Teaching in a Small Group

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Goals of the session:

• Overview of the adult learning process

• Understand when and why Small Group Teaching is effective

• Strategies to use during teaching sessions

• Identify potential teaching challenges
The Adult Learning Process

Adult learners want:

• To help set the learning objectives
• To use what they learn right away
• To problem solve, not just learn facts
• Feedback, so they can evaluate their own progress
Adult Learning Process

Help set the learning objectives → Collaborative

Use what they learn right away → Clinically relevant

Problem solve → Practical

Includes feedback → Encourages self-assessment

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Small Group Teaching:

Context

Teacher \rightarrow Learner

Content

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Small Group Teaching

Shared responsibility for the learning process
Small Group Teaching:

Opportunities for the teacher-

• To assess the learner’s needs and learning agenda
• To highlight misconceptions and individual knowledge gaps
• To observe learner’s reasoning skills
• To encourage self-assessment (metacognition)
Small Group Teaching:

• Examples of small group teaching

• When is this format useful?
Small Group Teaching: Planning the Session

Before you start...

Who?
What?
How?
"And so you just threw everything together? ... Mathews, a posse is something you have to organize."
Small Group Teaching: Planning the Session

• **Who** are your learners?
  – Motivation level?
  – Background knowledge?
  – What do they want to learn?
Small Group Teaching: Planning the Session

• **What** do you want to accomplish in the session?
  – “Need to know” vs “Nice to know”
  – What **three** points should they walk away with?
Small Group Teaching: Planning the Session

• **How** will you meet your teaching goals?
  – Techniques to use
  – Keep them involved

• **How** will you know that they are learning?
Small Group Session Work Sheet:

• **Who** are your learners?

• **What** do you want to accomplish in the session?

• **What** is challenges do you anticipate?

• **How** will you meet your teaching goals?

• **How** will you know that they are learning?
Small Group Session Work Sheet:

• **Who?**
  - Chief Residents, experienced teachers; tired from sitting and listening to talks

• **What?**
  - Provide some specific, useful techniques, likely to be used, encourage experimentation

• **How?**
  - Interactive didactic, modeling some of the tips during the session
  - Take home points on the 3x5 card

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Small Group Teaching: Running the Session

Your role:

“facilitator” vs “the UPS guy”
Small Group Teaching:

Teacher \[\rightarrow\] Learner

Context

Teacher \[\rightarrow\] Content

Learner

Content

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Small Group Teaching: Running the Session

Your role:

• prepare the general plan for the session
• set the tone for the session
• pay attention to the environment
• encourage participation
• keep the discussion on track
• time management
Adult Learning Process

- Collaborative
- Clinically relevant
- Practical
- Encourages self-assessment
Small Group Teaching: Running the Session

Tips and Techniques
Small Group Teaching: Running the Session

Tips and Techniques:
- Know their names and use them
- Learners should talk to each other
- Count to 10
- The “Coffee Cup Technique”
- 3 x 5 cards
- Use summary statements for key points

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Small Group Learning: Running the Session

Using Questions as Teaching Tools:
Small Group Learning: Using Questions as Teaching Tools

Ask about something that is worth knowing
Small Group Learning: By asking questions you can...

• Assess learners knowledge level
  
  \textit{(What do they \textbf{NEED} to know?)}

• Elicit their learning agenda
  
  \textit{(What do they \textbf{WANT} to know?)}

• Promote active thinking

• Assess their understanding of what is being discussed
  
  \textit{(Links new concepts with “real life” scenarios)}

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Small Group Learning: Using Questions as Teaching Tools

Types of Questions:

- **Recall**: first level of interaction with the material (list, name, report, define, etc)

- **Analysis/Synthesis**: demonstrate understanding (compare, categorize, distinguish, design, etc.)

- **Application**: apply new concepts to a specific clinical setting (interpret, apply, demonstrate, choose, etc)
What challenges have you faced in small group teaching?
Small Group Learning: Challenges

- Group with learners with different knowledge levels
- The “Learner with Frontal Release”
- The “Know it All”
- The “Bored Learner”--“Sleeping Learner”
- The “Shy Learner”

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Small Group Teaching: Challenges

• Unpredictability of the session - requires creativity and a tolerance for the unknown
• Learner’s needs and interests may not be what you predicted
• “Thinking on your feet” to refine or revise the learning objectives
• Group dynamics

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Small Group Learning: Keys to success

1) Plan ahead
2) Pay attention to the process, not just the content
3) Self-assessment: Learners AND teachers

*) Experiment
Now, the 3x5 card...