

**METHODS OF
TEACHING PRIMARY SCHOOL
SCIENCE**

DISCUSSION

Outline

- What is the Discussion Method?
- Role of the Teacher
- Role of the Student
- Advantages
- Disadvantages
- Guidelines for Effective Use

What is the Discussion Method?

- It is an activity in which learners talk together in order to share information about a topic or problem or to seek available evidence or solution to a problem
- It emphasizes a cooperative verbal exchange of ideas among the participants
- In a classroom situation discussion is often planned but sometimes it just occurs as the lesson progresses.
- It may occur for short periods during a lesson.
- Discussion is characterized by increased involvement and active participation of students

Role of the Teacher

- Poses the problem
- Reminds participants of the rules of conduct to be observed:
 - talking only when given the floor
 - listening when someone is talking
 - respecting other members point of view and guarding against arguments turning into personal conflicts
- Initiates interaction
- Directs and controls the discussion
- Gives a periodic summary but most of the time stays in the background

Role of the Student

- Observe the rules of conduct
- Talk with one another and shares information about a topic
- Suggest solutions
- Evaluate alternatives
- Draw conclusions or generalisations
- Think critically

Guidelines for Effective Use

- Topics must be familiar, interesting and affect the lives of the students
- Give students adequate time to prepare
- Prepare well

The teacher must be familiar with

- the content
- characteristics of the group
- the resources available to the students

Guidelines for Effective Use

- Serve as a moderator for the discussion

The moderator

- clarifies ideas
 - makes summaries
 - states conclusions
 - keeps the discussion on track
- Encourage many students to participate
 - Give a periodic summary, but most of the time stay at the back
 - Discourage any tendency by one or a few students to dominate the discussion

Advantages

- It provides an excellent opportunity for students to practise their oral communication skills
- It gives students practice in critical and evaluative thinking and listening
- Students learn readily from each other
- It provides good practice for problem solving
- It helps students clarify their thinking (ideas become clearer when they have to be expressed orally)

Advantages

- It gives training in the democratic process
- It provides problem solving skills
- Students can be directly involved in the instruction
- Good discussion can stimulate independent student work
- Ideas that run counter to accepted beliefs can be examined
- It presents feedback to the teacher

Disadvantages

- It does not easily lend itself to all types of subjects or topics
- It is difficult to achieve maximum interaction when the group is large
- Discussion are not good for learning facts
- It may give opportunities for the brighter students to show off
- When a discussion leader is weak the discussion can result in chaos

Disadvantages

- A few may dominate; some never participate
- Culture, age and background differences may hinder a discussion
- Students may present their ideas quickly with little preparation
- Students must have sufficient information of the topic to participate fully