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GROUP LEADERS GUIDE

SOUTH AFRICAN EXTENSION UNIT
DAR ES SALAAM

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

We wish to acknowledge reproduction and adaptation of much of the material in this Guide from the Namibian Extension Unit's "Group Leaders Manual".

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INTRODUCTION

In the education programme which you are about to start, you and your fellow students will be studying in groups. Fifteen or twenty adult people will meet together several times each week to study various courses. You will work and study together. Most of the time you will not have a teacher with you in your group. So how will you study? How will you learn?

- You will learn by studying together what is written in your courses.
- You will listen to and learn from audio-cassette recordings.
- you will work together on the exercises and help each other to understand them.
- you will sometimes be visited by your tutor to help you with any problems you face.
- you will work by yourselves on the courses between the group meetings.

It is very difficult to study by yourself without a teacher. That is why in this programme you are being organized to study in groups. If the group meetings are to be helpful, they need to be orderly and organised. Your job as a study group leader is to organise and lead your group meetings in an orderly way.

1. WHAT ARE THE JOBS OF A STUDY GROUP LEADER?

A study group leader is NOT A TEACHER. You are NOT expected to KNOW EVERYTHING in the courses. As a group leader you must do the following things:

- you must ORGANISE the meetings.
- you must PREPARE for the meetings.
- you must HELP your fellow group members to learn.
- you must GUIDE your fellow group members to use the courses.
- you must ENCOURAGE your fellow group members to study, to do the exercises and to take part in the group discussions.

Your jobs as a study group leader can be divided into three stages. They are:

1.1 Before the study group meeting you must:

- prepare yourself by becoming familiar with the unit which your group will study in the meeting.
- find out, by reading the unit and the group leaders notes, how to lead and guide your comrades in the exercises and activities.
- get ready all the necessary course books and other materials (audio cassettes, maths instruments, visual aids etc.) which the notes indicate you will need.
- prepare the meeting place by arranging the chairs and tables, by making sure there is enough light and by making sure there is not too much noise nearby.
- check that all your fellow members will be able to attend the meeting and that there are no other activities likely to disturb the programme. If some members cannot attend, you should know why.

1.2 During the meeting it is your job to:

- open the meeting by welcoming and greeting all the members.
- ensure that everyone has the necessary materials.
- call for silence and draw the attention of the group to the subject to be studied.

- control and direct the group right through the meeting by being firm but polite.
- make sure all the instructions in the unit and in the group leaders' notes are followed.
- encourage all members to contribute to and participate in the exercises and discussions and that none of the members dominate the meeting.
- guide and encourage fellow members without talking too much yourself.
- give a short summary as a means of closing the meeting to allocate tasks and to make sure everyone knows what to do before the next meeting.

1.3 After the meeting the group leader should:

- prepare a report on the meeting with the assistant group leader/secretary and give it to the tutor.
- refer unsolved problems and difficulties to the tutor or seek help from anyone else who is qualified in the subject.
- collect and store, or return, materials and equipment which were used.
- follow up any members who missed the meeting, help them to do the work they missed and encourage them to come to the next meeting.

As a group leader, you must therefore be firm, polite, patient and friendly. You must gain the respect and co-operation of your fellow members. In order to do this, you must know how to use the course materials, the cassettes and other equipment. You must also master the techniques of how to lead study groups effectively. The next section gives you more details on how to master these technique.

2. HOW TO LEAD STUDY GROUPS

2.1 Case Studies

EXERCISE: Here are two stories about study group leaders at work. Read them carefully and then answer the questions which follow:

Case No.1: Sizwe has had a very busy morning. He has to eat his lunch quickly and hurry to the study group meeting. He forgets to pick up the tape recorder and cassette for today's lesson. By the time he arrives the students are all there. He quickly tells them to put the chairs in rows. The lesson should start with the tape recording. As he does not have it, Sizwe decides to teach the students himself. He can tell them what it would have introduced and how that bit of English grammar works. He knows it himself. When he has explained it he tells them to get on with the exercise by themselves. He can now write that letter to his brother! It's the first time he has sat quietly today. Suddenly one of the students says he does not understand something. 'What don't you understand?' asks Sizwe without getting up. This comrade really is a poor student he never seems to understand the lessons. The student does not like to tell the whole class what he doesn't know. Very quietly he says he doesn't know what 'happens' means. Sizwe laughs: 'What! You don't understand such a simple word? Well, look it up in the dictionary!' Suddenly he realises there is a drill the students have to do in pairs. He hurriedly tells them to get into pairs and to do the drill together. Some students don't remember how to do this drill! Sizwe gets very angry with them and shouts at them. They have upset the whole class and now there is no time to finish. Well, it is too late now. They will just have to start their maths lesson. So he tells them to put away their English study materials and get out their maths study materials. Afterwards he remembers that he did not explain what they had to do for home study. Anyway, it is their own fault!

Case No. 2: Nawa is not very confident about today's lesson. He read it through yesterday and thought it was difficult. So he went through it again, with his lesson notes. He has prepared all the drills and exercises very carefully. He hurries from work to get the tape recorder and cassette. He then goes straight to the classroom, arranges the chairs in a circle. Then he listens to the cassette to make sure it is the right one. As the members of the group enter he greets them and asks about their work or their children. When it is time to start he introduces the lesson and tells them what they are going to do today. He makes sure they all have the right unit to work from. Then he plays the cassette and quickly gets the students to practise the exercises together. As soon as they start to work on the exercise he moves from student to student. One of them does not understand the word 'happens'. Nawa helps him to look it up in his dictionary. Then he checks to make sure he has understood it. The lesson notes say that exercise should take ten minutes only. Nawa ensures that everyone has done most of it. Then he groups them into pairs for the next drill. This is the difficult one. He explains it very carefully and practises the first two sentences with them. Because it is difficult he does not get angry when they do not understand. He explains it again. He helps them to do it by going round and listening to them. He realises how useful it was to practise it himself while he was preparing. A few minutes before the end of the lesson he tells them to stop working on the last exercise. Those who have not finished it, should finish it tonight, by themselves. He then introduces the home study exercises. He makes sure they know what they have to do. There is just enough time for a three minute break before they start the maths lesson.

EXERCISE QUESTIONS: Which of the two group leaders do you think was a good group leader, and which was a bad group leader? Why do you think one was good and the other bad? Discuss these questions with your fellow group leaders. Note down your answers.

Case No. 3: Mfumo was a study centre located in a busy agricultural and trading centre. The study centre had 150 adult learners studying different courses. Students met three times every week during evening hours after hard work in the farms or industries.

One evening, a study centre supervisor gave an order through the study centre secretary who was also a student. He ordered that all students should attend all class meetings on time without fail. The supervisor further ordered that all assignments must be done and handed in on time. If anybody didn't follow this order, he would be forced to pay a fine. He would also be dismissed from classes.

Therefore, under the fear of being the first victim of the order, the secretary of the centre called for an emergency meeting in which students were cautioned of the likely danger of fines and dismissals on the part of those who did not follow the order. The meeting ended in an unusually quiet and sad way.

On the following class meeting, half the number of students did not turn up for classes. By the end of the term, only a handful students were attending classes.

Exercise:

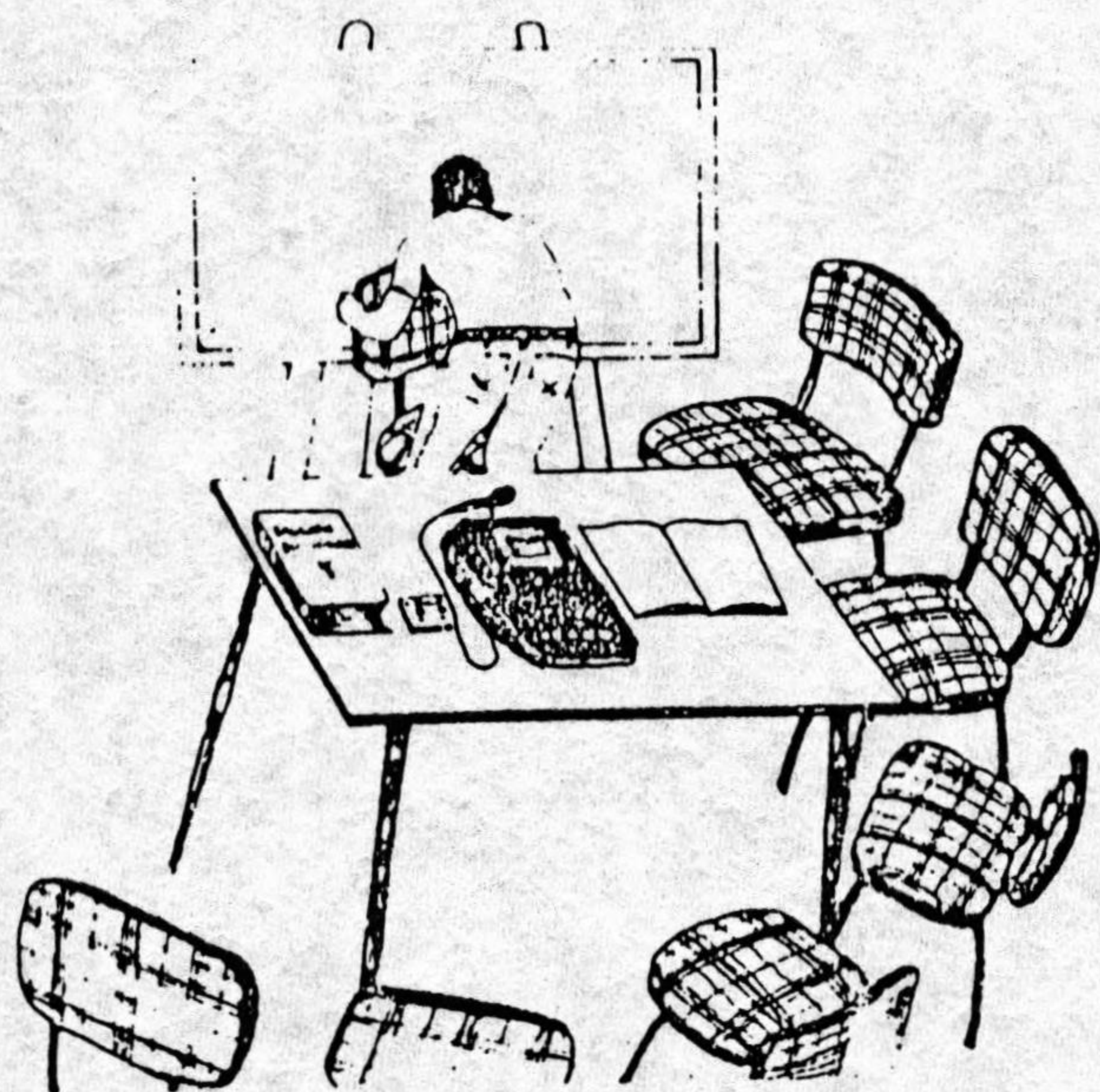
1. What went wrong?
2. What suggestions would you put forward for solving the problems?
3. What is the implication of this case study in an adult learning situation?

We will now explain some of the methods and skills you need for your job as group leader. This will help you to be successful. But methods by themselves, even when well done, do not make good group leaders. You must also be able to work easily with your fellow members. They must respect you and see you as a friend and helper. Then you will be successful.

2.2 Some methods of leading a group properly

(a) Preparing for the lesson: To do your job well in each lesson, you must prepare yourself carefully. Here are the steps you should take to prepare yourself:

- carefully read the lesson through in the course text.
- carefully read the Group Leaders' Lesson Notes for that lesson.
- note what you have to do in each section.
- decide when to do each exercise and how long it should last.
- be sure you know how to start and lead each drill or exercise.
- be sure you know what you need for the lesson - books, pictures, cassettes, equipment, paper, etc.
- be sure you get everything in time.
- be sure all the drills and exercises can be done with the equipment and material you have collected. If they can't, work out a similar drill or exercise which can be (or obtain the required material).
- plan how you will introduce the lesson to your students.
- work out how to make sure they start the work they have to do.
- sometimes you have to break your group into small sets for drills and exercises. Work out when and how you have to do this. Decide who will lead each of the sets.
- prepare lists of questions about various subjects in the lesson. This will help you to involve your students in discussions. Often this is needed in the lessons.



- be at the classroom at least 10 minutes before the lesson starts.
- make sure everything is ready.
- encourage your students to come on time.
- introduce the lesson to your students. Tell them what it is going to be about. Tell them what you and they are going to do during the lesson.
- show them what they have to do first. Ask questions to get them involved. Make sure they have understood.

Always follow what is written in each lesson and the instructions in your Group Leaders' Lesson Notes very carefully.

- (C) During the lesson: Your first job is to get the lesson started and to make sure all the students are taking part. After that your job is to keep them working through the lesson. You must make sure they understand what they are doing. Many of the exercises and drills must be done in small groups. Sometimes these groups will have two or three people in them; sometimes five or six people; sometimes more. You must organise them so that they move easily from a large group into a small group. It is your job to arrange for them to change from group work to individual work as and when required.

Here are the three important things you must do:



- Looking after student work:
go round from student to student as they do their work; see that they are doing it correctly; make sure they have understood and are following the instructions; encourage them to keep going; help and advise them when they need it.



- Following a timetable: work out how long each exercise or drill or section of the lesson should take; make sure that your students move on from one part to another as planned. But do not think you must follow the timetable exactly: Some students finish a piece of work more quickly than others; when such students have finished, encourage them to check their work carefully; sometimes ask them to help fellow students who are working more slowly; other times suggest that they go on to any remaining exercises..



- Keeping good order: Your group must be kept in good order. Good order and self-discipline are necessary if the students are to learn. Your students are adults, and adults usually know how to discipline themselves. But sometimes a member of your group may disturb the other members. Perhaps he has a personal problem, or finds difficulty with his studies. First you must talk with him by himself. Try to find out why he is disturbing the group. Help to solve his problems if you can. Try to persuade him not to disturb his fellow members. If that does not work, discuss the disturbance with the whole group, with him present. Try to have a group decision on how to control him. If this does not work you must seek the help of your tutor. He will try to help you to solve the problem.

EXERCISE: Here are two examples of discipline problems. Work out how you would deal with each of them.

Example 1: Five of your students always arrive late for the class meetings. They say they are late because of their work. When they arrive they disturb the other students. They ask where you are in the lesson; they move their chairs about; they make noise as they get out their books. It is always difficult to get control of the group again after this disturbance. The other students feel they are wasting their time to come at the proper time. They are complaining to you about it.

Example 2: One student says he is not interested in mathematics. He does not pay attention to the maths lessons. He refuses to do the exercises properly. If he does any exercises, he only copies them from his friend. He talks to other students who sit near him throughout the lesson. He refuses to stop talking when you ask him. He is stopping the whole group from progressing as they should.

What, do you think, are the causes?

Could you deal with them yourself?

How could you involve the group in solving them?

What would a group decide to do about them?

Would you need to ask the tutor to help?

- (d) Explaining difficult parts of the lesson: Often group members will not understand a difficult word, or a difficult instruction in the lesson. You must find out exactly what it is they do not understand and try to explain it to them.
- first read that part or instruction carefully so that you understand it yourself.
 - always use simple language when explaining something to others; simple words; short and simple sentences.
 - use words the students know to explain difficult parts.
 - be slow in explaining, so that the slower members can follow you.

- always check if your explanation has been understood; ask the members to repeat it in their own words.
- sometimes you can show your students what the difficult word or part means. You can act it, or draw it, or show the real thing.
This can help your students to understand.
- Where possible, prepare drawings in advance so that they are clear.
- point out to your students any drawings or charts or pictures in the workbook or on flip charts.
Make sure they have understood.

(e) Discussions: Sometimes the courses instruct you, as the group leaders, to organise a discussion. Sometimes, especially at first, you must lead the discussion yourself. Other times you must arrange for a member of the group to lead it. The purposes of these discussions are:

- to arouse the interest of the individual group members.
- to make them take an active part in the lesson.
- to give them practice in speaking the language.
- to give them practice in using mathematics.

Your job is to ensure that these discussions take place when the course tells you to do so. The most important thing in a discussion is that all members join in. You must make sure they do. It is helpful if different members of the group lead the discussions from time to time. This way, everyone gets practice in speaking English and in leading discussion.

Here are some ideas about how to lead a discussion:

- ASKING QUESTIONS is perhaps the most useful method of encouraging discussions.
- use them to bring members into the discussion.
- use them to move the discussion from one subject to another.
- use them to lead members to talk about the subject being discussed.
- use them to keep the discussion interesting and lively.
- use them to change the subject.
- use them to bring in quiet members.

- **DON'T BE TOO STRICT:** Allow members to talk about anything which interests them related to the subject. Guide them and help them to see how it relates. But make sure that they do not move far from the subject. Often you can guide the discussion quite easily. Just give them ideas or ask questions about subjects which have been forgotten. Or give a short summary of what has been said on one subject before moving to another. These will usually be enough to stop members from talking about other subjects.
- **DO NOT DO ALL THE TALKING YOURSELF:** Once you have started the discussion you should not break in too often. Do not force your own ideas on the group. Let the members question and answer each other. Let them produce their own ideas and reach their own conclusions.
- **QUIET MEMBERS** of the group will often sit in a discussion without joining in. It is very important that they are encouraged to take part. Often they are quiet because they are shy. Do not make them uncomfortable by asking them directly to say something. Find a subject in which they are specially interested, or where they have some special experience. Encourage them to say something about it. Help them to explain what they want to say. If they do say something, point out the importance of what they have said.
- **SOME MEMBERS TALK TOO MUCH:** This prevents other members from giving their ideas and opinions. Sometimes this leads to a conversation or an argument between two members. This destroys the discussion and discourages other members. If it happens the group leader should interrupt and bring the others into the discussion. You should prevent those who want to talk too much from doing so.

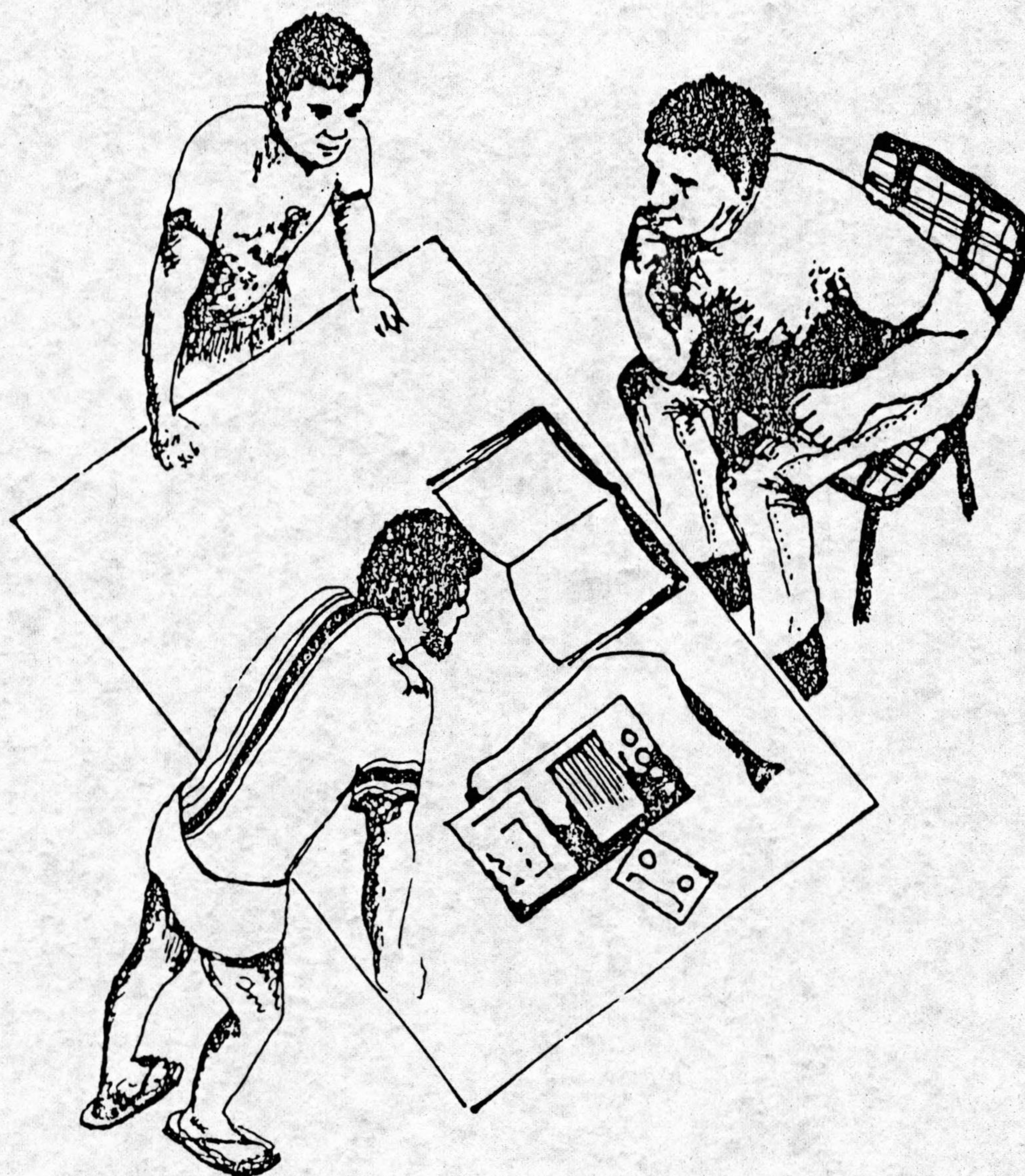
If necessary you should control them very strictly. You can do so by saying that other members should be given a chance to speak. Then the person who talks too much can be brought back in later.

- CONCLUSIONS: It is important that a discussion does not stop in the middle. This makes the members unhappy. It must reach a conclusion. You should inform the group when the time is nearly over, and begin to summarise the group's discussion. You must allow and encourage members to say what they have decided.

(f) Bringing the lesson to an end: If each lesson lasts for one hour, it is important to finish the first subject on time. Only if you do, can your group spend a whole hour on the second subject. It is also important that each lesson finishes in time to allow members to do other things. You must therefore follow the timetable as closely as possible.

- Sometimes you are in the middle of a very interesting exercise when it is time to finish. If all the members want to continue, allow them to continue for a short time. Tell them they must quickly reach a point where they can stop.
- Do not keep students working after they have finished or lost interest in an exercise. Encourage them to do something else. If there isn't time to start a new exercise, let them go a few minutes early.
- When it is nearly time to finish, begin to bring the lesson to an end. Make sure students have reached a good place to stop, summarise what the group has done, draw attention to conclusions the group has reached, do the final exercise if there is one which finishes the lesson.

- Before you close the lesson you must show the students what they must do for home study before the next lesson. Make sure they understand what they have to do. Make sure that they take with them whatever they need in order to do.
- After the end of the lesson, you must stay behind for a few minutes. Some students might want to see you by themselves to ask you questions or to tell you about their problems. This will help you get to know them. It shows that you are a friend and that you want to help them.



3. STUDY VISITS:

A study visit, is a teaching method which serves the following objectives:

- To expose learners to their expected interests.
- To motivate learners to work hard.
- To break the monotony of classroom instruction.
- To relate theory with practice.
- To supplement classroom instruction.

In order to achieve these objectives, study visits may be conducted before or after classroom teaching. If they are to be conducted before classroom teaching, they should act as stimulants to classroom knowledge to be learnt at a later stage of the curriculum. For successful study visits, students' interests must be identified or developed by the tutor. This can be done through involving in such a process the learners themselves.

Where a study visit is to be conducted after classroom instruction, it should reinforce the acquired theoretical knowledge to the learner. This can be achieved by the situation to be observed being thoroughly connected with the previous knowledge learnt in the classroom.

Study Visits normally require careful planning. This involves the following phases:

- The preparatory phase.
- The actual field study phase.
- The follow-up phase.

The function of the Preparatory Phase is to organize and provide a background relevant to the situation to be studied, and to generate the required interest. In this stage, essential technical terms and their significance should be explained to the learners. This stage should therefore consist of:

- A talk about the general situation of the place to be visited.
- A clear indication of the purpose of the visit; the points to be looked for; and their connection with future and/or previous knowledge.
- A clear arrangement of transport and meal facilities (if any)

- an indication of what materials should be carried by students e.g. notebooks, pencils etc.
- A prior arrangement with the authorities of the place to be visited.
- A well designed study visit observation schedule.

During the Actual Field Study Phase, assistance and direction should be given to the learners as much as possible by the tutor.

During the Follow-up Phase, the following should be observed;

- Learners should present individual reports on the visits in observational schedule forms. Reports may also take the form of brief lectures and discussions and chalkboard illustrations - if possible.
- The report should be critically weighted by the tutor and errors of observations corrected.
- The results of the study should be compared, organized, reviewed and related to the problem or project originally proposed, as well as incorporated within the broader subject development.