Teaching in a Small Group
CRIT 2016

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Goals of the session:

- Overview of the adult learning process

- Understand when and why Small Group learning is effective

- Describe strategies to use during sessions

- Identify 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**
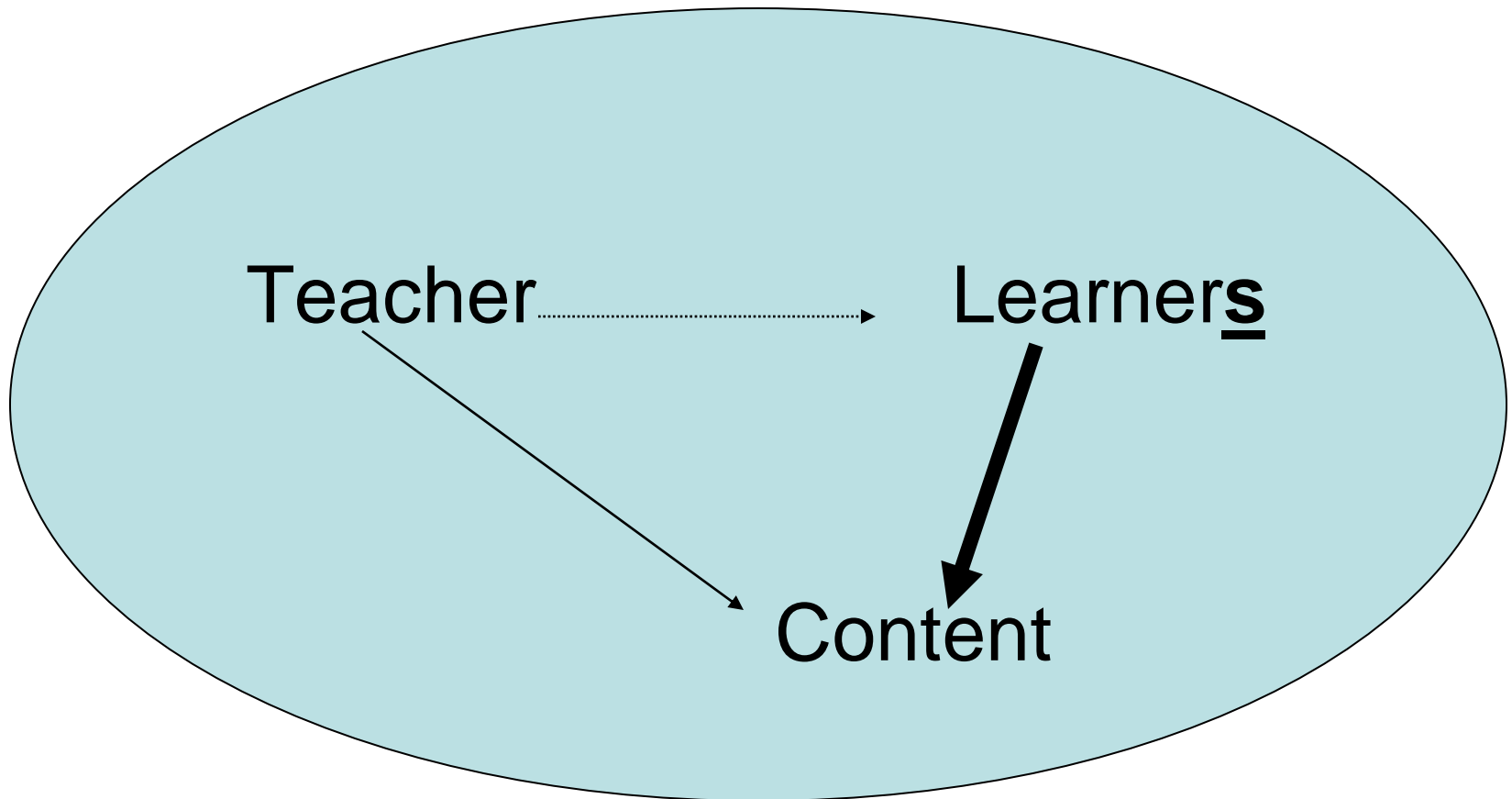
Problem solve ⟶ **Practical**

Includes feedback ⟶ **Encourages self-assessment**

Small Group Learning

- Origin: 1700s German research seminars and 1800s Oxford tutorials

- Defined by DIALOGUE and COLLABORATION= Student engagement

Small group teaching: The Higher Education Academy
David Mills and Patrick Alexander
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/small_group_teaching_1.pdf

Small Group Session Dynamics:

Context

Teacher ·····················▸ Learner**s**

Content

Small Group Learning:

- Promotes higher level of reflective thinking, problem solving, concept application, attitudinal change

- Collaborative, based on interaction
  - Between learners
  - Between teacher and learner
  - Between <u>existing</u> and <u>new</u> information

Small Group Learning

Shared responsibility for the learning process

Small Group Learning

Shared responsibility for the learning process

Teachers become learners, too

Small Group Learning

Shared responsibility for the learning process

Teachers become learners, too

Defined by the *process*

Small Group Dynamics: Role of the Teacher

- ***Coordinate*** as much as *Communicate*
- ***Facilitate***, rather than *direct*
- ***"Scaffolding"*** around which the learner organizes new information
- ***Inspire*** *rather than inform*

Approaches to Small Group Learning and Teaching
Learning and Teaching Centre University of Glasgow
http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_12157_en.pdf

Small Group Opportunities:

- To assess the learner's needs and learning agenda
- To highlight misconceptions and individual knowledge gaps - *unlearning*
- To observe learner's reasoning skills
- To encourage self-assessment (metacognition)
- To model good question development
- To provide immediate feedback

Small Group Learning: Preparation

- Just show up and start a conversation?

- Balance of informality and academic rigor

- Informal and unstructured in order to work, but…
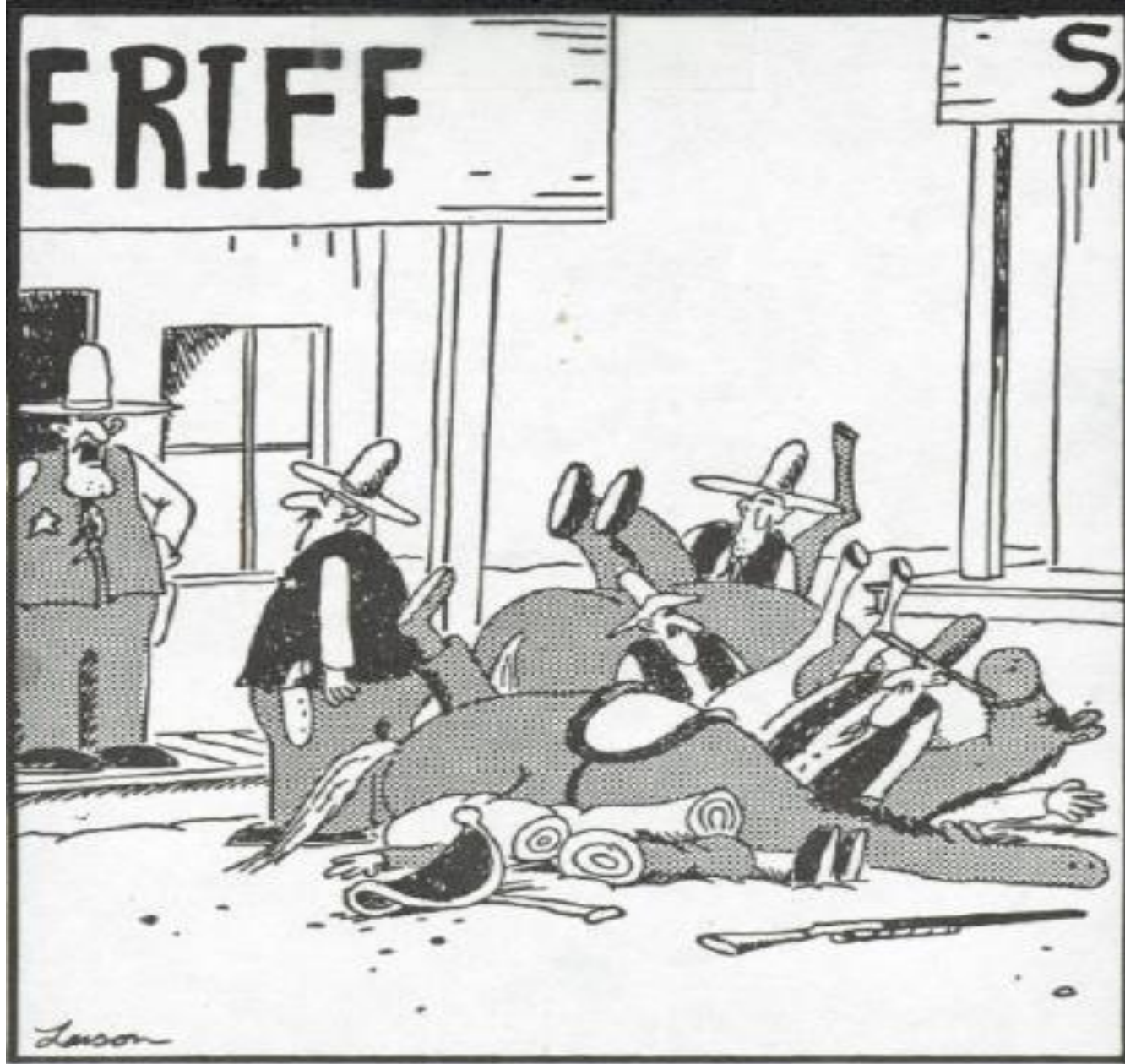
"And so you just threw everything together? ... Mathews, a posse is something you have to *organize*."

Small Group Teaching: Planning the Session

Before you start...

Who?

What?

How?

Small Group Teaching: Planning the Session

- **<u>Who</u>** are your learners?
  - Motivation level?
  - Background knowledge?
  - What do they want to learn?

Small Group Teaching: Planning the Session

- **<u>What</u>** do you want to accomplish in the session?
  - "Need to know" vs "Nice to know"
  - What <u>three</u> points should they walk away with?

Small Group Teaching: Planning the Session

- **<u>How</u>** will you meet your teaching goals?
  - Techniques to use
  - Keep them involved

- **<u>How</u>** 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?**
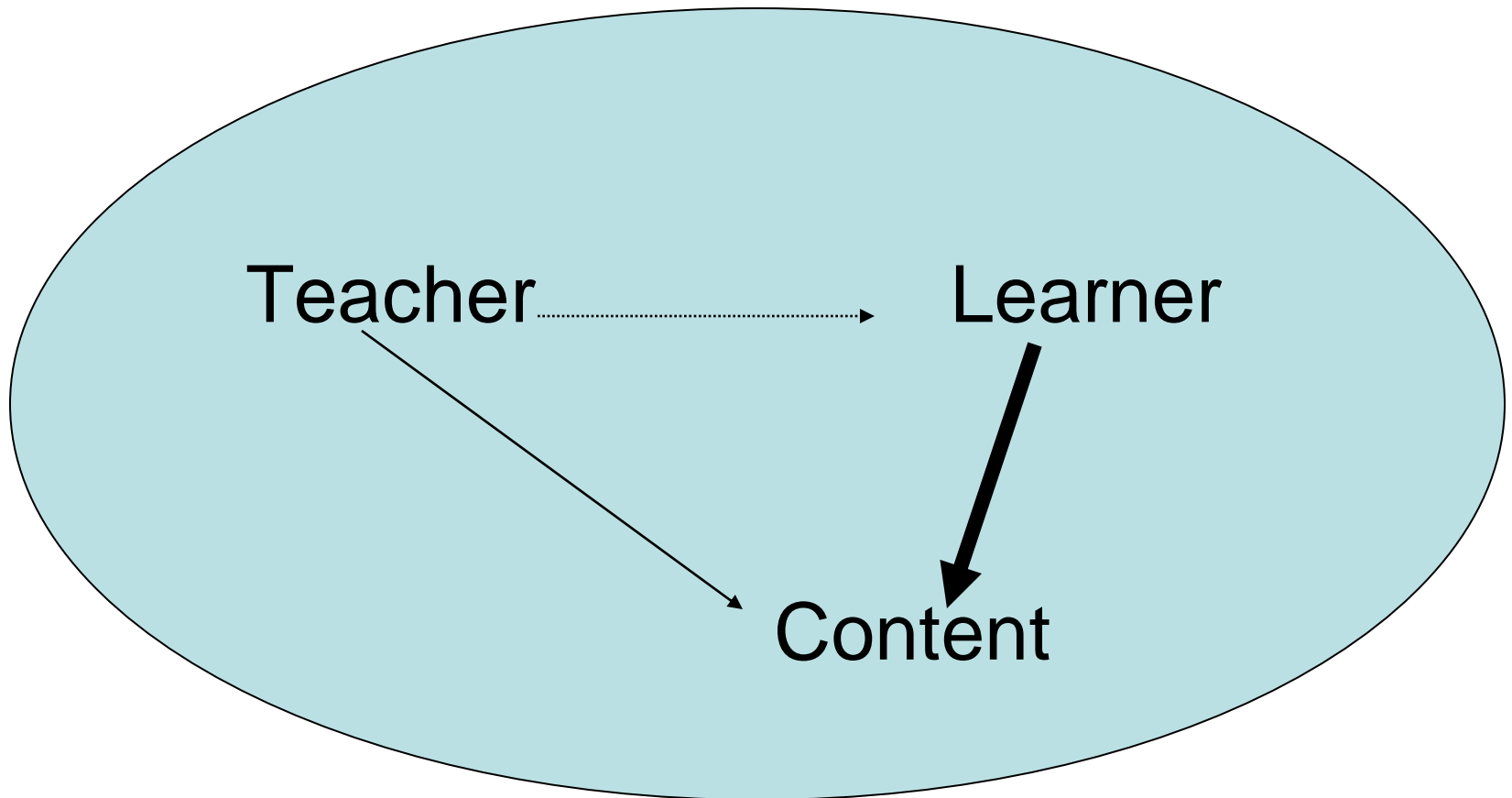
-Provide some specific, useful techniques, likely to be used, encourage experimentation

- **How ?**

- Interactive didactic, modeling some of the tips during the session

- Take home points on the 3x5 card

Small Group Teaching:

Context

Teacher → Learner

Content

Learning **NEW** information depends on **EXISTING** information

Small Groups: 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
- help the learners prepare – ADVANCE ORGANIZERS; PRIMING
- **If students are silent, it's your problem, not theirs**

KWL Exercise

What do you KNOW?	What do you want to KNOW?	What did you LEARN?

Small Groups: Their Role

- The GOOGLER
- The Note Taker
- The Time Keeper

- Come prepared- pre-reading, case review, define questions, hot topics

- **Set high expectations: "You <u>will</u> learn something today"**

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**

Small Group Teaching: Running the Session

Tips and Techniques:

- Know their names- and use them
- **Learners should talk to each other**

Small Group Teaching: Running the Session

Tips and Techniques:

- Know their names- and use them
- Learners should talk to each other
- **Count to 10**

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"**

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**

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**

Small Group Learning: Running the Session

Using Questions as Teaching Tools:

Questions can:

- Activate prior knowledge

- Explore misconceptions

- Reinforce accurate reasoning

- Promote additional insight

- **"Right answer" vs "Reasoning Skills"**

Small Group Learning:
By asking questions you can...

- Assess learners knowledge level: "*NEED to know?*"

- Elicit their learning agenda: "*WANT to know/*"

- Promote active thinking

- Assess their understanding of what is being discussed: *Link new concepts with "real life" scenarios*

Small Group Learning:
Using Questions as Teaching Tools

"Pimping" vs "Teaching"

Small Group Learning:
Using Questions as Teaching Tools

- "Pimping" vs "Teaching"
    - Brancati JAMA 1989
    - Detsky JAMA 2009

- What is the "Socratic Method"?

Socrates used questions as teaching tools, not pimping…

Questions about unknowable "truth"

- Existing beliefs placed in question

- Confusion and Doubt

- CURIOSITY

- Search for further truth through discussion

Small Group: Types of Questions

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

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

- **Application:** apply new concepts to a specific clinical setting *(interpret, apply, demonstrate, choose)*

Small Group Learning:
Using Questions as Teaching Tools

Ask about something that is worth knowing

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"

Small Group Teaching: Challenges

- Unpredictability of the session- creativity and intellectual nimbleness

- Learner's needs and interests not predicted- tolerance of uncertainty

- Group dynamics

- "I don't know the answer" but still maintain a "Confident teaching persona"?

Small Group Teaching: When it's over-

- Did your learners learn?
- What did they learn?
- Why did they learn?

- What did **_you_** learn?

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…

Suggestions

- **The Frontal Release Learner:**
  - "Can you link what you just said with the point that Timmy raised?"
  - "How do you know that, Jemima? Describe the evidence to support your point. Sam, what evidence would you need to substantiate Jemima's assertion?"
  - "Can you state/describe that another way?"
  - "Dan, you heard what Jemima shared. What would change if   XXX was YYY?"
- **The Bored Learner:**
  - "Mary, can you summarize the discussion so far? Where should we head next?
  - Sigmund, what if the patient was withdrawing now? Would you suggest anything different?"
- **The Shy Learner:**
  - "Greg, would you keep time, and tell us when we hot the 15 min mark?"
  - "We haven't heard from everyone yet. Alex, do you have something to add? Then Joey next."
- **The Know it All**:
  - "What evidence would you want Dan to present to support his statement, Angela, if you were going to convince someone else of that point?"
  - "Others may agree with you, Dan, but let's take another look at the case. Jeffrey, argue the point from a different stance."
- **The Talker**:
  - "Try waiting until 2-3 others have spoken, before speaking again"
  - "Before you go on, let's see if someone else has an opinion on that."
  - "For this group to be successful, everyone has to contribute. What could _you_ do to help make that happen?"
  - "We seem to be going over the same ground all over again. Is that because we've run out of new ideas?"

<u>Suggestions</u>:

- Starting:
  - Set ground rules, even if you think they are obvious
  - Distribute roles
  - Clarify time, and establish milestones for the discussion
- Wrapping up:
  - "What are two of the most important ideas that have emerged from this discussion?"
  - "What do you understand better now?"
  - "What questions remain for you? How are you going to find the answers?"
  - "What was confusing in the discussion today?"

Additional Resources:

1- **Teaching Toolkit: Large and Small Group Teaching**: helpful resources for teaching in large and small group, with descriptions of specific techniques to enhance learning through group interaction

    www.ucd.ie/teaching

2- **Foundation For Critical Thinking:** Paul, R. and Elder, L. (April 1997)
    www.criticalthinking.org

3- **The Socratic Method: Fostering Critical Thinking**: Discussion about the Socratic teaching method

    teaching.colostate.edu/tips/tip.cfm?tipid=53