



Stritch
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Medicine

Small Group Learning in Medical Education

MS4 Teaching Elective

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Learner perspective:

Benefits . . .

Challenges . . .



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Educator perspective:

Benefits . . .

Challenges . . .

Small Group Teaching

- **Active participation**

Teaching and learning brought about through discussion among all present (size)

- **Face-to-face contact**

Effective discussion requires verbal and nonverbal communication (room setup)

- **Purposeful activity**

Identify & communicate purpose/task (learning objectives)

Small Group Teaching includes:

- 1) Managing a small group –
 - Personalities
 - Learning Styles
 - Cultural/generational differences
 - Prior knowledge
 - Student behaviors
- 2) Task – clarification of purpose, expectations, roles
- 3) Maintenance – open, trustful, supporting climate for discussion; responsibility of students & teacher

Managing: strive to have problems in group, solved by the group --

- Dominant group member
- Reticent group member
- “Jokey” or offensive group member
- Late or absent group member
- Over-dependent group member

Task: Structure in small group teaching

Develop clear learning objectives

Plan session

- proceed with a purpose
- flow of session
- time efficient / awareness / flexibility

Adapt role to task

Maintenance: Evaluating small group teaching and learning

Product – achievement of task(s); objectives of session met

Process – method used to achieve objectives

Did everyone in the group participate?

Did student(s) take responsibility for their learning?

Did the group work effectively?

(forms <http://www.stitch.luc.edu/lumen/>)

Expectations of Learners

“in small group learning, the positive commitment of the individual learner is critical to it’s success.”

- Preparation
- Active and constructive contribution to session
- Effectively reflecting on issues raised
- Evaluation and feedback

Expectations of Teachers

- Prepare for sessions
- Try to be the first to arrive, not the last
- Initially, states objectives and initiates process
- Invites learner input and promotes discussion
- As group develops, facilitates a process in which learners together provide much of the initiative, explore options, test hypothesis, develop solutions, review outcomes



PCM EXPECTATIONS:

Students are expected to:

1. *Have good interaction skills.*
2. *Be prepared and participate in the group.*
3. *Demonstrate knowledge of the material or facility with the skill(s) taught.*

Faculty facilitators are expected to:

1. *Guide, not teach. They will adopt a non-directive policy thereby putting the responsibility for problem solving directly on the group.*
2. *Draw out points of view and comments from the members of the group.*
3. *Provide structure and conceptual summaries of the discussions so that the general "lessons" can be identified.*
4. *Attend all faculty development sessions to become the best facilitators and advisors possible.*

Summary –

Benefits of small groups:

- encouragement of independent self-learning
- critical thinking and problem solving
- awareness of the views of others

Successful small group learning:

- effective facilitators
- positive group atmosphere
- fostering of collaboration
- adherence to small group goals
- clinical relevance; promote problem solving