

## Facilitating a Small Group

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### Welcome!

- Break into "small" groups. Interview each other. Take turns introducing someone other than yourself to the entire group.

### Facilitating a Small Group

- Teaching is both an art and science
- Classroom style, presence, rapport less scientific
- Facilitated learning more productive and enjoyable
- Today:
  - Facilitation principles
  - Small group management
  - Demonstration evolutions

### What is facilitation?

- "Make easier"
- Method of student interaction
  - Coaching, mentoring and positive reinforcement
- AKA: experiential learning, constructivist learning, and invitational learning

- Must understand your audience

### Needs Assessment

- How do each of you currently use small groups?
- Are there any problems you are seeking solutions for in today's session?

### Adult Learner Characteristics

- Autonomous, self-directed, goal-oriented
  - Know student's goals
- Appreciate organization, clearly defined goals, and objectives
- Need to "buy-in"
  - Relevance, utility, context
  - Direct, concrete experiences

applicable to real world

- Activities integrated into overall learning experience

### Adult Learning Environment

- Function best in a student centered environment
  - Ego involvement
- Lectures are instructor centered
- Small group activities are student centered
  - Get student's perspectives about what to cover
  - Teachers facilitate

### Adult Learning Delivery

- Vary coverage based upon feedback
  - Students support processes with ownership
- Constant feedback
  - Performance evaluation
  - performance improvement
  - Allowed input into the feedback process
- Induce discovery--don't give--the correct answer
- Need small group activities to move thru levels of learning
  - Transfer of learning for adults not automatic and needs facilitation

### Demonstration Activity

- Instructions:
  - Interview the person to your right.
  - You may take notes.
  - Ask: full name, nickname, level of training, years of EMS experience, primary agency, how many days attending conference, arrived alone or with group, do they use e-mail, and one interesting fact about that person.
- Time:
  - 1 minute to arrange
  - 4 minutes to interview
  - 30 second introduction
  - Alert 2 minute remaining

### **Plenary Recap**

- Better use of time?
- Did guidelines and time frame focus and motivate productivity?
- Do we know more?
- Was there a sacrifice of spontaneity?
- Real world: Group size, ICS span of control.

### **Motivating the adult learner**

- Social relationships
- External expectations
- Social welfare
- Personal enhancement
- Escape/stimulation
- Cognitive interest

**In small groups, the critical elements of adult learning still apply.**

### **Motivation**

- Set an appropriate stress level
  - Expectation
  - Performance
  - Standards
- EMS classes promote higher stress because students responsible for human life

### **Reinforcement**

- Reinforcement should be routine to maintain consistent positive behavior
- Avoid negative reinforcement
  - Extinction of the undesirable behavior
  - May also alienate student
- Provide feedback from instructor, peers, and other students
- Interested student increases his responsibility for learning

### **Challenge/Difficulty**

- Customize difficulty to audience, prerequisites, time frame
- Challenge students
- It might be a slightly different level of difficulty for each student

### **Retention**

- Student cannot retain what is not learned
- Students must retain the information to benefit
- Information must be retained before it can be transferred
  - The instructor's job: Not lecture, help retain relevant information
  - Retention is directly related to initial learning
- Retention is enhanced by practice during learning

### **Transference**

- Ability to use the information learned in a new setting
- Positive
  - Student uses the learned behavior
- Negative
  - Learned behavior not used or applied incorrectly
- Optimize transference by reaching all three domains of learning

### **Key Concepts of Facilitation**

- Create action in the classroom
  - Avoid lecturing
  - Engage students in learning through activities
  - Shift in mindset
- ### **Classroom Layout Sets The Tone**
- Problem solving/brainstorming
  - Decision making
  - Discussion
  - Group work: tables and semi-private or secluded workspaces
  - Arrange to deflect focus from instructor to group, preserving interaction

### **Layouts**

### **Instructor-Group Interaction**

- Induce expectation students will learn
- Be patient. Let it evolve
- Guide via reinforcement rather than

explicitly control

- Student success will dynamically modify expectation

- Some persist as passive learners

### **Lecturing Doesn't Facilitate Facilitation**

- Time-honored, instructor-centered technique
- Disseminating a lot of information quickly
- Convenient, predictable with instructor control
- Easier to schedule, cost efficient
- Default practice in the classroom
- Does not lead to active learning

### **Move Beyond Simple Lectures**

- Build interest
- Maximize understanding and retention
- Involve participants
- Reinforce what has been presented
- Say less and allow students to do more

### **Altering Approach for Facilitation**

- Present highlights to whole class
  - Handout pertinent points
  - Focus on practical aspects
- Provide periodic review activities by participants
- Reinforce material in small groups with several instructors
- Provide an application problem
- Spot challenges and ask about concepts
- Play games

### **Small Group Work**

- Effective methods for active learning
  - Form groups quickly – time is precious
- In some settings, using the same group over and over again is best
- In others the groups are better when changed
- Vary skill levels to even the level of

each group

### **Selecting Groups**

- Randomly
  - Counting off, using letters, colored stickers, etc.
  - Allows students some control in the sorting process
- Teacher controlled
  - To separate or match students
  - Set specific group characteristics
- Student controlled
  - Effective to solicit more active student participation

### **Managing Groups Effectively**

- Best with teams of four
  - Peer facilitators may be added as a fifth member
  - Remember span of control?
- Agree upon the ground rules up front
  - Prerequisites: Punctuality, prepared
  - Participants expected to share information
  - Respect the views, values and ideas of others
  - Other rules as agreed upon by the members

- Assign clear tasks

### **Rotate Group Roles**

- Keep everyone active and avoid favoritism
- Discussion leader
  - Keeps group on track and maintains participation
- Recorder
  - Records strategies, unresolved issues, data
- Reporter/Spokesperson
- Accuracy coach and timekeeper
  - Checks understanding of the group
  - Finds resources and manages time

### **Using Groups With Large Classes/Inexperienced Students**

- Well defined activities with clear

objectives

- Bring the class together for discussion and/or clarification at frequent intervals
- Plan both group and individual assignments
- Look for signs of behavior that undermine group function
- Use peer facilitator to assist group

### **Resolving conflict within groups...**

#### **Level 1: Preventing Escalation**

- Monitor group for early signs of conflict
- Intervene immediately
- Use group evaluations to help control individual student behavior
- Encourage spontaneous verbal feedback

#### **Level 2: Empowering Students**

- Listen to student concerns
- Encourage students to resolve conflict
- Coach students on possible resolution strategies

#### **Level 3: Resolving Conflict**

- Establish and review ground rules for the discussion
- Each student to presents point of view while others listen
- Ask each student to define ideal outcome
- Facilitate discussion of possible outcomes

#### **Level 4: Instructor Intervention**

- Refer to course syllabus
- Refer to student manual
- Possibly involve other members of the teaching team

#### **Facilitating Discussions**

- Discussion is one of the best forms of participatory lecturing
- Effective for:
  - Recertification or refresher classes

during a review of concepts

- Topics involving opinions
- Getting started or wrapping up a classroom session

#### **Tips for Facilitating Discussion**

- Involve all students
  - Consider small groups discussing the same idea to include all students
- Redirect inattentive students back to the group
- Move the discussion around the class (e.g., via prop or some other strategy)

#### **Facilitator Actions**

- You don't have to comment on each person's contribution
- Paraphrase: check your understanding and the students
- Compliment good comments
- Redirect an inaccurate/incorrect statements to the class for correction
- Disagree gently

#### **Mediate Differences In Opinion**

- Mediation=balancing act
  - Sustain discussion without interjecting yourself as authority and impairing momentum
- Encourage students to back up their statements with facts
- Remind everyone to respect differing opinions
- Consolidate ideas and summarize
- Provide follow-up information for additional study or reading

#### **Sustaining Momentum**

- Elaborate
  - Suggest a new way, even when the student answered correctly
- Energize
  - Quicken your responses
  - Use appropriate humor
  - Prod students for an answer

#### **Practical (psychomotor) sessions**

- Experiential (or practical) sessions help to make training active
- Remember: transference occurs with repeated practice
  - Examples: role-playing, games, simulations, and problem-solving tasks

#### **Tips for Starting Practical Sessions**

- Explain the objectives, benefits, overview, then specifics
- New equipment?
  - Give directions before equipment or supplies
  - Or let them review equipment or setting for a minute before you give instructions
- Demonstrate complicated activities one time for the entire group
  - Include any adjunct faculty to provide consistency

#### **Down To Practical Business**

- Divide students into groups
  - Small enough size so all participate
  - Keep the activity moving
  - Odd number? Recorders, peer evaluators
- Set and inform students of the time limit
- Anticipate repetition and review

#### **Sustaining Active Learning**

- Give impression of what they did "good" and "bad" first
- Allow other student participants to give feedback
- Positive-negative-positive feedback
  - Begin with specific positive statements
  - Constrictive criticism
  - End with positive statements

#### **Close The Deal!**

- Don't miss the opportunity to sustain active learning
- Challenge the students

- Begin with simple, rote exercises and build towards critical thinking situations
- Recap and critique at the end of each session

#### **Optimizing Practical Session Time**

- Start on time
- Give clear instructions one time
- Prepare visual information ahead of time
- Distribute handouts quickly
- Expedite group reporting
- Record on flip charts
  - No repeating of information from group to group
- Shorten discussion points—emphasize short answers
- Quicken the pace to create energy
- Come back from group work or breaks promptly

#### **Calling Participants to Order**

- Kitchen timer, watch alarm or laptop timer
- Flick light switch on and off
- "Now hear this" into the microphone
- Create a verbal wave—clap hands or everyone repeats "Time's up"
- Play music
- Unique sounds – a gavel, a bell, a dinner gong

#### **Reinforce Importance of Time**

- Start on time whether students are back or not
  - Otherwise you reinforce that it is acceptable to be late
- Designate a time keeper for the breaks who calls students back to the room

#### **Maintaining Group Order**

- Group work is not pure freedom
- Nonverbally show students you are attentive
- Refocus straying, arguing, or monopolizing

- Ignore small nuisances
- Discuss negative behaviors in private
- Encourage all students to participate
  - Call on someone who has not participated and whose hand is raised
  - Occasionally restrict participation to people who have not spoken
- New comment builds on previous idea

### **Get Personally Involved**

- Connect on a personal level
  - When you know students, they tend to control their behavior better in your presence
- Change the method you are using
  - Switch from full class to smaller groups or pairs
- Do not take personally the difficulties you encounter in the classroom setting
- Seek support from other faculty members

### **Psychomotor Activity**

- Goal: acceptably apply a KED to your spokesperson as swiftly as possible under 3 minutes to the provided skill sheet without speaking to each other.
  - Rehearse on a patient other than your spokesperson.
- Each group will demonstrate its technique
- Time:
  - 15 minutes to coordinate task
  - Alerted at 10 and 5 minutes remaining

### **Plenary Recap**

- What went well?
- What went poorly?
- Report on the issues your groups needed to coordinate, synchronize, or solve for this task?
- Comment/broaden to how you would handle these situations in a real class as a facilitator?

- What format did we just use? +-+
- ### **Classroom Control Issues With Facilitation**

- Can easily lose control with high facilitation
  - Students may perceive you are "not doing your job"
    - They are participating more actively in their learning
  - Co-workers who do not understand facilitation may also believe this
- Ensure students stay on task
  - Monitor conversations to assure they are on topic
  - Students having difficulty may give up before asking for assistance

### **Addressing Questions/Issues**

- Assist finding resources but do not get tricked into doing their work
  - Consider "3 before me" technique to foster independence
    - When asked for assistance student should be able provide at least resources tried first
    - If not, direct them to appropriate resources instead of giving the answer

### **Facilitating Activities Take Time**

- Objectives can often be met faster via lecture
- Remember: students retain more with repeated practice
- They do not argue with their own results of learning
  - If they discovered it for themselves - they own it
- Goal to assist students to think critically and at a higher level
  - Cannot be done with passive learning techniques

### **Questions?**

### **Summary**

- Shift mindset from quick, convenient

lecture

- Requires instructor is organized, attentive, prepared, and INVOLVED
- Facilitation promotes active, student-centered learning compatible with adults
- Linkage with practice fosters critical thinking
- Consider student, environmental, instructor factors
- Guide rather than control