meet the following criteria:

- Is the question necessary? Beware of asking too many rhetorical questions.
- The formulation of questions should be unambiguous and grammatically correct.
- Questions should be meaningful, relevant and relate to the subject context.
- Questions should be suited to the level at which learners are working.
- Questions should be formulated to test not only knowledge, but also understanding and application. Questions that require only a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer are therefore not appropriate.
- The teacher’s primary function is that of facilitator and helper, not that of an inquisitor.
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5.3.1.5 The textbook method

The textbook undoubtedly remains one of the most important aids in the classroom. It offers a measure of security to both learners and teachers, especially inexperienced teachers. This explains why the choice of a textbook is so important.

One of the greatest mistakes you can make is to create the false impression that the prescribed textbook contains all that needs to be known about the subject. The characteristic structure of EMS is disregarded if learners are not introduced to other sources as well and if they are taught to memorise instead of to reason. The textbook can therefore never replace the teacher. In fact, it is the learner’s textbook, not the teacher’s. In preparing the lesson, the teacher should analyse the theme and determine which of the variations discussed below will produce the best results. Strictly speaking, each variation has its place in the presentation of material, but it should be used with discretion.

- The teacher reads from the textbook. During the discussion of a theme the teacher can read short sections from the textbook or ask one of the learners to do so. This draws the learners’ attention to certain aspects of the subject matter and can be of great value. In contrast, the unprepared or badly equipped teacher may read through the textbook page after page, making only sporadic comments. This would not motivate the learners to either concentrate or think. After all, they are able to read for themselves!

- The teacher discusses the contents and the learners study the textbook at home. This involves a conscientious and systematic study of successive themes as arranged in the textbook. Themes are studied in isolation, and with little reference to work completed, there is no overall or total view of the subject matter. Supplementary sources are seldom used. Learners are expected to study the textbook at home, and they are tested in the next period where the teacher asks questions, usually at lower cognitive level. Years later these unfortunate learners will remember EMS as a mere body of dry facts. Although this method may produce good examination results, it disregards the characteristic structure of EMS.

Activity 5.2

The constant load shedding introduced by ESCOM in 2015 has seen a rise in the demand for and supply of generators and other sources of power.

1. Explain the concepts of demand and supply.
2. What in your opinion propelled the rapid demand for other sources of power?
3. Differentiate between the law of demand and the law of supply.
4. Illustrate with a graph the rise in the supply of generators.
• Learners have to study the textbook beforehand. Learners are instructed to study certain sections of the subject matter beforehand. The teacher tests their knowledge and then supplements it where necessary. This is a variation on the previous method, but requires more independent activity.

• The teacher explains the subject matter and provides a blackboard scheme. The scheme unfolds in the course of a well-structured exposition by the teacher. At the end of the lesson, the teacher can refer back to the scheme to emphasise certain points or to determine whether the learners understand the work. The learners then copy the scheme and answer questions based on data obtained from both the textbook and supplementary sources.

• A combined method. The teacher presents the subject matter, points out interrelationships where necessary and gives learners the opportunity to copy the backboard scheme and then to summarise the work. This is followed by a class discussion in which all the learners are expected to participate. The class can also be divided into smaller groups, each with a leader who has to report back. Greater emphasis is placed on learners’ activities. The ultimate aim is to give learners the opportunity to use their knowledge of the subject matter to solve problems. Learners should be taught to read the textbook critically, for instance, by asking themselves the following questions: ‘How does the author distinguish between main issues and side issues?’, ‘Does the heading of the chapter or paragraph relate to the contents?’, ‘What is the central idea in each paragraph?’ ‘Do paragraphs follow each other logically?’

The textbook method has the following advantages:
• The textbook serves as a link with other authoritative sources that may supplement the work done in class.
• It offers the teacher a point of departure, providing a framework of the prescribed syllabus and shows learners what ready knowledge they should possess. If used correctly, the textbook consolidates knowledge rather than serving as a source of new knowledge.
• It provides a basis for assignments and discussions.
• It shows learners what progress they have made with the syllabus. The textbook is also a very useful source for revision.
• It enables learners to study beforehand at their own discretion. They may also find the bibliography in the textbook very useful for an in-depth study of certain themes, because no textbook deals equally well with all the various themes.

The textbook has the following disadvantages:
• Learners are limited to one textbook per learner for EMS, as prescribed by the education authorities.
• The use of one prescribed textbook can lead to content-driven instruction which concentrates on subject content and limits critical thinking processes.
• The concentration in textbooks on subject content and subject knowledge may lead to the exclusion of the values and attitudes that are needed in a learner-centred approach.
• The use of the textbook encourages rote learning whereas teachers are expected to move to an approach where learners must understand and apply knowledge.
• The use of the textbook can discourage new ways of teaching and thinking.

5.3.1.6 Using economic cartoons as teaching method

Economics cartoons are drawings or pictures of contemporary issues or topics, for example, unemployment or poverty. Teachers can use economic cartoons as effective and excellent teaching tools, creating a constructive classroom environment in which to achieve lesson objectives (Sever & Ungar, 1997:89; Van Wyk, 2011:125). This teaching strategy promotes enjoyable learning, enhances critical thinking, directs attention and arouses interest in learners for the subject. Economic cartoons in the form of comic strips are another teaching source that introduce learners to the contemporary world. Economic cartoons stimulate students to learn, and being exposed to the type of humour exhibited in cartoons enhances their interest in the topic. You must therefore carefully select and use appropriate and relevant economic cartoons for the lesson. There must be a purpose for choosing a specific cartoon (Lochrie, 1992:9).

The following steps are proposed for the introduction of cartoons in teaching your subject (Van Wyk, 2011:130):
• Plan specific objectives for using economic cartoons. The objective for using the cartoon for a specific topic could either be to promote critical thinking or class discussions on contemporary economic issues.
• Analyse the specific cartoon by applying different formats or structures such as linear or circle flowchart diagrams or mind maps to accommodate student learning styles.
• Use graphic organisers to help students analyse the context and/or the message being conveyed in economic cartoon.
• Ask students to create their own drawings and interpretations of an economic event such as a budget. This helps to inform context and evolve understanding.
• Use quotes, either from newspapers or quotes of economic magazines, to supplement the cartoon.
• Use cartoons to initiate class discussions, drama, role playing, simulations, dialogue, debate, journal and essay writing.
• Be prepared to facilitate discussions that may lend themselves to debate. Try not to convey your own opinions. Strive for the neutrality of the facilitator.
• Implement your assessment strategy or tool to see if the learners have achieved the objectives of the lesson.
• Debrief learners after working with the cartoon.

The use of economic cartoons has the following advantages:
• It can depict real-life situations and events in graphic form.
• Learners can freely discuss and analyse the cartoon and come up with possible solutions.
• In EMS, cartoons can be used to explain concepts to slower learners.
• Cartoons can enable learners to apply their knowledge.
• Cartoons are often used in different forms of assessments to challenge the cognitive levels of learners.

The use of economic cartoons has the following disadvantages:
• A common disadvantage of using old economic cartoons in South Africa is stereotyping.
• Sometimes cartoons are used that do not correspond to the prescribed content.
• Cartoons can be prescriptive around model answers.
• Cartoons do not give learners free scope to use their imaginations.
• The overuse of cartoons in EMS can dampen learners’ enthusiasm.

Before you continue with the next section, complete the following activity.

Activity 5.3
1. What is a cartoon? Why should you use economic cartoons as a teaching method in your lessons?
2. Give three advantages to using economic cartoons as a teaching method in your EMS lessons.
3. The article features some economic cartoons. Do Internet research and download two new economic cartoons that could be used for the topic of inflation. Prepare a lesson around the cartoons. Remember that some cartoons are copyrighted and you need to check whether they can be used in your classrooms.

Teaching hint
The use of articles, cartoons and comic strips raises two problems:
• First, you are using other people’s intellectual property, which should be acknowledged.
• Second, it is possible to select only material and cartoons that reflect your own personal viewpoints and biases.
Do you make sure your EMS lessons present a variety of viewpoints and encourage learners to think for themselves?
Where do you stand on topics such as gender discrimination?
5.4 Generally accepted elements of a good teaching and learning experience in EMS

You need to give special attention to learners’ speaking, reading and writing skills in order to ensure that some learners are not disadvantaged, for example, as a result of language-use or the type of activity developed in the learner- or teacher-centred approach. An effective teaching and learning experience (lesson) in EMS should therefore provide carefully considered and meaningful opportunities for learners to read, speak, write and reflect on their learning. Each of these aspects is discussed below.

5.4.1 How to promote reading on a specific topic in an EMS lesson

Achieving success in EMS depends not only on subject knowledge, but also on having a decent vocabulary and being able to communicate in the classroom. One of the primary tasks of any teacher is to create opportunities for learners to read. EMS is a subject with content that presents complex and contextually rich situations for learners to develop their reading skills. Reading can also be a great way to improve a learner’s EMS vocabulary. For example, a case study could be planned as motivational tool to peak learners’ attention and provide ample time for them to read and come up with solutions to complex scenarios and situations. A scenario to promote reading skills is depicted in the case study that follows.

**CASE STUDY: A CLASS TRIP TO ROBBEN ISLAND**

The EMS class undertook a trip by boat to Robben Island. After landing on the island, a heavy storm prevented them from returning on the same day and to make matters worse, a power outage by Eskom cut the communication network off from the rest of South Africa. To keep learners busy, they were encouraged to read the history of the island, making notes about it and summarising the main points. The learner coming up with the best piece of writing would be awarded a prize. After staying over on Robben Island, the weather conditions improved enough for the class to return and according to them it was an experience they would not easily forget!

5.4.2 How to promote speaking (communicating) in an EMS lesson

In the EMS classroom, teachers must be aware of obstacles in communication that can hamper learning and teaching. The learner receiving a message might not understand the message or concept because of a language barrier. Most South African schools have multilingual classrooms where students have a variety of home languages, but are taught in either English or Afrikaans. Communication skills may differ in the same class and you must be prepared for such
a scenario. The debate is the ideal teaching method to improve learners’ communication skills. Economic issues of the day can be explored using debates.

Using the Robben Island case study, learners had to come up with new ways to communicate. The isolation of the group from the outside world meant that they were forced to communicate or speak to each other. This scenario promoted communication skills.

5.4.3 Reflecting on learning

You should develop learning experiences that support reflection. In other words, you should structure your lessons carefully and provide enough time for learners to be able to reflect on what has been learned. In addition, you yourself need to reflect on your own classroom practices, as this is will help to improve your teaching. Only by reflecting on his/her own practices in the classroom, can a teacher improve his/her teaching. It is educationally sound practice to reflect on whether learning has actually taken place by assessing the learners on what has been conveyed to them.

How can reflection be done in the EMS classroom? Using the Robben Island case study the teacher can allow the learners to reflect on their experiences. They can first reflect on the different reading and communication activities on the island. Second, they can make sense of what had happened. Last, they can share each other’s ideas on their experience on the island. Reflection of the whole experience will allow the teacher and learners to expand their knowledge. It may not be possible to achieve every element in every lesson, but these are useful yardsticks to measure the success of different approaches that you have applied in EMS.

Conclusion

In this chapter different types of teacher-centred methods were discussed. Furthermore, generally accepted elements of a good teaching and learning experience in EMS were explained. The chapter aimed at helping you to make informed decisions regarding an appropriate teaching method to teach EMS in your classroom. The following teacher-centred methods were discussed: direct instruction method, whole class discussion, teaching large classes as a method, question and answer method, textbook method and economic cartoons as a method. The EMS teacher has a variety of teacher-centred methods at his/her disposal and in EMS it is important for the personal development of learners that they are exposed to these different methods. Learners differ with regard to their background, needs, experiences, aspirations, physical and psychological traits. Teachers must provide learners with opportunities in the classroom to express themselves.
CHAPTER 5 Approaches to teaching EMS: The teacher-centred approach

Key concepts

**Brainstorming**: a technique for thinking, sharing and creating new ideas to solve a problem

**Direct instruction**: a teaching method where the teacher takes the dominant position during the presentation of the lesson and learners only listen, but in certain cases can respond to questions asked by the teacher

**Mind mapping**: creating a visual display of ideas connected to a main concept

**Teacher-centred approach**: when the planned lessons are presented in such a way that the teacher is in control of the teaching process and the learner remains a passive listener responding to instructions by the teacher

**Teaching method**: a planned, structured and procedural way of teaching with a specific plan in mind for reaching the intended goal

**Teaching strategies**: learning methods used to help learners learn the intended content and be able to develop achievable goals in the future

Questions

1. List and describe the different teaching approaches a teacher can use in his/her classroom.
2. Explain the strategies you can apply to ensure that effective teaching in large classes is achieved.
3. Compare the similarities and differences between the question and answer method and the textbook method as teaching approaches. Reflect on the educational value of each of these approaches in EMS.

References


**Further reading**


