

Teaching for Learning; *Bringing theory to practice*

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What are you hoping to learn this morning? How to...

- improve your teaching effectiveness
- engage or motivate learners
- enable deeper learning amongst your students



Learning Objectives

At the completion of this session, you will be able to:

- Describe characteristics of effective teaching & learning experiences
- Describe some educational theories relevant to health professional education
- Informed by these theories
 - Critically reflect on your own teaching practice
 - Design some new strategies for adapting your current practice to promote deeper learning and engagement

Our guiding framework for today: Critically reflective practice

Examining your teaching and learning experiences from a number of different lenses:

- Our autobiography as a learner of practice
- Our colleagues' experiences
- Theoretical Literature
- *Our learners' eyes*

(S Brookfield 1998)

Outline

- Your learning experiences
- Some theory
- Application to practice challenge
- Practice Tips
- Did I walk the talk?

Think about a memorable learning experience that you have had... It really had an impact on you, things really stuck.

What was it about the experience that enabled your learning?

- Teacher
- You
- Design (task /process)



What made those learning experiences so effective?



Education theories can...

- Help us reflect on and improve our skills as facilitators of learning
 - Provide a rationale for choosing teaching methods & solving problems
 - Provide frames for creating educational experiments & innovations
- Enhance the development of competence and a professional identity in learners

Today

- Primarily an individual focus in selecting theories / paradigms of learning
- Not a social focus that views learning as tied to its context and embedded in the social processes there
 - Situated learning
 - Social cognitive theory
 - Workplace based learning

Mann 2011

Adult Learning How many of you have ever...



Your learning path

- Did you have a problem that led you to identify a learning need?
- Did you set goals for yourself?
(learning objectives)
- Did you have a deadline?
- Did you go to different places & sources to get what you need to help you meet those goals?
(learning strategies and resources)
- How did you know that you achieved your goals?
(evidence of accomplishment)

Andragogy's key assumptions *(adult learning principles)*

Adults Learners:

- See themselves as independent & self-directing
- Have a wealth of experience which is a resource
- Are more motivated by internal drivers than by external ones
- Value learning that is relevant and helpful for their current practices
- Are more interested in problem-centred approaches than in subject-centred ones

(Knowles 1968)

Implications for Teaching

- Advise re the need to know
- Utilize prior experience or provide them with experiences that can be utilized
- Embed teaching & learning in “real” problems
- Involve learners in planning of relevant methods & curricular content
- Create a collaborative learning climate of trust & confidence
- Encourage and support learners in developing their own learning objectives and plans

→ self-directed learners

The learning contract

LEARNING CONTRACT FOR THE EDUCATION SCHOLARS PROGRAM: YEAR 1

Name: _____ Date: September 28, 2010

OBJECTIVES What are you going to learn? <i>(What are your objectives)</i>	METHODS How are you going to learn it? <i>(What are the resources that you need and strategies that you are going to use)</i>	EVIDENCE How are you going to know that you learned it? <i>(What will be your evidence)</i>	VERIFICATION How are you going to prove that you learned it?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Self-directed Learning

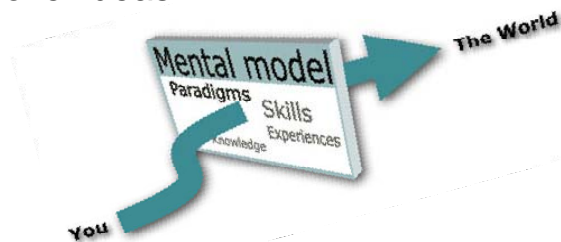
- A goal to strive for
- Aligned with lifelong learning
- Requires that students must have some control over the learning process
- Recognizes that students exist along a continuum depending on what they know

Essential skills to facilitate self-directed learning

- Self-assessment skills
- Identification of learning gaps
- Defining learning objectives
- Selecting & locating learning resources
- Critical appraisal
- Critical reflection on their learning process & outcomes

Constructivism

- Learning is about
 - trying to organize one's thoughts & ideas to sensibly connect to each other &
 - adapting one's thinking to create meaning from novel ideas & experiences



Constructivism

We adjust our



by:

Assimilation - new info is simply added to existing cognitive structures

Accommodation - the intellectual organization has to change to adjust to the new idea

Key notions for learning

- New learning is constructed on the framework of existing knowledge / experience
- Learning is an active process that occurs with interaction
 - working with & discussing it
 - connecting it with what is already known
 - applying it to new situations & problems
- Storage & retrieval are influenced by
 - attributing meaning
 - relevant practice
 - the context in which it is learned



(G Regehr 1996, K Mann 2002)

Implications for teaching

- Take into account a learner's existing knowledge
- Facilitate the connection of new learning to their existing knowledge
 - how it applies to what they know & need to do
- Ensure relevancy of learning situations / problems
- Engage learners in active learning processes → to construct new knowledge
- Teacher guides and facilitates



Active learning processes

- Relevant problem solving & discussion
- Encourage students to
 - think out loud
 - ask questions
 - participate in cognitive conflict
 - develop alternative explanations & hypotheses
 - experiment
 - make their own analogies & conclusions

Social constructivism



- Learning occurs through dialogue & social dynamics within a social context
- The process of engagement with others through discussion
 - refines thinking & performance
 - creates meaning & understanding through elaboration & the development of connections

“Social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition” Vygotsky 1978

Key assumptions



- Knowledge is actively constructed through social collaboration:
 - dialogue about each others' thinking, problem-solving & learning
- The framework of existing knowledge is the knowledge of the entire community of learners
- Motivation to learn is driven by:
 - rewards from the knowledge community
 - internal drive to know & understand

Implications for Teaching



- Use groups that require learners to collaborate & work together
- Appreciate diversity & debates as valued perspectives & processes to construct collective knowledge
- Create an atmosphere of trust & collaboration
- Reinforce contributions made by all participants

Time to... Apply Theory to your Practice

- Divide yourselves into groups of 3
- Discuss how you plan to adapt your current teaching practice based on the theory assigned to your table
- Decide on 1 – 2 tips you would like to share in a 1 minute sound bite
- Presenter's table will get prizes
- You have 10 mins

Group Assignments

- 1 – Andragogy
- 2 – Constructivism
- 3 – Social constructivism



Andragogy



I tried to

- Identify/establish a need
 - what you might want to learn, why care
- Utilize your prior experience as learners & practitioners
 - think pair share, your adult learning projects
- Embed teaching & learning in “real” problems
- Create a climate of partnership, trust & confidence

Constructivism



I tried to

- Tap into your mental models t
existing understanding
 - previous experiences as a learner and teacher

- Help make the connections – by utilizing examples
from my practice to link with the theories

- Actively engaged you in relevant problem solving
 - to adapt your models → meaning
 - to encourage you to develop hypotheses & ideas
for action

Social Constructivism



I tried to

- Use groups in our teaching
- Create a culture of collaboration by sharing of
experiences and ideas
- Encourage peer dialogue, interactivity & problem
solving to facilitate understanding, refining
thinking and generation of ideas
- Create a supportive and fun environment

