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)
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>METHODS</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>VERIFICATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are you going to learn? (What are your objectives)</td>
<td>How are you going to learn it? (What are the resources that you need and strategies that you are going to use)</td>
<td>How are you going to know that you learned it? (What will be your evidence)</td>
<td>How are you going to prove that you learned it?</td>
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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

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
Tell us your Tips!

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 to activate your pre-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
You are a curriculum