

## Section 2

# Teaching and Learning

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# Teaching Methods

## and Approaches

A key feature of Transition Year should be the use of a wide range of teaching/learning methodologies and situations. The goals and objectives of the programme can best be achieved by placing particular

emphasis on:

- ✓ **Negotiated learning**
- ✓ **Personal responsibility in learning**
- ✓ **Activity-based learning**
- ✓ **Integration of appropriate areas of learning**
- ✓ **Team teaching approaches**
- ✓ **Group work: discussion, debate, interview, role play.**
- ✓ **Project work and research**
- ✓ **Visiting speakers and seminars**
- ✓ **Study visits and field trips**
  
- ✓ **Work experience, work simulation, community service.**

Educational activities undertaken should enable students to have valid and worthwhile learning experiences with emphasis given to developing study skills and self-directed learning.

# Approaches to Learning

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## PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN LEARNING

Helping students in Transition Year to come to a greater realisation that school work is for *them*, that homework is for *them*, not for their teacher, is an important part of their maturing.

Clarity about the *aim(s)* of a module is vital.

Can each student *put into words* these aims?

Is each student *clear* about the task in hand?

Research has shown that the more students in schools have a *responsibility* for some aspect of their learning environment the more likely they are to achieve their potential at a particular stage.

Trying to ensure that each Transition Year student has a '*post of responsibility*' in the school is a worthwhile goal.

Let the students brainstorm all the aspects of the school that *they* could help to improve and develop. Encourage the students to specify particular tasks in their 'Contract of Learning'.

Target-setting *realistic dates* for assignments by individual students and by groups needs to be done from the start of the year. However, *each student* will need regular opportunities to *report on progress* on the assignment: otherwise teachers will be unduly hassled at the last minute!

Appropriate use of the *journal* can help in developing the student's sense of responsibility for her/his own learning.

## MYSELF AS A LEARNER

During Transition Year, getting students to think about *thinking* and *learning* is crucial. The following is helpful both for this purpose and to enable a class to practise working together.

### Instructions

- 1 Each student completes the 8 sentences (below) in silence.
- 2 Move into groups of five.
- 3 Agree a leader and a writer.
- 4 The leader conducts a round robin on each of the sentences.

### Task

When you have thought about the following sentences, group in fives and agree on a writer who will prepare an acetate sheet on behalf of the group.

The acetate sheet should indicate the  
**FOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT  
ASPECTS OF LEARNING**

as experienced by the group members.

### Sentences

for reflection/response

- 1 I have found learning most enjoyable when...
- 2 The people/teachers I have learned best from have been...
- 3 I have failed to learn when...
- 4 People/Teachers I have failed to learn from have been...
- 5 I can learn on my own if...
- 6 My particular strengths as a learner are...
- 7 My most recent learning has focused on...
- 8 If I avoid learning it is usually because...

# Negotiated Learning

Negotiated learning means involving the learner in the initial decision about a particular course/module. It is NOT about a lowering of educational standards or the ignoring of the role of the teacher in designing and interpreting curriculum.

Negotiated learning presupposes an understanding by the teacher of the importance of *Experiential Learning*.

Experiential learning means the planning of learning from the life experiences of the student, and planning experiences from which learning may occur.

The student in a transition year programme will often have a wealth of experiences from home life, junior school realities, relationships within the home and outside, part-time jobs or summer work, and perhaps foreign travel. The student

may also have experienced significant success or/and failure in the narrower learning context of school.

Negotiated learning means taking seriously each student's reality.

The expectations the student may have of herself/himself largely resulting from the perceptions of parents and previous teachers are also relevant to negotiated learning.

Negotiating a Contract of Learning with students in Transition Year is essential to the 'development of their capacities for self-directed and open learning' that the "Guidelines" talk about.

## **1 Be clear yourself!**

What are your aims and objectives?

What SACK is involved?

(Skills, Attitudes, Concepts, Knowledge)

## **2 Do you know these young people?**

What is the basis of your 'knowledge'?

## **3 Agree learning rules/procedures.**

## **4 Agree aim(s) and time framework.**

Significant days?

'Highs' and 'lows'?

## **5 Agree assessment/record method.**

## **6 Agree Proximal goal(s).**

At the beginning of the term/module the teacher outlines the course, indicating the expectations (s)he has of the class or group: class procedures need to be made clear, the length of time involved and the kind of participation, learning and assessment that may follow.

The balance between the professional's expertise and the kind of democratic consultation involved in negotiating the learning is a delicate one if students have been unduly 'spoon fed' in the Junior Cycle.

The teacher's willingness to listen to students in a professional way is crucial.

( Insert School Heading here )

# Contract of Learning

Transition Year will help you make the transfer from Junior Cycle to Leaving Certificate.  
It offers you a unique opportunity to develop in a number of important areas:

Personal	To help you develop your personality and character towards a more positive and confident self-image.
Study/Work	To develop independent work and study habits appropriate to the Senior Cycle.
Career	To become familiar with workplaces outside school and possible career paths.
Social	To become more informed about society and more skilled at dealing with people.

This school has high expectations of you during Transition Year. Here we outline our requirements with regard to work and behaviour. Transition Year students are expected to contract to do the following:

- Actively participate in the opportunities offered throughout Transition Year.
- Develop work and study habits appropriate to the Senior Cycle.
- Establish positive and respectful relationships with fellow-students and teachers.
- Participate in classwork and complete homework and other assignments on time, to the required standard.
- Observe the rules and regulations of the School with regard to conduct, attendance, punctuality and uniform.
- Give of their time and energy to a special area of learning outside their routine responsibilities.

*Signing this contract is a mark of your commitment to the success of your Transition Year. From the staff's point of view it represents our commitment to treat Transition Year students as young adults participating in a course which we have planned with the goals of developing greater maturity, relevant skills and an orientation to the working world.*

## Contract

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
have read and understand the Contract of Learning.

I accept the conditions set out for Transition Year as reasonable and appropriate to Senior Cycle students. I will work and behave according to the requirements set out above. During my Transition Year I also undertake to pursue some special area(s) of work/study which particularly interest me.

My special area of work/study will be \_\_\_\_\_.

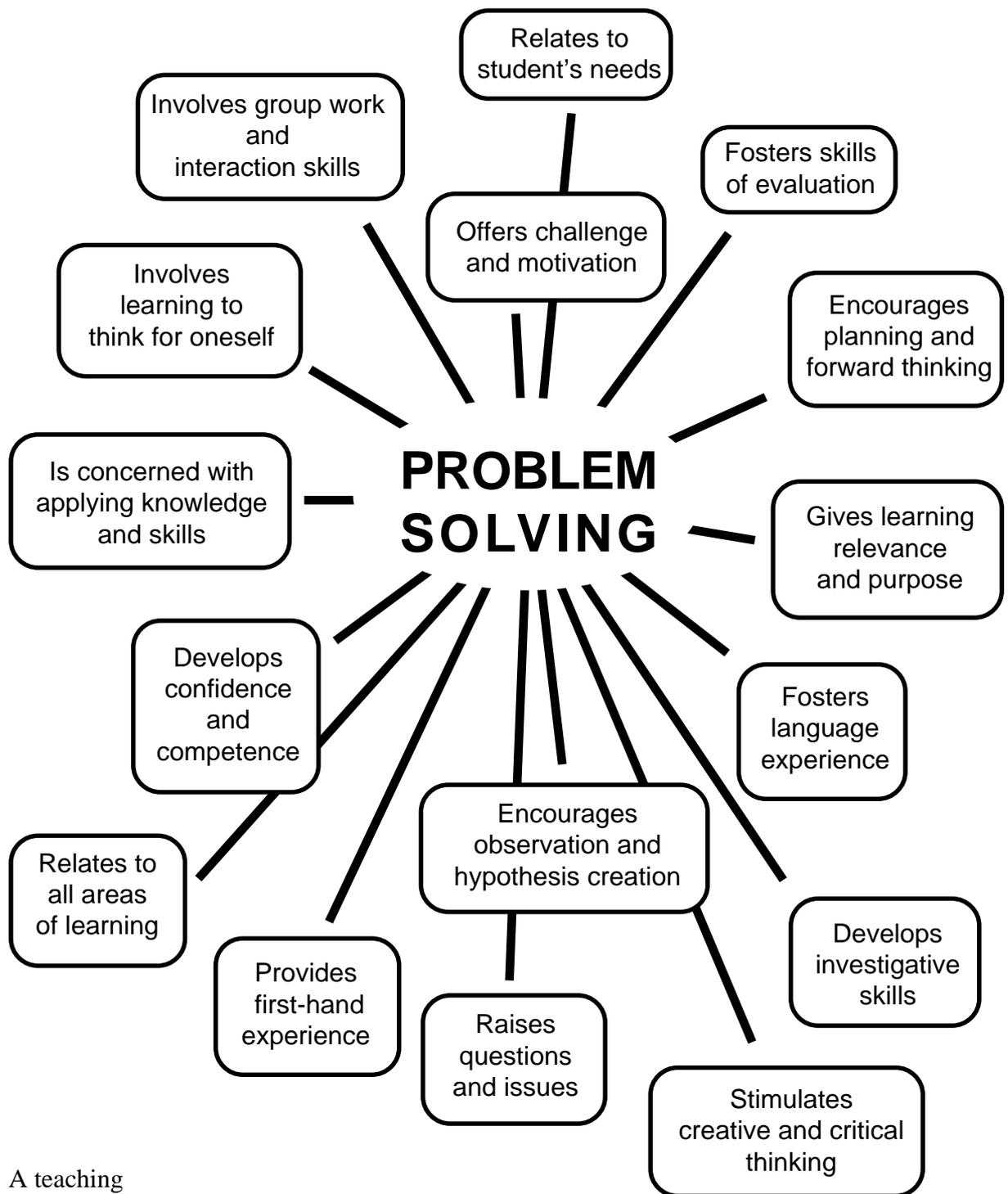
I take personal responsibility for researching and organising this activity on my own initiative.

*Signed* \_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
TYP Co-ordinator



A teaching and learning approach that includes **Problem Solving** can stimulate creative and critical thinking in young people.

Setting **Tasks** with students can offer challenge and help them fan their motivation.

Cultivating a questioning approach and keeping alive a sense of wonder is relevant to all areas of learning within Transition Year.

Where feasible, problem solving might involve Group Tasks so as to enable students to learn in a more social context than the traditional preparation for State examination courses allows. Relating a task to the school **Environment** can give students an experience of success and responsibility that is desirable in a civic sense too.

# Learning and Study

## Skills

At the beginning of Transition Year it is worthwhile helping students to reflect on their ability to learn and to organise their study.

One useful approach is to use a **SWOT** analysis as in the example on the next page. This can help teachers and guidance counsellors to organise learning approaches and homework methods early in the year.

Another approach could be to use a **Learning Strengths Checklist** (also included). This too will help students to reflect on aspects of their education and personal development; it will also help in setting **realistic goals** with regard to learning.

Some students may find it helpful to write on a card what **help** they want regarding their **learning methods** during Transition Year. Some teachers have found this most revealing! The findings will help design the learning methods that teachers will need to use with the students.

# My **S W O T** and I

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1 **S**trengths      My learning strengths are

---

---

2 **W**eaknesses      My learning / study weaknesses are

---

---

3 **O**pportunities      This year I have opportunities to

---

---

---

---

4 **T**asks      From now to \_\_\_\_\_ I have the following tasks:

---

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Now **tick** what best describes your present attitude to Transition Year:

Excited

Fearful

Looking Forward

Confident

# Learning Strengths

## CHECKLIST

When it comes to learning, everyone has strengths and weaknesses. This checklist will help you identify some of your learning strengths and also focus your attention on what you need to improve. The list is not exhaustive and there may be other strengths of your own which you may wish to add to it.

	Well		
<b>How do I do the following? (Tick.)</b>	Very	Some- times	Rarely
Make a decision to learn			
Concentrate on my work			
Cope with distractions			
Follow instructions			
Organise my learning time			
Find out how things work			
Mend or fix things which are broken			
Understand what I read			
Take notes			
Use a library			
Use a book to find some information			
Ask questions in class			
Make a summary of something I've read			
Write a composition			
Spell			
Use a dictionary			
Complete a project			
Carry out a field study			
_____			
_____			
_____			

From my responses to these questions, I can draw the following conclusions:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

# Group Work

Group work needs to be an important aspect of Transition Year for students. Not only can it be helpful in developing social skills but it *can be fun* and may also help to balance the 'solo-approach' of preparation for the State examinations.

Group work can also be a *waste of time*. Preparation is vital.

*Paired learning* is already well established in language learning, in home economics, in science and occasionally in other school subjects, so most Transition Year students will appreciate its use.

Paired learning can also be worthwhile in oral English, in creative learning games, in preparation for essays, tasks, assignments, in revision work - the possibilities are numerous. Allowing Transition Year students to choose their partner/paired learning friend is one approach though appropriate teacher-intervention will sometimes be necessary.

*Clear ground rules* need to be appreciated by the students before group work.

The students need to *know* why group work is being used: its purpose.

## GROUP DISCUSSION

Provided a Group is 'prepared', discussion can be of educational value. Being 'prepared' includes being clear on basic rules e.g. one speaker at a time; active listening to the speakers; a clear purpose in the discussion. The students' basis of knowledge exists: otherwise group discussion may well be an 'exchange of ignorances'.

Potential pitfalls that need to be handled if the students are to develop confidence and competence in discussion are:

## Why?

**Discussion**

- Clear ground rules/procedures
- One speaker !
- Listeners
- Topic Clear
- Begin with 'brainstorm'
- at least initially

**Role Play**

- A powerful, 'dangerous' tool
- Clear purpose
- Clear methodology
- Clear instructions for players
- (written, verbal)
- Clear questioning after role-play
- to 'debrief' appropriately

**Debates?**

**Paired Learning?**

**Interviews?**

- 1 A dominant student in the group.
- 2 Over dependence on the teacher.
- 3 A student who lacks the confidence to speak
- 4 Student relationships: perhaps out-of-class ones that may influence the group atmosphere.
- 5 A 'clown' or 'victim' in the group.
- 6 Not following the topic in the discussion.
- 7 Disagreement rather than reflective thinking.
- 8 A student using the discussion as a personal gripe session.
- 9 Lack of information re topic
- 10 The 'difficulty stater'.

# Project Work

Project work will be a worthwhile learning experience for teachers and students if:

- 1 Students are clear on the purpose of their project.
- 2 Students have the necessary skills to do their project, e.g. being able to find out facts or do research, often through reading; using a library; interviewing people; being able to verbalise questions clearly; being able to write clear paragraphs.
- 3 Students have realistic expectations regarding the task: this should become evident to themselves if they write a half-page about their proposed project.
- 4 Project work takes different forms - not necessarily written! *Oral presentations* of projects have much to recommend them, particularly since traditional examination courses do not encourage oral English skills.
- 5 See
  - (i) section on Assessment in this Resource Pack for helpful approaches to project assessment;
  - (ii) Junior Certificate Science notes for teachers sent to schools November 1993; pages 9-12 inclusive, are particularly useful in non-Science areas.

## Design Brief

### Clear Purpose

- a) Student's set of proposals
- b) Time span feasible?
- c) Personal resources
- d) Other sources

Note: Student needs to write half page on above.

### Elements of Methodology

- a) **Research Skills**
- b) **Individual, Paired, or Team learning**
- c) **Presentation**
  - Essay
  - Written report
  - Diagrams and notes
  - Video/Audio cassettes (or combination?)
  - Photography
  - Newspaper
  - Journal/Diary
  - Drama/Mime
  - Dance
  - Music
  - Sources used

# Classroom Visitors

Using classroom 'visitors' during Transition Year can be inexpensive, reasonably easy to organise and very helpful to individual and group motivation.

The 'visitor' at times will be part of a seminar linked to areas of work. The preparation - including the development of social skills and verbal competencies - and the follow-up are as important as the seminar/lecture/presentation itself.

Where possible, use of role-play, video or audio tape can help the students develop

confidence and social skills.

Planning is vital.

The 'visitor' can also be the school principal or any member of staff who is willing, and interested in supporting the Transition Year group's learning experience by visiting them.

Thus, for example, the 'visitor' might listen to a class presentation on project work, or a drama studied or presented simply in the classroom - the possibilities are endless.

Parents are often very happy to fulfil this role of 'visitor'.

## The Visitor

### as a Learning Tool

#### Learning takes place

<b>Before</b>	Through Preparation
<b>During</b>	Through Listening, Social Interaction, Affirmation of Students
<b>After</b>	Through Social Interaction Improved Verbal Skills

#### Evaluation of Visit:

#### How should students Record/Evaluate?

A method for the students to record and evaluate the visit should be worked out in advance. (See sample form in this pack.)

# Skills

Nobody is unskilled. People have different strengths and weaknesses. The concept of skills is best viewed not as an either/or matter in which one either possesses or does not possess a skill. Rather, it is preferable to think of oneself as possessing skills strengths and skills weaknesses or a mixture of the two. If one makes good choices in the skills area, this is a skills strength: if one makes poor choices, this is a skills weakness.

## Skills provide Options

The greater the range of skills a person possesses, the greater the range of alternatives available to her/him.

*“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day: teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”*

Chinese Proverb

A  
**SKILL**  
is the  
**ABILITY**  
to  
**PERFORM**  
a  
**TASK**  
in a  
**COMPETENT**  
manner,  
to be  
**PROFICIENT**  
in some  
**ACTIVITY.**

# Valued Skills

Group work for teachers  
to develop teaching and learning strategies

List six skills valued in schools.

	1	_____
	2	_____
	3	_____
	4	_____
	5	_____
	6	_____

List six skills valued in society.

	1	_____
	2	_____
	3	_____
	4	_____
	5	_____
	6	_____

Should the Transition Year Programme reflect the values of the school or the values of society at large?

	_____
	_____
	_____

What do you think should be the core skills of the Transition Year Programme?

	_____
	_____
	_____

# Stages of Skill Acquisition

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## Awareness

of a skill  
one lacks or may  
wish to improve



## Motivation

Realising there  
are potential gains  
sufficient to warrant the  
effort made to learn



## Analysis

of the components  
of the skill,  
of one's objectives  
in learning it, of  
possible teaching sources



## Practice

Selecting components  
to work on, deciding when,  
where and how to start,  
and actually 'doing' them



## Review

Getting feedback  
on performance if possible.  
Assessing progress oneself.  
Rewarding progress,  
correcting mistakes.  
**Repeat, or**



Work  
on next  
component



## Apply the Skill

Using the learning  
in real situations.  
Possibly teaching it  
to others.

# Teacher's Plan for Skills Development

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1 Awareness ➡ Identify the skills you wish to develop or improve in the student.

2 Plan

Problem Solving Technique ➡ Force Field Analysis

What are

(a) the Driving Forces      (b) the Resisting Forces

which relate to the development of this skill in the students?

	Driving Forces	Resisting Forces
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Write down at least five steps you might take to enhance the Driving Forces and to diminish the Resisting Forces.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Individual Teacher Planning for Teaching and Learning

## I would like to teach the following:

**Information** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Skills** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Attitudes** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

to (Identify group  
or individuals.) \_\_\_\_\_

by (Identify when you  
hope to teach by.) \_\_\_\_\_

## I will recognise that learning has occurred by

**Information:** (Indicate how you will assess what information students have learned.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Skills:** (Indicate what new behaviour you will expect to observe students using  
which would suggest they had begun to develop new skills.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Attitudes:** (Specify what student behaviour you will look for that would indicate  
the acquisition of the desired attitudes.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Self Esteem

## and Skills Development

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**Self esteem** is the value judgment that we make about ourselves and how we assess our own worth from the picture we have of ourselves. We develop this picture by

- observing ourselves, how we cope with various situations, our successes and failures.
- our interaction with others, especially those who are significant in our lives e.g. parents, friends, teachers, etc.
- the way we think others see us which we pick up from their perceived reaction to us.

**Research** Indicates that students with high self esteem

- are more effective learners.
- know their own capabilities.
- grow more healthily.
- are more responsible, confident and ambitious
- are more likely to succeed.

**Students'** self esteem is enhanced by

- an affirming climate in the whole school.
- succeeding in what they do.
- being respected and accepted.
- having good relationships with teachers.
- being given responsibility.
- becoming more skilled.

**Self Esteem and Skill Development** are promoted by 5 main elements:

### 1 Awareness

Teaching how we build our self image

Focusing on positive and negative feelings

Recognising 'put downs'

Developing an awareness that we are unique - fingerprints

Making a list of things we can do

Putting together a collage of oneself

### 2 Motivation

Recognising we can change the picture we have of ourselves

Realising the benefits of having high self esteem

### 3 Analysis

Importance of self-talk

What do I do which builds my self-esteem?

Who is important to build my self esteem?

Checklist on "What I like about myself"

### 4 Practice

Positive strokes - receiving compliments from others

Self awareness exercises

Recognising one's strengths

Practising positive self-talk

Visualisation

Maintaining a log book of successes

(A 'Folder of Achievement')

### 5 Reviewing

Regular reviews during the year

Examining how one maintains self esteem

**Teacher's Feedback** that enhances self esteem has 4 components:

- a) A **description** of the student's behaviour (without making a judgment on it as well)
- b) Your **reaction** to the behaviour
- c) **Acknowledgement** of the student's feelings
- d) A statement of **expectation** about behaviour

## Skills Development Module

# Teacher's Preparation Checklist

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### In relation to myself

- 1 What do I want to achieve?
  - A Rationale
  - B Specific Objectives
- 2 Have I explained my objectives clearly to all concerned?
- 3 Will I need support?
- 4 Have I gathered all the relevant information?
- 5 What resources will I need?

### In relation to others involved

- 1 Who do I need to inform/consult?
- 2 How might I inform the 'silent' majority in the school?
- 3 Where might opposition come from?
- 4 How might I turn this opposition around?
- 5 Do I/my colleagues need any information/training?
- 6 When/how might this training be organised?

### In relation to students

- 1 Have I explained clearly to the students the purpose of the skills development?
- 2 Have I explained clearly to the students the possible gain for them in developing this skill?
- 3 Does the session contain sufficient involvement through participation?
- 4 Is there a good balance of learning by hearing, observing and doing?
- 5 Am I adequately balancing facilitation with didactic input?
- 6 Am I paying adequate attention to the sequencing of content across the classes?
- 7 Is the sequence of items working?