



Leading Effective Small Group Sessions

Role of learners in effective small group sessions

- Be actively involved in the process of learning by:
 - Articulating what they know
 - Wrestling with the limits of their understanding
 - Engaging with others while seeking solutions to a problem
- Share experiences and observations
- Ask questions
- Get feedback
- Learn from peers
- Take more responsibility for their own learning
- Foster collaborative and interactive skills

Role of Small Group Leaders

- Not to lecture
- Listen
- Question
- Make visible and challenge underlying assumptions
- Encourage balanced discussion
- Allow silences
- Speak judiciously
- Pay attention to: learning climate, group process, and learner's concerns, interests and experiences.
- Allow learners to express uncertainty
- Admit knowledge limitations
- Encourage further group/self-study
- Promote active discussion by:
 - Preparing for the session
 - Previewing the content and process of discussion
 - Actively involve all learners while monitoring the group process
 - Cover content
 - Summarize the discussion

Benefits of effective small group sessions

- Stimulates thinking
- Promotes deep engagement with the topic
- Overcomes misunderstandings
- Motivates learning

Reference

Muller, J. & Irby, D. (2005). Practical teaching. How to lead effective group discussions. *The Clinical Teacher* 2(1): 10-15.