
UNIT 4 ENHANCING LEARNING SKILLS

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

It is not uncommon to find some children who do not enjoy studies. They may have a lot of potential for learning but are not inspired to learn as they have no interest in it. Learning in the narrow sense may mean only passing examinations while in a wider perspective it would generate curiosity and a desire for knowledge in the learner. The responsibility of teachers and parents of elementary school children is hence to promote/strengthen this kind of learning and help children develop skills for achieving that purpose. In this unit, with the help of some cases, we have discussed ways to enhance learning.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- establish the relationship between academic performance and study habits;
- identify the elements conducive to good study habits;
- recognise which of the elements of study habits of a given learner need to be modified;

- motivate the learner to develop better learning skills;
- create an environment in the class/home in which the child will be helped to develop good study habits;
- encourage in the child the habits of observation, interpretation and verification of information; and
- help the child in assessing his/her study habits and to make appropriate modifications.

4.3 WHY DO CHILDREN FAIL TO PERFORM?

Let us consider some cases:

Asha's performance has deteriorated. She has many interests but is confused on how she can cope with her studies and other activities. Her parents are anxious. Mohan is not achieving well in academics. His parents insist that he is at his books most of the evening. Reena comes to class without her study materials; sometimes her pencil is missing or her books are not in her bag. Seema on the other hand is a consistent worker, organised with her material and generally up to date in her work. She enjoys reading and learning and is enthusiastic about activities and play. Except Seema, all others are not doing well at school due to different reasons. We can help their basic skills of organising themselves for studies, time management, skills of reading, memorizing and writing and observation and experimentation.

4.3.1 Attitude Towards Studies

Studying essentially requires a positive attitude towards school and learning. As we have already mentioned, there are some students who fail to get interested in school and some students who spend much time trying to avoid tasks related to studies. There could be many reasons for this. It's possible that education is not valued in the household; the child's environment is not stimulating enough; he is overworked at home; is ill/fatigued; is unable to understand lessons in class; is scared; has personal problems with the teacher or has a poor self-concept.



"Take me anywhere but school."

Rahul is a 10-year-old who does not like school. He complains of his teachers being boring and unfair. He fails to enjoy and reading. He makes excuses when asked to study. He complains, spends time worrying and hates to be told to study. Parents are away at work when he returns from school. Rahul is expected to cope with school work on his own. The home environment is not the one where studies are considered important. At school, he gets scolded and punished for lack of interest.

He needs to develop a liking for study and also a positive attitude. He needs to be explained that he has control over the situation and that he can modify his study habits in a number of ways that will be suitable as well as beneficial to him. Studying will cease to be a burden if he sees enjoyment in reading and learning. A positive and receptive attitude may be developed with some parental support. If the child is encouraged to try out ways in which he can learn, he may gradually develop a positive attitude which would take the sting out of learning. One of the ways in which this attitude can be fostered is by encouraging the reading habit about which we will speak in a later section.

Learning cannot take place if an individual does not see the need for it and has no desire to do it. This aspect needs to be tackled right at the beginning. This may require a patient understanding of the reasons why a student does not have a positive attitude to learning. This process may involve: (i) identifying people who can help in the process of developing a desirable attitude in the child, e.g., parents; (ii) making a list of activities the child likes doing and using these to generate curiosity in him to read, e.g., a child may be interested in motor cars. He may be given books on motorcars to read. He can then be asked to answer questions on various details. He can prepare a game on learning through words in class for the same topic. He may be asked to narrate.

Such exercises when tried with children help in generating a positive attitude towards learning and gradually he may develop an interest in his class work also.

Check Your Progress

Note: a) Write your answer in the space given below.

b) Compare your answer with those given at the end of the block.

1. How can you generate interest in arithmetic in a child?
 - a) Count the money given to him at the time of his birthday.
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)

4.4 TIME MANAGEMENT

Apart from having a positive attitude towards learning, another aspect that has a big influence is how we manage our time.

Studying, you would agree, at times demands focused attention and exclusion or postponing of other interesting activities due to time limits.

We spoke about Mohan who is a low achiever. His parents insist that he is at his books for most of the evening. His work is unsatisfactory. Obviously, Mohan's performance is not in accordance with the time he puts in. Like any other child, Mohan also needs play and entertainment but lacks the skill to manage his time. His parents are unable to see any reason for his poor performance. They feel that the length of time for which Mohan studies is quite sufficient for him to be good at his

studies. However, Mohan despite the time put in, is unable to finish his work. His poor performance has affected his motivation and interest and his attitude towards studies.

How do you think Mohan can be helped to prevent him from slipping into absolute inefficiency? You may perhaps like to ask Mohan to describe an activity in which he has been successful. It may not necessarily be related to study. It could be play-related, activity related or just related to some task accomplished in the home.

Mohan tells you that he likes giving a bath to his dog and is entrusted with this task as he can do it well. Ask him to make a note of the steps he went through to reach a current ability. Exactly, how did he get to be good in that task, you could help him apply to studying? He describes to you the exact steps or sub-tasks he does before the actual task. You notice that he has learnt to do certain tasks before he actually begins bathing the dog. He gets the bucket of water, soap, mug and a towel ready. This preparation he has learnt to do to save time and energy on the actual task. He recalls that on the first occasion before getting all the things ready and he started giving bath to his dog. When he went to fetch the soap the dog disappeared. He searched for it then repeated the process. He wasted both time and energy. He learnt that certain steps will save time and energy. Taking an example from this experience, Mohan can be guided to improve his study efficiency.

Ask him to find out why his friend Rahul gets a B grade and completes his studies in half an hour while Mohan also gets 'A' grade in the same task on which he has spent three hours. Rahul probably wastes little time on the task since he has his materials ready and has planned his work.

Making a time chart is a skill that we shall attempt to develop in this section. As we have seen one of the important attributes of a good learner is the ability to make good use of time. Mohan prepared his material before giving his dog a bath and he could complete his task well in less time. Organization of sub-tasks facilitates work. A child, however, is confronted with a number of tasks and may need to examine his/her priorities to be able to do it appropriately, schedule his/her time for optimal achievement. Time management is needed not only with regards to all the tasks to be performed but also for specific tasks, e.g., if Mohan has to learn 3 lessons of History he must organise his time in such a way that he is able to devote enough time for all. A time schedule, however, must not in any case be a hard task master. Mohan's parents presumed that since Mohan was at his books most of the time, he was necessarily studying.

This may not be true.

4.4.1 Making a Time Chart

The first step in learning to manage time more efficiently is to make a time chart which assesses the current use and waste of time. It is important to distinguish between fixed (something that is done everyday at the same time) and flexible (something that can be done at any time of the day) activities in terms of the amount of time as well as the time of the day at which they have to be taken care of. List some activities which may be called "**fixed activities**" for the child and some "**flexible activities**". Did you include school timings, personal hygiene chores for the fixed and play, recreation "the flexible?"

Now, let us get into the lesson. Make a list of the activities a child would normally do. You could ask some of your students to do the same. Now, arrange these flexible activities ranking them according to priority for that student.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Broadly allocate time for studies, play, recreation, etc. Study time must further be divided into the study of various school subjects. Some subjects need more time than others, also alternate between activities that require intensive attention and sitting in one place with those that allow movements and relaxation. There is another variation some children can learn faster and better than others. Rohit may be able to learn the same lesson in half an hour while Mohit may take time for warming up. Besides completing schoolwork, sometime should be allocated for pursuing hobbies, extra curricular activities and reading of storybooks.

Write the points you feel need changes in Mohit's study schedule?

.....

.....

Now, let us look into the time schedule. Is there any wasted time? Is there enough time to complete studying? Does the schedule reflect Mohit's priorities? Does the schedule suggest too many activities at once?

4.4.2 The Typical 'Prime Time'

We all are probably aware that there are times of maximum alertness which may vary from person to person. Learning may be easy for Seema in the evening, and for Rohit he may best learn in the morning. It would then be advisable that Seema tackles the most difficult learning task in the evening while Rohit may do the same task in the morning. This may suggest to Rohit that he cannot learn in the evening. This is not true. No time schedule should be treated as shackles to one's needs. Most of these are conditioned habits and not genetic. It should be also pointed out that these habits get formed due to environment, e.g. silence/less disturbance in the home in morning or evening, and so on.

4.4.3 Breaks/Rest-intervals are Valuable

Here the main question is: what is a break or rest-interval? It is nothing but time period(s) for breaking the monotony. It could be a rest or relaxation time or change of work, just getting up for a little stroll or any other activities a child feels as play.

Working effectively involves the breaks without feeling guilty and rewards for productive work. List out activities which you can give during a break, after a span of learning, which children would enjoy. Do you think children will look forward to a learning session after such a break?

Well, a break may not always be possible in the school or at home. Can a learning session itself be made exciting? Let us see. What are the different ways you may suggest to children to learn subjects, such as,

- History
- Geography
- Science
- English

Each subject may require a different approach.

When it is difficult to concentrate it may be best to put it off for a while. In school, a football match is on or in the neighbourhood, a music programme is going on. Seema feels that she would either see the match or hear the music for a while before sitting down to her work. It should be generally acceptable if it is not a habit to search for such exciting alternatives.

Indeed, the key to effective time management is organization, i.e., planning and arranging the coherent whole. As we have seen, Kamla comes to school either without her books or pencil, paper, etc., if we peep through her window at home, we see a disorganized and untidy room.

Let us now consider what Seema's room is like:

What are the possible differences you could find in Seema's and Kamala's rooms:

Kamla	Seema
1. The study is disorganized	1. The study table is organised
2. Books are scattered all around	2. Books are in order
3.	3.
4.	4.

4.5 SKILLS OF READING

Reading is perhaps the most vital single activity associated with learning. While sometimes we may read primarily for pleasure, and at other times, primarily for learning. There is one real contradiction in their two connotations. Learning can and should be fun. In the context of reading skills as a study skill, we would be helped if we could focus our attention on the reading style. This reading style will differ depending on the purpose for which we are reading.

When Mona reads a mystery book, her purpose could be to get a gist of the story time. However, when her teacher asks her to read a chapter from a geography book on "The Earth and Its Movements", she may pay more attention to certain critical details. In adult life, we ultimately need the skill of being able to pick up and understand important details. This may involve developing the skill of reading not necessarily the words or even individual sentences, but whole paragraphs or even more. There may of course be certain kinds of situations in adult life where we do pay attention to most details in a given reading not necessarily the words or even individual sentences, but whole paragraphs or even more.

In the primary school, however, children are usually encouraged to pay attention to every word because each sentence brings new information that has to be processed and organised. Even in childhood, however, there are occasions when a child may speed read without reading every single part, e.g., comic books, where there is a supplementary pictorial materials.



What we need to remember is that study is always purposive.

What does an explorer do before going on an expedition? He obviously gets a general idea of what the journey is most likely to be before he actually experiences the journey. Try this exercise in your class. Give your students to read that chapter and ask questions on it. Ask them the first question after about 5 minutes. What is this chapter about? You are likely to find only a few students who have skimmed through the chapter for general content to be able to answer your question. After 20 minutes, ask them detailed questions on the passage. Discuss with them the method they followed.

Reading is most effective when you know what you are looking for. When you don't know this, your mind has no indication as to how to organise the information it receives. You will not know which bits are important and which can safely be left out. There is nothing to fix your attention. Attention may be drawn to different aspects of the material depending on the purpose, e.g., if the purpose of reading a paragraph is to find out how many sentences there are in it or to find out how many words in the paragraph begin with the alphabet? It would be helpful while reading to pay attention only to these details.

What we perceive is bound to be selective. However, frequently we do not provide the focus of reading before we actually start studying that material. Here is a passage that we can use as an example. Meera and her brother lived in a village beyond the beyond the hillock.

Meera's father was a cobbler who went to nearby bus stop where he would sit by the roadside and mend shoes and slippers and earn a meager livelihood. Meera, looked after her little brother and took him to school with her. She also had to help her mother in the household chores.

Now, look at the questions that follow. What did Meera's father do for a living? Where did he go everyday? Where does Meera take her brother? You may perhaps have to look into the passage for answer. If you had known the questions before reading the passage, answering would be easier. These questions demand simple comprehension.

Now, if on the other hand, we wish to develop skills of seeing relationships, we could ask a different set of questions such as: who were the characters in the passage? Are the characters related to each other? What was the sequence of events? Yet another purpose of such an exercise may be to encourage imagination in the child. In that case, the kind of questions that would be asked would be of the following type:

Suppose Meera's father worked at the school instead of the bus stop, then what kind of customers would he have had? Thus, depending on the purpose for which the teacher would like the child to read, he/she could ask any of these different types of questions. Further, if these questions were made available to the children before the reading of the passage, their attention could be focused on relevant points.

4.5.1 General to Detailed

If you skim through a chapter before reading it in detail, you will gain some idea of what the chapter contains which will make you answer particular questions at every stage of your learning and it is an important part of the process. An effective way of reading to understand is to:

1. skim the passage for general content,
2. read the question, and
3. read the chapter in detail, looking for all the information that relates to the questions as you read.

4.5.2 Skimming is Important

Comprehension of the material being read improves when the reader gets a synoptic view of the text. The intricate details can be filled in the cognitive map or outline, a reader prepares for himself/herself through skimming. It is like taking a bird's eye view of the material to be read. Reading of subheadings, words in bold letters, seeing the figures helps in getting a general view. When a reader goes into the details at the outset, he/she may not be able to recognise the details as part of a total/whole.

Check Your Progress

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below

(b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the chapter.

2. Saanubh, a 12-year-old, likes table tennis for which he is taking coaching classes. He also likes to read storybooks. While he would like to pursue these interests, he is finding it difficult to schedule his study time. You ask him to list out all his activities so that you can help him in preparing his study schedule. The list he prepares is given below. You may write F for Flexible activities and I for inflexible activities:
 1. Attending school 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
 2. Seeing the video
 3. Practicing table tennis for an hour
 4. Playing friendly games
 5. Toilet routines
 6. Reading story books
 7. Visiting friends and relations
 8. Playing with the dog
 9. Having meals.
 10. Watching TV
 11. Doing homework
 12. Helping in household chores
 13. Personal tasks such as polishing shoes, packing the bag, etc.

2. Which of the following arrangement of activities do you think would provide a break in terms of type of activity. Give reasons:

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1. Mathematics | Games | English |
| 2. English | History | Geography |
| 3. Music | English | Maths |
| 4. Geography | Mathematics | English |
| 5. English | Mathematics | Break-Maths |
| 6. Hindi | English | Break-History |

4.5.3 Encouraging Reading

Encouraging children to read from as many sources as possible would be a useful habit for teachers to encourage. Interesting informative and challenging material can be found in the textbooks, magazines, encyclopaedias and a variety of other books. How can reading habits be encouraged?

This is what some teachers have done.

1. Asking different children on different days to read and share what they have read with the class (one or two children a day for a few minutes each).
2. Giving a hint about what a book is all about and thus arousing their curiosity.
3. Encouraging the use of library. At the elementary school level, it may be difficult for children to go and search in a big library and find the books they are looking for. Teachers can help by selecting several books, say twenty to twenty-two, that have information on the topic or project that the class is working on. These can be kept readily available in a box in the classroom itself.

Another aspect of using the books is to be able to find specific information in it from amongst all the other things it may talk about. Adults can show children how to use the content page and some times even the subject index page to locate what they are searching.

4. A few books selected on varied topics attractively and prominently displayed around the class is yet another way of encouraging children to read. The choice of books may depend on current interests of the children as well as topics that are studied. The books can be changed after couple of weeks.

When you plan an assignment on a topic in science next time, could you think of suggesting to children some books which they can look up? Some children may try doing the assignment from a particular source, others from yet another source. The use of magazines, pictures, material from encyclopaedias could be encouraged. When children use different sources to collect information, they may arrive at various methods of presentation. They also learn the use of new terms and see relevant pictures. Their learning would then become enriched and interesting.

4.5.4 Reading is an Active Process

Reading is a process which requires readers active participation. It involves the readers previous knowledge and thought processes. Reading involves the use of words (vocabulary), comprehending what the material is all about, pace at which such comprehension is possible. As discussed earlier, the process of reading involves skimming, looking for answers or specific details, interpreting or comprehending the meaning and satisfying the purpose for which the process was pursued. This process

involves understanding of the written material which must necessarily precede memorizing, if it is required.

Comprehension of any material varies with the reader's experiences, level of education and his/her socio-cultural background. These elements to a great degree are influenced by his/her vocabulary. Rich vocabulary enhances the pace at which a reader can read and makes comprehension easier. At the elementary level, the teacher can play a vital role in helping this to grow.

4.5.5 Developing Vocabulary

One of the major problems children face in reading is, as mentioned earlier, the weakness in vocabulary cannot only be enriched by learning the meanings of the difficult words selected randomly. It is more important to understand the meaning of new words in the context of their usage. If a child learns by sensing the meaning of the word in the context where it has been used, it will improve his/her comprehension. It will also help him/her to use the word to describe his/her own experiences.

Check Your Progress

- Note:** a) Write your answer in the space given below
b) Compare your answer with those given at the end of the block.

- 4 Suggest some methods by which you would help children to improve their vocabulary.

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4.5.6 Reading should Encourage Observation and Experimentation

We have seen that reading is a process where the reader aims at comprehending what the writer says. In the olden times when books were few, people relied more on their own power of observation and experimentation. While the skills of reading are valuable in the present day, it would also be worthwhile to encourage children in developing the skills of observation and experimentation.

In this section, we have spoken about various methods in which teaching and learning can be fun. In this context, we could add that the elementary school children may be encouraged to learn through observation of their environment, e.g., a visit to a zoo which may not only be a joyful experience but may teach the child a lot about animals through observation. Similarly, a visit to a park, a forest, an orchard may help the children to learn about flowers, trees and fruits. At home too, the child may experiment and observe. When a child sees a plant grow from a seed, it is a more valuable experience than mere reading. Reading must not inhibit such skills but should supplement and in a way arouse curiosity in the reader. This curiosity would encourage experimentation and observation which are basic methods of learning.

Check Your Progress

Notes: Compare your answer with those given at the end of the block.

5. Reading to learn or effective reading includes the following steps:
- Reading to enrich knowledge.
 - Getting familiarized with the questions relevant to the chapter.
 - Skimming through the lesson for general content.
 - Reading for details.
 - Reading to look for new words and their meanings.

The most efficient order is:

- 1,2,3,4,5
- 3,2,4,1,5
- 2,4,1,5,3
- 4,5,3,1,2

4.6 MEMORISING

This is another important learning skill. This itself involves a lot of organization. There are many factors involved in deciding how well a task will be memorized. The intensity of a stimulus, its distinctness, frequency and recency all affect retention and recall. The amount of attention, interest, motivation to remember, fatigue, understanding of the subject are other important factors affecting memory. Research has indicated that meaningful material is better retained than memory. Research has indicated that meaningful material is better retained than meaningless one; poems better than nonsense syllables, and stories better than figures in statistics. More effort also leads to better retention as does a pleasant emotion associated with the task.

It is very interesting to see how children remember stories, phone numbers, songs, TV serials but fail to remember their lessons. Let us take the example of Vikas who is a cricket fan. He likes the game and seems to recall when Sachin Tendulkar made a century and how Yuvraj Singh was bowled out. Yet, the scene in class is somewhat different. Vikas cannot remember facts from his history lessons. What skills/techniques do you think he uses to remember cricket related facts and figures? Which quality do you think is important for Vikas to develop to be able to memorize his lessons? Can you use the skills he uses to recall facts of the game to remember facts of History?



The intention to remember can do wonders with memory. We remember what we want to remember. The material intended for recall is generally carefully stored in memory and this facilitates its retrieval when needed. The desire to store facts hence makes understanding, organizing and grouping of facts easier. One who desires to learn follows, the fundamental process of Reading-Thinking-Integrating. This process necessarily suggests that memory devices are best structured by the learner, e.g., dates may be best remembered in chronological order, some memories are best helped by visual imagery, some by analogy, some by theories and the use of senses. Use this figure to see when you have used this trick to remember someone by associating one with another.

One of the most common mistakes that students make is to try to memorize material that is disorganized. Organization must be filled neatly to be asked for when needed. Let us take an example. Sportsmen are specialists of different games. How would you memorize the names of large number of sportsmen? You may classify them according to the different games they play such as basketball, badminton, tennis, football and the like.

You can ask students to classify flowers according to their colour or according to place where they have seen them, etc., animals, according to their family type, size, habits, etc. Classmates according to height, etc. They can then try to recall names by thinking of the category. We can use this to help us recall.

Here is a list of words. First, try to memorize the list in the given order. Then, organise the words into groups, you may find convenient. Try memorizing now, peanut, apple, orange, banana, red, walnut, green, blue, grapes, cashew, yellow, pineapple. Try classifying the items in the list to facilitate learning.

Which list of words was easier to remember? When we organise material into meaningful units, it's always easier to remember: we also learn faster what we experience through more than one sense organ, e.g., when a poem is recited aloud we are using our voice, eyes, and ears. It is common knowledge that a language is best learnt by staying in a place where it is spoken and used. Hearing the words spoken and use them facilitate learning.

Try this exercise in your class. Give to a group of students a verse from a poem to be learnt silently and after 10 minutes ask them to recite it.

Ask the same group to learn another verse by reciting aloud from their books. After ten minutes, ask them to recite it. Which verse was learnt better?

Writing and reciting use different senses to assist memory. Perhaps the slowest and least efficient way is merely to read it over and over again.

Memorizing (say of a passage) may be facilitated by the use of certain techniques which are as follow:

1. Repeated recitation – helps enhance learning than silent reading.
2. Whole vs. part learning – if the task to be learnt is long, then, its more effective to divide it into parts and learn followed by a revision as a whole.
3. Spaced and unspaced learning – Learning at one sitting though useful for emergency, is not as effective as spaced learning.
4. Cramming vs. logical memory – Material understood and memorized in meaningful units is always retained longer than that which is learnt through rote.
5. Organisation of knowledge – Information organised into related parts and subparts is retained longer
6. Poeming associations

Along with these techniques, what is equally important is a motivation to learn and a relaxed and rested mind.

Mark the methods which you feel are more effective as compared with others.

1. Reading it at spaced intervals
2. Keeping the write-up under the pillow
3. Reading it hundred times (but without comprehension)
4. Reading it aloud
5. Reading it with comprehension
6. Use of different senses (e.g., writing and reading)
7. Learning spellings of the words
8. Associate the meaning of that passage with some other passage a story one has previously learnt.

4.7 RECALL

Recall is essential for learning. Learning as we have seen follows three essential steps: understanding, memorizing (by organising material) and recalling or retrieving material when required.

There are some people who find this process easy. After understanding the material on they read, they use their skills of organising and storing material in their mind which makes it convenient for them to recall it. This process is very often easy when the learner finds the material purposeful or interesting. The same material may not be easy to store and recall by all persons. However, the skill to learn and recall may be developed in children at an early stage which would help them to deal with material of different types thereby facilitating their use through memorizing and recalling. Material once learnt, however, tends to be forgotten. Review of material learnt is vital for effective recall. Recall must follow this sequence-Reading a select portion to be learnt for approximately 15 minutes Rest for a short while (for a minute or two) checking of the text to see if any points have been missed out and making a note of them.

Recall next morning (that is at spaced intervals) and recall after a longer time.

4.8 WRITING SKILLS

In the school system, what a child learns or an information he/she has processed is measured by what the child writes. This writing comes through processing of learnt materials in the form of notes, diagrams, points, etc. What is done in the classroom teaching in the form of notes is often the crucial format of the material learnt. At the elementary level, this helps the child to focus his/her mind on the important points. In other words, the matter is organised to facilitate recall. While this is a useful method, it would be advisable to guide and help children to grasp the main content of a material by following the so called précis/concise/summary method.

After a passage is read, the children may express in their own words what they have read. At times, it may be only a sentence but it ensures that the child is learning to comprehend. If you read a story to your class, what are the type of questions which would help you to know that the child has comprehended that story? A very common question is what do you learn from this story?

There can be activities such as asking the children to write in three or four sentences the gist of the story. For some children perhaps, a drawing could be more expressive. You have in most likelihood asked children to write short paragraphs, essays, on topics which a child sees in his/her environment. Such an activity helps in assessing the way a child processes information and to what extent his/her writing skill is developed.

In terms of the writing skills, what would you look for in the child's work to be certain that their writing skills are well directed?

The elements of writing for a normal child constitute of vocabulary, i.e., correct usage of words, sentence structure, logical presentation and spelling. Of course, neatness and formation of letters is desirable for a good presentation.

4.8.1 Vocabulary

When we speak of developing reading habit, we mentioned the value of recognizing and using new words. We also speak about using words in this context. What would you consider more valuable in terms of vocabulary-use of long words or choosing the right word? Can you think of a classroom activity which can help children to put to use new words appropriately.

There is a tendency in younger learners to use new big words without really checking on their appropriateness. Let us see these sentences:

1. It was a large very shortly stalked, solitary flower.
2. It was a large single flower with a short stalk.

Which sentence do you think uses words correctly?

Very often, children experiment the use of new words they pick up. The usage may not be absolutely correct, but they can be guided into using the words correctly gradually instead of hampering their selection.

4.8.2 Sentence Structure

Writing skill necessarily includes the use of appropriate structures of sentences. The child must learn to structure his/her thoughts to be correctly understood. Too long or too short sentences may tend to lose their meaning and may have grammatical errors. This essentially comes from good practice.

Children, however, may be encouraged to read stories to help them appreciate good language usage.

Find out a few magazines, books which would be of use to children in developing good language and expression skills.

4.8.3 Logical Presentation of Facts

The art of good writing is not only in rich vocabulary, structured sentences but also in the logical presentation of facts. When we look at the simple process of answering a question, breaking up of the question into its component parts and then answering each part in the required sequence would ensure a logical answer. This is only possible when learning has followed the process of understanding and organising of material in the mind. Hence, any such writing necessarily provides for assessment both by the child and by the teacher. Such assessment provides for a feedback to the learner to work on improving on the skills which ensure effective learning.

4.8.4 Spellings

Much emphasis is laid on spellings at the elementary school stage specifically with the purpose that words are the basic tools for functioning in any language. Any handicap in language learning at usage may partially be because of poor spellings.

It is, however, advisable that undue emphasis on this element may hamper the growth of logic of thought processes. Learning of spellings however can be fun for an elementary school child. Let us see how Arun learnt spellings. Arun was weak in the use of 'e' and 'i' together. He would get confused when asked to spell words like believe, deceive, relief, etc. His teacher used a little phrase which he learnt. 'I' before 'E' except after 'C'. Whenever there is doubt, he would recite this. Could you identify common spelling errors in children and spell out the rule which they might remember?

4.9 STUDYING FOR EXAMINATIONS

So far in this Unit, we have attempted to look at learning and study skills in a broad perspective-learning for life related to knowledge for mastery of skills, rather than for a narrow objective of just getting through examinations with flying colours. It is important that a child be encouraged from the elementary stages to develop capabilities of analysis, understanding and decision-making which will be needed in almost any kind of work in adult life. The current examination system sometimes relies more on memorization and lays little emphasis in such integrative capabilities thereby putting the student on crossroads where his/her skills are limited as compared to the competencies required. On the other hand, a child who has developed basic study skills to enhance his/her thought processes will be able to do complicated work and cope with examinations as well. These skills include: organization, time management and effective memorizing techniques. In any case, in the elementary school years, examinations should not be once a year affair but competencies of children should be assessed at various times of the year so that competencies other than memorization also can be encouraged to develop. However, sometimes one may not be in a control of the situation. One may be in a school that goes by the routine memory based examination system. As an individual teacher, one can still emphasize the long, broader learning skills on a year round basis while guiding the children how to plan and study in an organised manner so as to effectively answer questions even in a traditional examination system.

4.10 LET US SUM UP

We have seen in this Unit that it is possible to enhance children's understanding at school by developing effective study habits. It is a matter of great concern for the school teacher to find children incapable of coping with school demands and achieving academic success. For identifying weaknesses and planning strategies and to overcome them, the teachers and parents participation is required. Effectiveness in the world of work to a large extent depends on work habits which would be initiated through effective study habits learnt at school.

4.11 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Select a passage of about 100 words suitable to the grade you teach. Develop few questions on the passage to include questions of simple comprehension, application questions, and questions which would elicit imagination. Suggest expected answers.
2. List out your activities, arrange them in the order of your priorities, mark out flexible and inflexible activities and prepare your daily schedule. See if it is working for 15 days. Make alterations, if needed.
3. Try out in your class the techniques of effective learning which we have discussed in this unit. (Hint: follow the sequence-skimming of the passage for general content, seeing the questions on the passage, reading in detail, answering the questions).

ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Unit 1

1.
 - i) Mary D'Silva: intelligence; attention; health; activity; parental education, economic status, and expectations; attitude to education; motivation to learn; and impairments.
 - ii) Maneesh: Personality; self-concept; parental attention; interest; parental education; peer-group/siblings; time spent on study; maturity and readiness.
 - iii) Kamla: Intelligence; home climate; parental education and their attitude to education; socio-economic status; birth position; readiness; activity; personality; impairments.
2.
 - (a) Physiological: genetic background, brain injury, biochemical imbalances, intake of toxic substances, oxygen deprivation, diseases, drug intoxication, malnutrition, congenital defects, impairments and handicap.
 - (b) Physiological: intelligence, personality, aptitude, interest, motivation, attention, self-concept, readiness, child-maturity.
 - (c) Socio-emotional: Family belongingness, child-rearing practices, facilities for play and study, birth position, parental expectations, disorganization and home climate, parental occupation, economic status and value systems.
 - (d) Educational: Adequacy of learning experiences, appropriateness of activity, repetition and review, continuous/spaced learning, complexity of the material and its meaningfulness, size of the class, and bilingualism.
3. The factors are: Attention, socio-emotional, health, parental attitude, birth position, economic background, attitude to education of the parents, readiness, and personality.

Unit 2

1. Learning is development that comes from effort and experience while maturation is the unfolding of characteristics potentially presenting the individual's genetic heritage and can be associated with the normal growth of individuals.
2. Learning is establishing association between stimulus and response.
3. In classical conditioning, the behaviour is elicited by stimulus while in operant conditioning, the behaviour is emitted by the organism. In the first case, reinforcement is a condition for behaviour while response is followed by reinforcement in the latter.
4. Generalization is a process in which one response caters to number of similar responses while discrimination tries to elicit situation/stimulus specific response. For example, small babies associate all women with their mother (generalization) in the beginning and later on, depending on the reinforcement, start differentiating mother with any other women (discrimination).
5. Positive, negative, punishment and extinction.
6. Attention, retention, motor reproduction and motivation
7. You can add number of behaviours to the list like dressing, punctuality. etc.
8. In signal learning, a particular response is expected of an individual interacts with similar stimulus response learning an individual given a response for expecting a specific reinforcement (refer to section 2.7)
9. You can give some examples of your choice (refer to section 2.7)

Unit 3

1. D
2. i) F; ii) T; iii) T
3. ii), iii)
4. a & c
5. i) iv), v) 11, 13, 17 & 19
6. B

Unit 4

1. To generate interest in arithmetic, you could give him similar response.
 - i) Count the money given to him/her at the time of his/her birthday.
 - ii) Let him/her plan how much he/she would spend on a particular thing or game.
 - iii) Let him/her go through the experience of buying something and encouraging him/her to calculate in terms of money.
 - iv) Allow him/her to keep scores for a game, etc.
2.

F – Flexible	I – Inflexible
i) Attending school 8 a.m. to 1: 30 p.m.	I
ii) Seeing the video	F
iii) Practicing Table Tennis for an hour	F
iv) Playing friendly game	F
v) Toilet routines	I
vi) Reading story books	F
vii) Visiting friends and relations	F
viii) Playing with the dog	F
ix) Having meals	I
x) Watching the TV	F
xi) Doing homework	I
xii) Helping in household chores	F
xiii) Personal tasks like polishing shoes, packing the bag, etc.	F
3. 1, 3, 5 & 6 provided appropriate breaks.
 - i) The activities are different in nature in arrangements 1, 3, 4.
 - ii) In arrangements 5,6 there are breaks scheduled which allow freshening up of the learner.
4.
 - i) Let the children identify the difficult words.
 - ii) Add to this list some words which you think are important
 - iii) Let the children infer the meaning from the text, i.e., they should sense the meaning.
 - iv) Help them to look into the dictionary when they cannot guess the meaning.
 - v) Help them to see the relevance of new words in the context of their experiences.
 - vi) Let them see the new words in the context of words they know by seeing them as synonyms and as having different kinds of meanings.
 - vii) Play vocabulary games in class.
5. C' is the most efficient order.