

LIC 8 – Review LIC

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Review: LIC 6

Teaching & Learning Strategies (2)

Research has long supported writing as an instrument to facilitate learning (Deshler, Palincsar, Biancarosa & Nair, 2007) as it enhances conceptual understanding (Abell, 1992) by asking students to “pay closer attention to details, organize data more logically, and structure the arguments in a more coherent way” (Kober, 1993, p. 45). There is also a growing body of research around how the human brain learns and its implications on the teaching learning process. According to Allan Paivio’s dual coding theory, the brain has two ways of processing: the visual and the verbal. The combination of the two leads to the most powerful results. Students will remember more when they’ve mixed language and imagery. However, while writing is an important tool for learning, so is talk! Talk is a part of human development that helps us to think, learn and make sense of the world. People use language as a tool for developing reasoning, knowledge and understanding. Therefore, encouraging students to talk as part of their learning experiences will mean that their educational progress is enhanced. Talking about the ideas being learnt means that those ideas are explored, and reasoning is developed and organized.

Keeping these principles of learning in mind, we focused on the following two strategies in this LIC:

- 1) Supporting Student Discussions
- 2) Learning Journals

Strategy 1: Supporting Student Discussions

What is Supporting Student Discussions?

After teachers finish explaining a concept and check for understanding, based on their students' needs, they provide a script or guiding questions for student discussions (in pairs or groups) that help students elaborate on key concepts. The teacher builds in several support structures such as initial modelling, suggested sentence structures, list of key ideas etc. The students then discuss in pairs or groups, and share with the larger class. As the students get more comfortable with this approach, teachers can also start including broader questions or asking students to create their own questions for discussion. This strategy can be used as and when the teacher sees fit based on how much time they have.

Why is it important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To deepen learning and build communication skills while working collaboratively.• To build student's capacity to think before they speak, to effectively paraphrase, to honor others' thoughts and to synthesize ideas.• To develop the language skills as result of participating in such discussions.• It increases student's participation that leads to increased autonomy in mastery of content using connectedness among them.• An approach to ignite intrinsic motivation.
How to use it effectively offline?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start with asking students to discuss in pairs same as think-pair-share, so that every student contributes to the discussion. As students become more confident, teachers can create bigger groups to introduce more variety in discussions.• In classrooms ask students make groups or get them to pair up with the person sitting next to them (however, ensure they maintain adequate distance from each other)• Ensure that the pairs and groups are different everytime even using distance mode.• Elaborative questions could be used to initiate the discussions. Encourage students to comments, paraphrase and extend the conversation.• It is also important to listen to student interactions actively in order to contribute thoughtfully and give support wherever required.
How to use it effectively online?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In distance mode students can call one other person to think in pairs, and then share the main points of their discussion using WhatsApp chat or audio.• In distance mode give them choice to select their pair in limited time then form a bigger group (6-8 students) using random pairs.• In distance mode share the document or text or key points before using poll questions, Google document or picture of questions on WhatsApp. Then, ask students to discuss the results. <p>In online mode teacher can observe students in zoom break-out rooms,</p>

	different google meet ID for different groups, chat on small WhatsApp group.
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Now, take 5 minutes to reflect on the following and share:

1. How can Student Discussions help students at this time? Can you connect it to their social emotional wellbeing?
2. What can you do to use this strategy effectively online?

Model Example

Meena is a Mathematics teacher in Delhi who has been teaching virtually using Zoom for the past few months. While she is happy that more of her students are now participating in class, she still sees them struggle to express their opinions and communicate their thoughts verbally, or by sharing in chat box. She realizes that only some students are involved in classroom discussion.

This is when Meena remembers the strategy she had used when schools were open – Supporting Student Discussions! Meena explains to the students that every day at the end of the class, she will share with them ONE discussion question. The next day, they should call one or two friends from the class and discuss that question with them. On Day 3, Meena says she will include some time for students to share what they discussed with their friends.

For the first discussion questions, Meena finds a suitable question from the Must Do list and shares a photo of the question on WhatsApp.

Since this is the first time she is trying to get students to have focused discussions, she supports the activity by preparing a Google document with references and important points to include in the answer. She follows up with her students the next day and sends a message reminding them who is their group! She is excited to hear their sharing tomorrow.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What did you like about Hema's use of the strategy? Why?
- 2) What would you change to make the strategy more effective?

**TABLE 1****PLANNING (Supporting Student Discussions)**

In the following table, plan how you might use Supporting Student Discussions online or offline:

Using Elaborative Questions What are some questions you can ask as prompts for the discussion?	
Provide Adequate Support Structures What will you do to make sure students have the support they need to carry out discussions? (<i>e.g. providing a script, providing a list of key concepts etc.</i>)	
Identify Students Who Need Help What strategy can you use to ensure you are listening to different groups of students to identify those who need help?	
Promoting Growth Mindset How will you use this opportunity to further promote Growth Mindset?	

FEEDBACK AND ADAPT

Read through your partner’s plans and give feedback on how to improve. Make sure you give ONE area of strength, and ONE area where they can improve. Your feedback should refer to the Success Criteria in the box below.

Success criteria

AREA	SPECIFICS	NOTES (write down the feedback your partner gives in the space below)
Using Elaborative Questions	What are some questions you can ask as prompts for the discussion?	
Provide Adequate Support Structures	What will you do to make sure students have the support they need to carry out discussions? (<i>e.g. providing a script, providing a list of key concepts etc.</i>)	
Identify Students Who Need Help	What strategy can you use to ensure you are listening to different groups of students to identify those who need help?	

Strategy 2: Student Reflection Diary/Learning Log

What is Student Reflection Diary/Learning Log?

It is a notebook students use to reflect on what they learnt. It is one of the various activities under 'Writing to Learn' - short, informal and low-stakes writing tasks that help students think through key concepts or ideas presented in a course. Students, either during the last five minutes of class or as part of Do Now, reflect on and summarize what they learnt during that, or the previous, class. Then, teachers provide students with an opportunity to self-check their responses by referring to class notes or textbooks. Building on the effectiveness of retrieval practice in consolidating learning, Learning Journals encourage students to recall information they had previously learnt while also providing a safe space for them to practice their writing.

Why is it important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing is an important tool for facilitating learning and enhancing conceptual understanding of students. This can also be used as part of retrieval practice.• Students often associate writing only with examinations and struggle to express their learning in written form.• Writing to Learn, presents writing as a safe opportunity for students to put their thoughts into words, developing confidence and skill.• As discussed in LIC 4, long-term memory is enhanced when students try and recall information that they had previously received.• Retrieval is made more effective if students get a chance to check for accuracy and points they may have missed after writing in their own words. This makes Student Reflection Diary/Learning Logs an ideal and simple way to help students revise and retain what they learnt in class.
How to use it effectively offline?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First explain to students that this log writing is not for assessment purpose.• Ask them to write their thoughts freely, or they can draw pictures or make small mind maps or flow charts to start with as they are not going to be judged.• Do not correct their journals like other notebooks, simply go around to see where students are struggling so that you can support them.• Teacher can give some questions as clues to start. To ensure full participation teacher must go around class and help students in case they need it.• Encourage students to self-correct their work for which they can refer to notes and book.

How to use it effectively online?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write and send pictures of the writing on WhatsApp• Use Google docs for writing purpose• Padlet can also be used if students agree to sharing their writing with others
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Some prompts that can be shared with students for writing:

3. What did you do in class today?
4. What did you learn?
5. What did you find interesting?
6. What questions do you have about what you learnt?

Model Example

Hema, a Biology teacher in Meena's school, has been wondering how she can get students to do more writing practice in the month before exams. Currently, she notices that her Grade 11 students feel nervous showing their answers and this often leads to them copying answers off of other students. She comes across the concept of Writing to Learn and decides to use Learning Journals in her class to get students to practice their writing.

*Hema has not been able to take live classes on Zoom as most of her students do not have access to it. Instead, she uses WhatsApp to send videos and audio files through which she communicates with her students. Hema decides to use Student Diaries along with Retrieval Practice. She identifies a topic from the **Must Do syllabus** that she knows her students are comfortable with and gives them a question based on that topic. **Since the students are comfortable with this topic, she believes that revising it and practicing writing about it can ensure they do well in questions that appears in the exam on this topic.***

Before sending them this activity, Hema lets her students know that this is not a test! She tells them it is just a way for them to see what they remember and what they need to revise. She asks them to write down whatever they remember and share pictures of their responses through WhatsApp.

After they have shared their responses, Hema asks them to now refer to their notes and books to see what they forgot about and need to revise.

Discussion Questions:

- 3) What did you like about Hema's use of the strategy? Why?
- 4) What would you change to make the strategy more effective?



TABLE 1

PLANNING (Student Reflection Diary)

Take 10 minutes to use the following table and plan how you might use Learning Journals with your students:

Ensure Participation of All What can you do to ensure that students feel comfortable in using their journals? <i>(e.g. allow a variation of responses such as using words instead of full sentences, using captions and images etc.)</i>	
Opportunities for self-correction. What will you do to make sure students have the opportunity to check their responses? <i>(e.g. provide time during Do Now for students to refer to their textbook.)</i>	
Encourage the use of images. How will you help students use images in their reflections? <i>(e.g. show students examples of one pagers with images)</i>	

FEEDBACK AND ADAPT

Read through your partner's plans and give feedback on how to improve. Make sure you give ONE area of strength, and ONE area where they can improve. Your feedback should refer to the Success Criteria in the box below.

Success criteria

AREA	SPECIFICS	NOTES (write down the feedback your partner gives in the space below)
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	<i>full sentences, using captions and images etc.)</i>	
Opportunities for self-correction.	What will you do to make sure students have the opportunity to check their responses? <i>(e.g. provide time during Do Now for students to refer to their textbook.)</i>	
Encourage the use of images.	How will you help students use images in their reflections? <i>(e.g. show students examples of one pagers with images)</i>	