Teaching Tools – Small Groups

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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

Andragogy: Adult Learning Theory in Perspective
Malcolm S. Knowles 1978

Adult Learning Process

Help set the

learning objectives ⟶ **Collaborative**

Use what

they learn right away ⟶ **Clinically relevant**
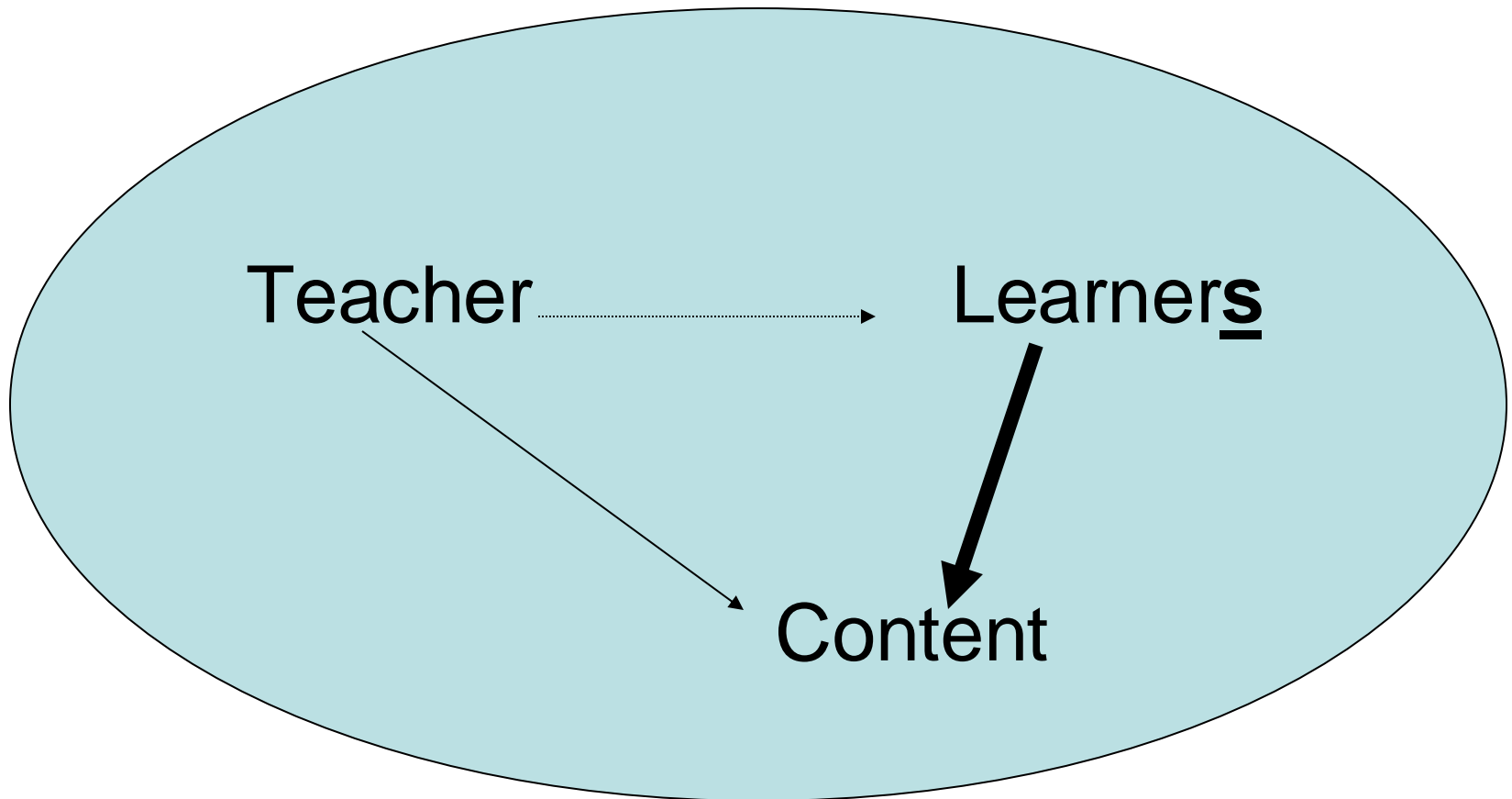
Problem solve ⟶ **Practical**

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**

Teacher ──────► Content

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

Defined by the *process*

Small Group: 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:

- Highlight misconceptions and individual knowledge gaps - ***unlearning***

- Model good question development

- 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 Opportunities:

- Assess the learner's needs and learning agenda

- Observe learner's reasoning skills

- Encourage self-assessment (metacognition)

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 Teaching:

Context

Teacher → Learner

Teacher → Content

Learner → Content
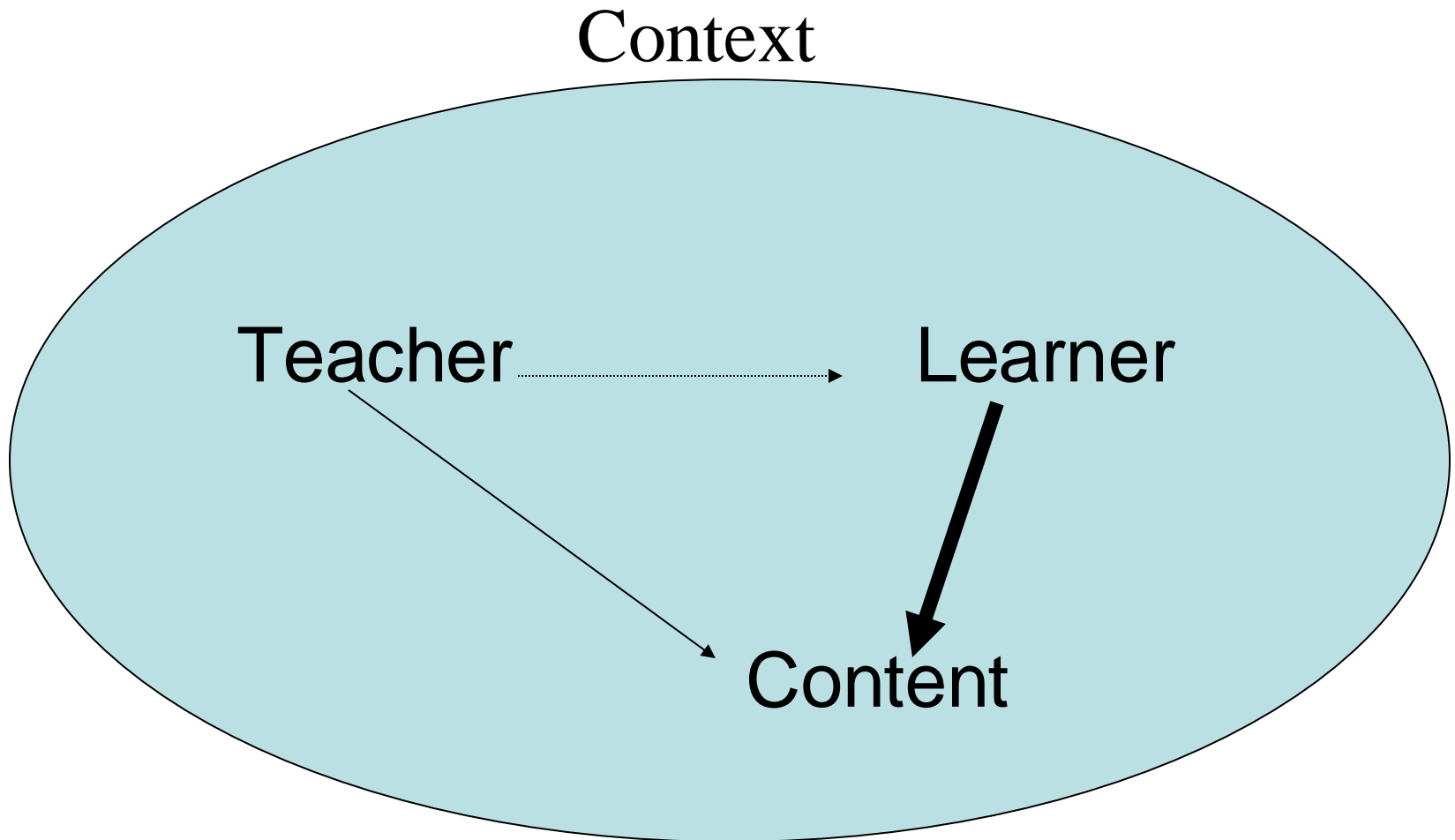
Small Groups: Your Role

- 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

Small Groups: Their Role

- The GOOGLER
- The Note Taker
- The Time Keeper

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

Adult Learning Process

- **Collaborative**
- **Clinically relevant**
- **Practical**
- **Encourages self-assessment**

Small Group Teaching: Running the Session

Tips and Techniques

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- Know their names- and use them

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- **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"**
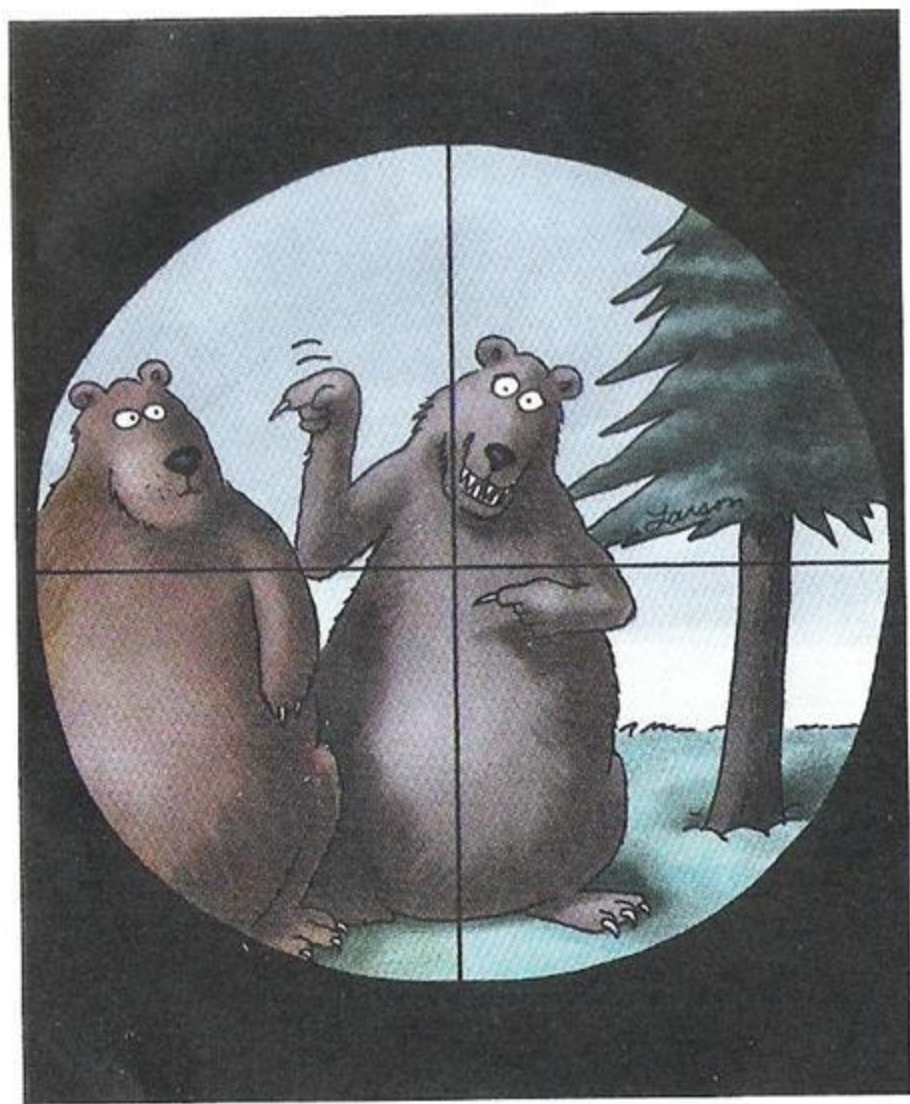
Small Group Learning:
By asking questions you can...

- 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

Small Group Teaching: When it's over-

- **Did they** learn?
- **What** did they learn?
- **Why** did they learn?

- What did **_you_** learn?

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"

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
  - "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 <u>you</u> 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?"
  - "What questions remain for you? How are you going to find the answers?"
  - "What was confusing in the discussion today?"

University of New South Wales Faculty of Medicine
http://www.nevadaadulteducation.org/nvrb/SmallGroupTeaching.pdf

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

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…