Interactive Teaching Methods

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Learning objectives

By the end of this session you should be able to:

• Recognise the aims and challenges of small group teaching
• Develop a good educational environment and help students learn within that environment
• Write clear objectives for a teaching session in the context of a basic session plan
• Select some interactive teaching techniques that can enhance deep learning when teaching small groups
Overview

• What are we trying to do and how difficult is it?
• A little bit of educational theory
• Some ideas for facilitating small groups

• COFFEE BREAK

• Time for us all to have a go!
Ground Rules

1. Turn mobile phones off
2. Share your ideas and be open to new ones
3. Be willing to participate and take a few risks
4. Give honest, supportive feedback to others
5. Have fun!
So, what do we need to think about?
Aims and challenges
Over to you...

- In pairs/trios:
  - Discuss the **aims and challenges** you experience when teaching small groups. Select your top 3 for each of these.
  - You have **3 minutes**
Teacher or student centred?
## Small Group Behaviour and Dynamics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of members</th>
<th>Changing Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 – 6</td>
<td>Little structure or organisation required; leadership fluid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 – 12</td>
<td>Structure and differentiation of roles begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 – 25</td>
<td>Structure and role differentiation vital. Subgroups emerge. Face-to-face interaction is more difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 +</td>
<td>Positive leadership vital; sub-groups form; greater anonymity; stereotyping and projections occur.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jaques, 2000
Educational environment
A Theory of Adult Learning

Malcolm S Knowles
(1913-1997)
Self-directed learning

‘a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes.’

Knowles, 1975
Experiential Learning

David A Kolb
(1939- )
The Experiential Learning Cycle

(Kolb et al. 1984)

Concrete experience
DOING

Reflective observation
THINKING

Active experimentation
TESTING

Abstract conceptualization
PLANNING
Facilitator skills
Facilitator Skills: Planning

Decide on objectives
Think about structure
Choose some ways to make things interactive
Facilitator Skills: Planning

- Set some ground rules
- Plan seating and room set up
- Outline the roles of facilitator and learners
- Prepare audio-visual aids or handouts
Facilitator Skills: Structuring

Session Structure
Structure

- **Beginning** *(set)*
- **Middle** *(dialogue, content, body)*
- **End** *(closure)*
Structure

- Tell ‘em what you are going to tell ‘em
- Tell ‘em
- Tell ‘em what you’ve told ‘em
Beginning (‘Set’) 

- M – Mood
- M – Motivate
- U – Utility
- C – Content overview
- K – Knowledge base
- O – Objectives
"The single most important factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows; ascertain that and teach him accordingly"

Ausubel, 1968.
Middle (‘Body’) 

- must know, should know, could know
- logical sequence, bite-size chunks, recaps
- move from particular to general
- vary the stimulus
End (‘Closure’)

- no new material, including questions
- **summarise** key points
- refer back to the beginning *(the ‘set’)*
- give learners a sense of **achievement**
- make **links** to next session
Setting the Objectives

What do they need to learn?
Over to you

Write down an **objective** for the last session that you taught

You have **2 minutes**

Keep it handy and we’ll come back to it...
Aims and Objectives

An aim is a statement describing a broad or abstract intent, state or condition.

An objective is a contract which describes what trainees or students will be able to do at the end of the session that they cannot do at the beginning.
Can you spot any ambiguous verbs?

- to understand
- to list
- to think
- to construct
- to recall

- to recognise
- to know
- to state
- to define
Can you spot any **ambiguous verbs**?

- **to understand**
- **to list**
- **to think**
- **to construct**
- **to recall**
- **to recognise**
- **to know**
- **to state**
- **to define**
Hierarchies of Learning: Bloom (1956)

Knowledge
- List
- Recall
- Name
- Define

Comprehension
- Discuss
- Describe
- Explain
- Identify
- Locate

Application
- Interpret
- Apply
- Illustrate
- Operate
- Demonstrate

Analysis
- Distinguish
- Test
- Compare
- Contrast
- Debate

Synthesis
- Compose
- Design
- Create
- Manage

Evaluation
- Judge
- Assess
- Rate
- Revise
- Estimate
A good objective should be **SMART**

**S** Specific should specify what learners want to achieve

**M** Measurable be able to measure whether learners are meeting the objectives or not

**A** Achievable are the objectives achievable and attainable?

**R** Realistic can learners realistically achieve the objectives with the resources available?

**T** Timebound by when should the learners have achieved the set objectives?
Over to you

Return to the objective that you wrote. Based on what we have just talked about, refine it.

You have 2 minutes
Facilitator Skills: Asking Questions

Differentiation
consider stage, experience and ability of learners

Closed questions
facilitate recall

Open questions
allow reflection and require higher cognitive functioning
Facilitator Skills: Asking Questions

Clarifying questions
check understanding of underlying principles

Justifying questions
access reasoning behind a response

Probing or hypothetical questions
extend thinking, explore options
(e.g. to develop differential diagnosis)
Final Thoughts on Questioning

Make sure you allow thinking time, alone or in groups. It’s easier to be stupid in pairs.

Provide prompts.

Rephrase the question.

Listen to response.
Introducing interactivity
Interaction: methods to try

- Brainstorming
- Buzz groups
- Snowballing
- Rounds
- Circular interviewing
- Line-ups
- Role play
4 rules operate

evaluation and criticism is ruled out
free-wheeling is welcomed
quantity is wanted
combination and improvement are sought
Snowballing

Individual task eg write, reflect
Share ideas in pairs
Introduce partner and his/her ideas; look for patterns
Develop principles, guidelines, action plans

Increasing sophistication of task
Rounds

Each student has, say, one minute to talk about topic
Circular Interviewing

Traditional interaction

Students ask questions of each other (prepared on cards?)
Line-Ups
Role play
Over to you...

Practising some small group techniques

- Form into your groups. You will be allocated a small group technique and some roles.

- Choose a topic or use my example. Prepare to facilitate your activity for our whole group. You have 10 minutes preparation time.

- You will then have 8 minutes to facilitate the activity.

- As a group we will then discuss how things went.
Any questions?
Recap and Summary

- Small group teaching hinges on preparation
- Remember the principles of adult learning
- Make sure your session has a structure
- Have 2-5 clear objectives
- Include interactivity
So what might you do in your practice?
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