

5.5 Role of Teachers

- Teachers should have a good grasp of the learning objectives for each lesson and help the majority of or even all students to master the related skills, knowledge, values and attitudes.
- Students must produce parental consent letters before they are allowed to take part in canoeing activities. To ensure that all safety measures have been taken, teachers should also refer to the “*Safety Precautions in Physical Education for Hong Kong Schools*”; “*Guidelines on Outdoor Activities*” issued in 1999 and 2004 respectively as well as relevant notices on weather conditions and safety issued by government departments such as the Hong Kong Observatory.
- Teachers should know the background and capability of each student and cater for individual differences accordingly. They should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the activity. This makes the students feel confident about the instruction given.
- Prior experience is critical for students to capture and comprehend new knowledge. Teachers need to understand their students well and motivate them with appropriately challenging learning contents. Teachers should adapt teaching approaches to suit students of various capabilities, and ensure that no students lag behind and all reach their full potential.
- Teachers should be aware of the available time for canoeing and appropriately spread it out in different lessons. Teachers should consider the background of students and cautiously estimate what they can do and plan the lessons accordingly. Before the lessons, teachers must check the number of available canoes and group their students appropriately to maximise learning effectiveness.
- To arouse students’ interest and to make theoretical learning easier to follow, teachers should make use of appropriate teaching aids such as real objects (e.g., life jackets, paddles, wind scale charts, tide charts, maps, etc), VCDs or DVDs (about canoeing in western countries), etc.
- Teachers should bear in mind that there may be unexpected dangers on water. Therefore, they must make clear to the students that safety precautions are very important. Teachers should teach students the proper way of putting on a life jacket and arrange for them to practise swimming in their life jackets , before doing an activity in canoes. Teachers should consider the weather, tides, wind directions, currents and environment to determine if canoeing activities can be conducted.
- Teachers should choose appropriate venues to engage students in drills and exercise of various difficulty levels. For example, teachers should avoid teaching beginners to board floating canoes at windy spots, or teaching skills that easily lead to the canoe capsizing where there are strong currents or where marine transport is busy; teachers may teach some of these skills in swimming pools.
- Teachers should familiarise students with capsizing drills at an early stage so that they can stay calm when they confront a real capsizing. However, in cold weather conditions, such drills may be arranged at the end, instead of, at the beginning of the day’s programme.