

34 Managing an activity

A Warm-up

Your trainer will set up two activities.

What was helpful and unhelpful about the way they set up the activities?

B Stages of activity set-up

- 1 Here is a list of things a teacher might do when setting up and running an activity. Put them in a logical order. (There may be more than one order.)
 - ☐ Demonstrate the activity.
 - ☐ Get learners' attention.
 - ☐ Check learners have understood the instructions.
 - ☐ Give a clear signal for learners to finish.
 - ☐ Follow up on the content of the activity (for example, by checking answers or eliciting ideas from students).
 - ☐ Allow learners to compare their answers or ideas with other learners.
 - ☐ Monitor learners' progress during the activity.
 - ☐ Feedback on the language of the activity (for example, by correcting errors or clarifying the meaning of vocabulary items).
 - ☐ Give the instructions orally while indicating the relevant areas of the material to be used.
 - ☐ Give a clear signal for learners to start.
- 2 Which of these things did your trainer do when setting up the activity during the warm-up? To what extent did they help you to understand what was expected of you as a learner?

C Strategies for managing an activity

- 1 The type of activity you are setting up, and the type of learners you are working with, influence how you might set up an activity. Look at the list of classroom management strategies (A–K). Which strategies could be useful if you are setting up:
 - an activity where adult students work alone to complete sentences by putting the verb into the correct tense, as specified in the written instructions?
 - an activity where university students work in small groups to prepare a presentation?
 - an activity where young learners work in open class, guided by the teacher, to draw and write about a monster?
 - an activity where teenagers work in pairs to design their perfect school?
- A Put learners into pairs or groups before you give them any of the other instructions.
- B During your instructions, display materials clearly by holding them in front of you or putting them on the screen, rather than having learners look at materials in front of them.
- C Break instructions into small stages. Wait for students to complete one stage before you introduce the next.
- D Keep the language of instructions as simple and straightforward as possible. Check that learners have understood them.

5 – Developing teaching skills and professionalism

- E Demonstrate how to do the activity.
- F Have an example of a finished model prepared, so that you can show learners what they are aiming for.
- G Write key words on the board / in the chat box to summarize the instructions, for example *10 minutes, 3 ideas, notes only*.
- H Set a time limit so students know how long they have to complete the activity.
- I Have a clear purpose in mind for your monitoring. For example, are you checking whether students are on task? Or whether they've finished? Or whether they've got the answers right? Or taking notes of language being used and its accuracy and/or appropriacy? This may change throughout the activity, but can help you to choose what to focus on at each point.
- J Ensure learners know all of the answers before you move on to the next activity.
- K Follow up on the content of an activity before you correct errors or upgrade language.

You can also add your own ideas.

- 2 How might your use of these strategies be the same, or different, if you are teaching online or in a physical classroom?

Tip

When planning your lessons, you might want to script instructions and add reminders about anything else you need to do to manage an activity. After the CELTA course, it's unlikely you'll continue to plan in this much depth. However, thinking through activities in detail during the course can help you to anticipate potential problems with activities, feel more confident during lessons, and better support your learners' learning.

D Putting it into practice

- 1 Choose an activity you are going to use in your next TP. Plan how you will manage the activity.
- 2 Share your plan with a partner and look at their plan. Check you have both thought about all of the applicable stages of the activity set-up cycle. Can you think of any ways to make the management of the activity more streamlined or straightforward for the teacher or the learners?

KEY WORDS FOR TEACHERS

Check you know the meanings of these terms.

- *classroom management*
- *monitoring*
- *feedback*

REFLECTION

Work in a small group. Choose one aspect of activity management which you think will be most challenging for you, and most beneficial for your learners if you can improve it. Decide with your group how you can work on this, including things you could ask your colleagues to look out for when observing you during TP.