

INTEGRATION OF TEACHING SKILLS

UNIT FOUR

Personalisation of Reinforcement

Synopsis :

1. Programme
 2. Terminal Behaviours
 3. Flow Chart
 4. Discussion Material
 5. Points for Discussion
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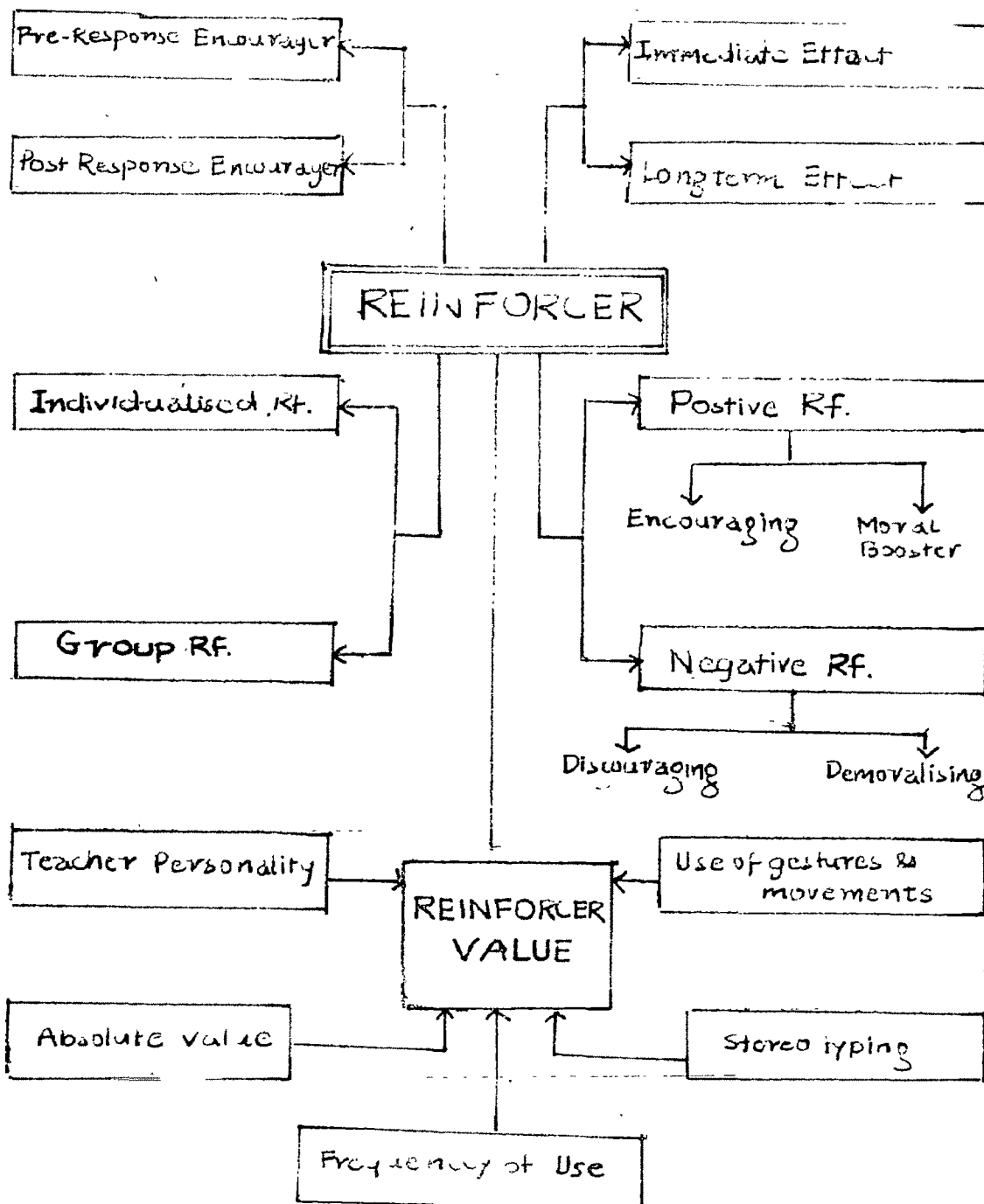
(1) Programme :

1. Reading Instructional Material
2. Discussion

(2) Terminal Behaviours :

1. Student teachers will recall different classifications of reinforcers.
2. Student teachers will recall different factors affecting the reinforcer value.
3. Student teachers will relate their self concept with repertoire of reinforcers they use in classroom teaching.

USE OF REINFORCERS IN CLASS ROOM TEACHING.



Instructional Material

Personalisation of Reinforcement

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Synopsis :

- (1) Meaning
- (2) Type of Reinforcements
 - (a) Initiation Reinforcement and Feedback Reinforcement.
 - (b) Instant Effect and Cumulative Effect Reinforcement.
 - (c) Group Reinforcers and Individual Reinforcers.
- (3) Factors affecting Reinforcement Effectiveness
 - (a) Extent of Use.
 - (b) Personality of Teacher.
 - (c) Mode of Presentation.
- (4) Role of Positive and Negative Reinforcement in Class Room Teaching.

You have practiced the skill of reinforcement during micro-teaching practice. You have come across different types of reinforcers to be used to increase pupil participation, during classroom interaction. You might have noticed during practice that, some of them are usable by you quite often and some do not appear suitable. You might have also observed that some of the student teachers

can encourage pupil participation without much depending upon the listed reinforcers. These are the common phenomenon that are related to individualisation of reinforcers. In this unit, let us concentrate on this aspect, analysing the meaning of reinforcement and its relation to the individual personality of teacher.

Reinforcement in teaching is an act of external force that encourages the recipient learner to do a particular desired behaviour by the reinforcer. In the sense teacher's reinforcing behaviour is an external force on learner to facilitate to elicit desired response. Usually teacher presents reinforcer soon after she questions or after getting the response. Teacher sometime uses reinforcers to cease some of the learners behaviour that are not desired by her. In both the situations teacher is acting with reinforcers for enhancing the desired behaviours and discouraging undesirable acts of students in the classroom teaching.

For the sake of convenience let us classify the reinforcement into two groups namely those reinforcement which are used by teachers to reinforce learner soon after student response, and the other group having those reinforcer that are used during explanatory statements, and before student response so as to encourage them to respond. The first category mentioned are usually of evaluative and feedback function. These reinforcers boost morale of students. This teacher behaviour is important for effective classroom teaching. The evaluative function will direct the children in forming a direction towards concept attainment. It should be noted that, these reinforcers should encourage the respondent to similarly think and respond, but it should not affect the rest of the student to feel inferior to the respondent. Similarly the answers found incorrect should be treated not to dishearten and withdraw the respondent from participation but should acknowledge the incorrectness and change the mode of thinking into suitable form.

The effect of reinforcers is of two types, one being instant effect and another cumulative effect. Instant effects are those which teacher gets immediately as pupil participates and cognitive involvement of pupil in learning take place. The other one will be the long term effect which have long term effect on learner so as to change his learning habit, discipline maintenance in school etc. It is usually observed that, a single student getting consistent encouragement from teacher develop superiority complex and the others having neutral or no encouragement develop suppressed personality. The role of reinforcer in class room is not to develop such discriminative personality but to provide appropriate opportunities to every one to develop positive outlook and attain the set class room objectives. This type of balancing requires ability from teachers, not to concentrate on a few intelligent students but to involve every one in one way or other, so as to provide a feel to the group that, everybody is contributing in class work in one way or other, so as to provide a feel to the group that, everybody is contributing in classwork in one way or other. Low achievers should

be provided with simple questions so as to develop confidence in them whereas challenging question to high achievers. The reinforcers should also depend upon both the levels of questions and the capability of learner to respond correctly.

Group reinforcement is an effective way to encourage all students of class as a group. Reinforcers like you all did it, you all have contributed, will help to maintain homogeneity and group feeling in the students. In this case the teacher should be able to involve all students in class work.

The reinforcers referred as those used along with explanation and before student response are group encouragers rather than individual students. It is usual practice of teachers to use phrases like, 'You all know it', 'It's simple if you think a little while', etc. Another effective way to group encouragement for the teacher will be to identify with the students. While teaching using statements like 'Let us do that', 'I think we are facing some difficulty at this stage', 'who will join me to do this?', 'Why shouldn't do like this', etc. will help in this case.

Teacher in long run form mannerism with reference to reinforcement use. This stereotyping phenomenon refers to use of one or two reinforcers repeatedly, for almost all occasions. For instance, reinforcers like 'O.K.', 'Good', 'that's right', 'Umph', etc. are examples of reinforcer mannerism. These in long run do not work as reinforcers since taken as mannerism of teacher. There are instances wherein teacher use these reinforcers even when the answers are wrong. In such cases the reinforcers lose their value and no more function as encourager. By using reinforcers often forming mannerism with increase ineffectiveness of classroom teaching.

The amount of impact made on learner depends to some extent on the type of reinforcer used. This is to mean that reinforcers carry - varying degree of value along with them. Usually, 'O.K.', 'Fine', 'Right', are taken as normal reinforcers and 'Very Good', 'Excellent' etc. are considered as having higher value. Even though these reinforcers do have hierarchical relations by themselves, they are highly influenced by a few factors, which are mentioned below.

1. Extent of Use : As mentioned before, repetitive use of reinforcer in classroom as mannerism will lower the effect of reinforcer tending to neutral. Similarly, the reinforcer used occasionally will have high impact compared to its normal value.
2. Personality of Teacher : Teacher differs in their temperament of liveliness in classroom. Some are very serious and some are very much free in their expositions. A serious teacher using many reinforcers will create an artificiality in classroom and vis-a-vis. A serious teacher presenting a smile on his face may have higher value compared to verbalising 'good' by a jovial teacher.

3. Mode of Presentation : Skill of explaining and some other skills involve verbal communication as their main components. In such cases teacher will be modulating his voice. Voice modulation in a particular form itself may act as reinforcer. The voice modulation while delivering reinforcer also decides the value to a great extent. For instance saying 'very good' in a tired voice, looking away from student showing disinterest facility will have less effort compared to delivering the something instantly, loudly, cheerfully and facing to the student.

It is usual practice not to use negative reinforcers during classroom teaching. The intention being not to discourage student activities, student response and participation. Also negative reinforcer creates distance between the teacher and student. However, this does not mean that, student should be allowed to do mischief in classroom by distracting the classroom teaching. In such situation teacher should use appropriate words and phrases so as to handle the discipline of classroom, and orient students towards productive participation. In other words, the teacher should handle the group or individual by applying the principles of guidance and counselling.

During some instances use of negative reinforcers in a specific form may act as positive reinforcers rather than producing negative effects. For instance a situation wherein majority of x students have raised their hands eagerly to answer a question presented. And teacher may say 'Wrong' to the wrong respondent with a smile on his face producing an effect that, the respondent becomes restless to think instantly so as to bring correct answer. As the teacher say 'incorrect' to many student responses the climax to bring correct answer steadily increases in the classroom. The description is to conclude that, reinforcer cannot be said as encourage or discourage unless the context and effects aroused in the class are observed as they exist. The ability to encourage and use reinforcement ultimately remains in the hands of teacher.

Teachers Manual :

Discussion Session
Duration : 90 Minutes

The discussion should conclude a few aspects that are covered in the instructional material. Some of the important conclusions are given below :

1. Avoid stereotyping reinforcement.
2. Use of reinforcers like 'excellent', 'very good' should not be used liberally unless the context demands.
3. Negative reinforcers can be used in the class so as to produce conducive climate during teaching.
4. Depending upon the manner the teacher uses the reinforcer, the negative reinforcer may also act as positive reinforcers.

5. Group reinforcers are equally important as individual directed reinforcement.
6. Teacher should become one amongst group while teaching in the class.
7. Indiscipline problem should be carefully handled so as not to harm the individual personality of students.
8. The type of reinforcer one uses and its effects depend upon personality of teacher, mode of presentation and the context it self.

The supervisor may also ask to evaluate the reinforcers each student teacher uses, and provide comments about his mannerism, style of presentation, suitability to his personality. This will help each student teacher to self appraise his repertoire of reinforcements and modify accordingly.
