



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Interactive Teaching Methods



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Learning objectives

By the end of this session you should be able to:

- Recognise the aims and challenges of small group teaching
- Develop a good educational environment and help students learn within that environment
- Write clear objectives for a teaching session in the context of a basic session plan
- Select some interactive teaching techniques that can enhance deep learning when teaching small groups

Overview

- What are we trying to do and how difficult is it?
- A little bit of educational theory
- Some ideas for facilitating small groups
- COFFEE BREAK
- Time for us all to have a go!

Ground Rules

1. Turn mobile phones off
2. Share your ideas and be open to new ones
3. Be willing to participate and take a few risks
4. Give honest, supportive feedback to others
5. Have fun!



So, what do we need to think about?



Aims and challenges

Over to you...

- In pairs/trios:
- Discuss the **aims and challenges** you experience when teaching small groups. Select your top 3 for each of these.
- You have **3 minutes**

Teacher or student centred?



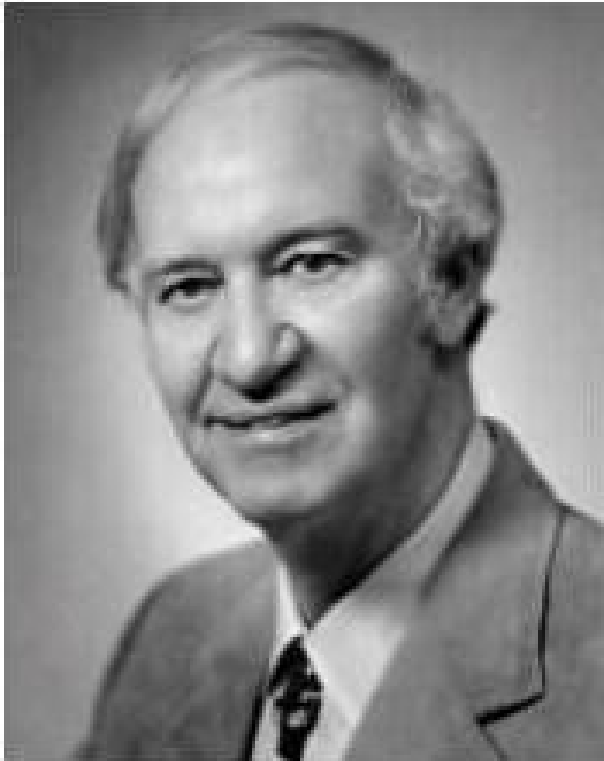
Small Group Behaviour and Dynamics

m o r e c o h e s i o n	Number of members	Changing Characteristics	m o r e t e n s i o n
	2 – 6	Little structure or organisation required; leadership fluid.	
	7 – 12	Structure and differentiation of roles begins.	
	12 – 25	Structure and role differentiation vital. Subgroups emerge. Face-to-face interaction is more difficult.	
	25 +	Positive leadership vital; sub-groups form; greater anonymity; stereotyping and projections occur.	

Jaques, 2000

Educational environment

A Theory of Adult Learning



Malcolm S Knowles
(1913-1997)

A Theory of Adult Learning

Self-directed learning

‘a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes.’

Knowles, 1975

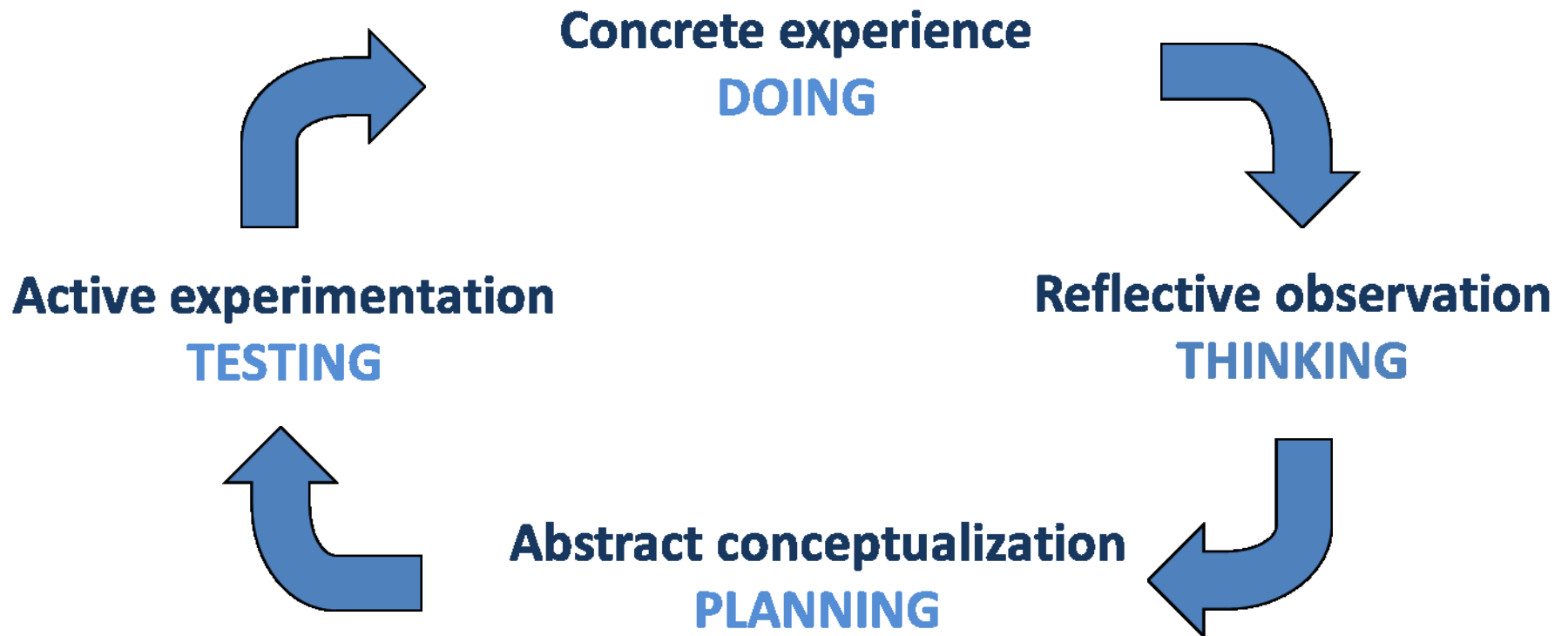
Experiential Learning



David A Kolb
(1939-)

The Experiential Learning Cycle

(Kolb *et al.* 1984)



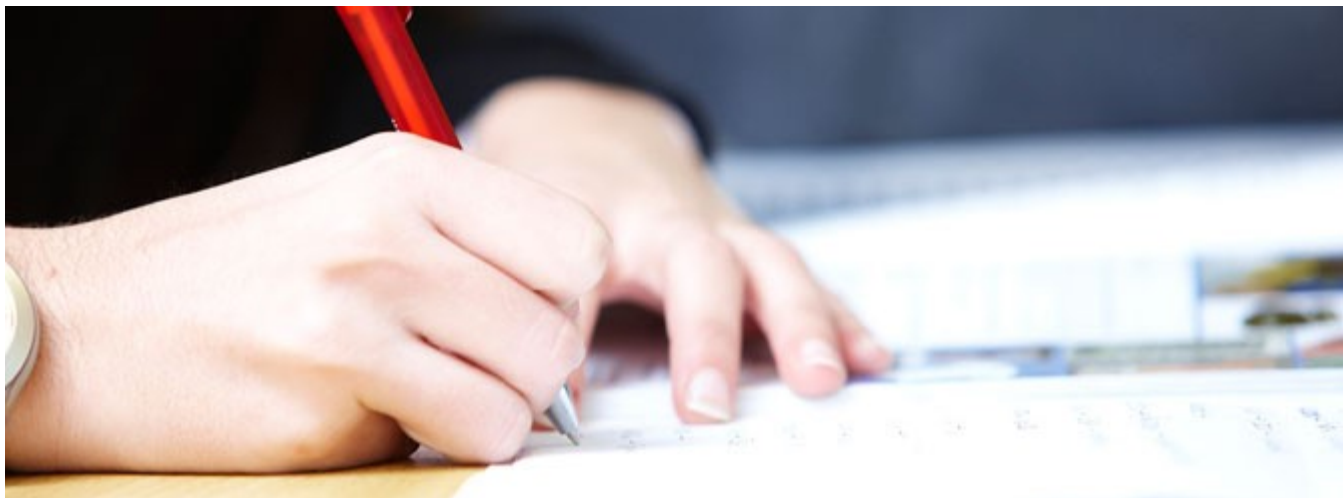
Facilitator skills

Facilitator Skills: Planning

Decide on objectives

Think about structure

Choose some ways to make things interactive



Facilitator Skills: Planning

- Set some ground rules
- Plan seating and room set up
- Outline the roles of facilitator and learners
- Prepare audio-visual aids or handouts



Facilitator Skills: Structuring

Session Structure



Structure

- Beginning (set)
- Middle (dialogue, content, body)
- End (closure)

Structure

- Tell 'em what you are going to tell 'em
- Tell 'em
- Tell 'em what you've told 'em

Beginning ('Set')

- **M** – Mood
- **M** – Motivate
- **U** – Utility
- **C** – Content overview
- **K** – Knowledge base
- **O** – Objectives

“The single most important factor influencing learning is **what the learner already knows**; ascertain that and teach him accordingly”

Ausubel, 1968.

Middle ('Body')

- must know, should know, could know
- logical sequence, bite-size chunks, recaps
- move from particular to general
- vary the stimulus

End ('Closure')

- no new material, including questions
- summarise key points
- refer back to the beginning (the 'set')
- give learners a sense of achievement
- make links to next session

Setting the Objectives

What do they
need to learn?



Over to you

Write down an **objective** for the last session that you taught

You have **2 minutes**

Keep it handy and we'll come back to it...

Aims and Objectives

An aim is a statement describing a broad or abstract intent, state or condition

An objective is a contract which describes what trainees or students will be able to do at the end of the session that they cannot do at the beginning

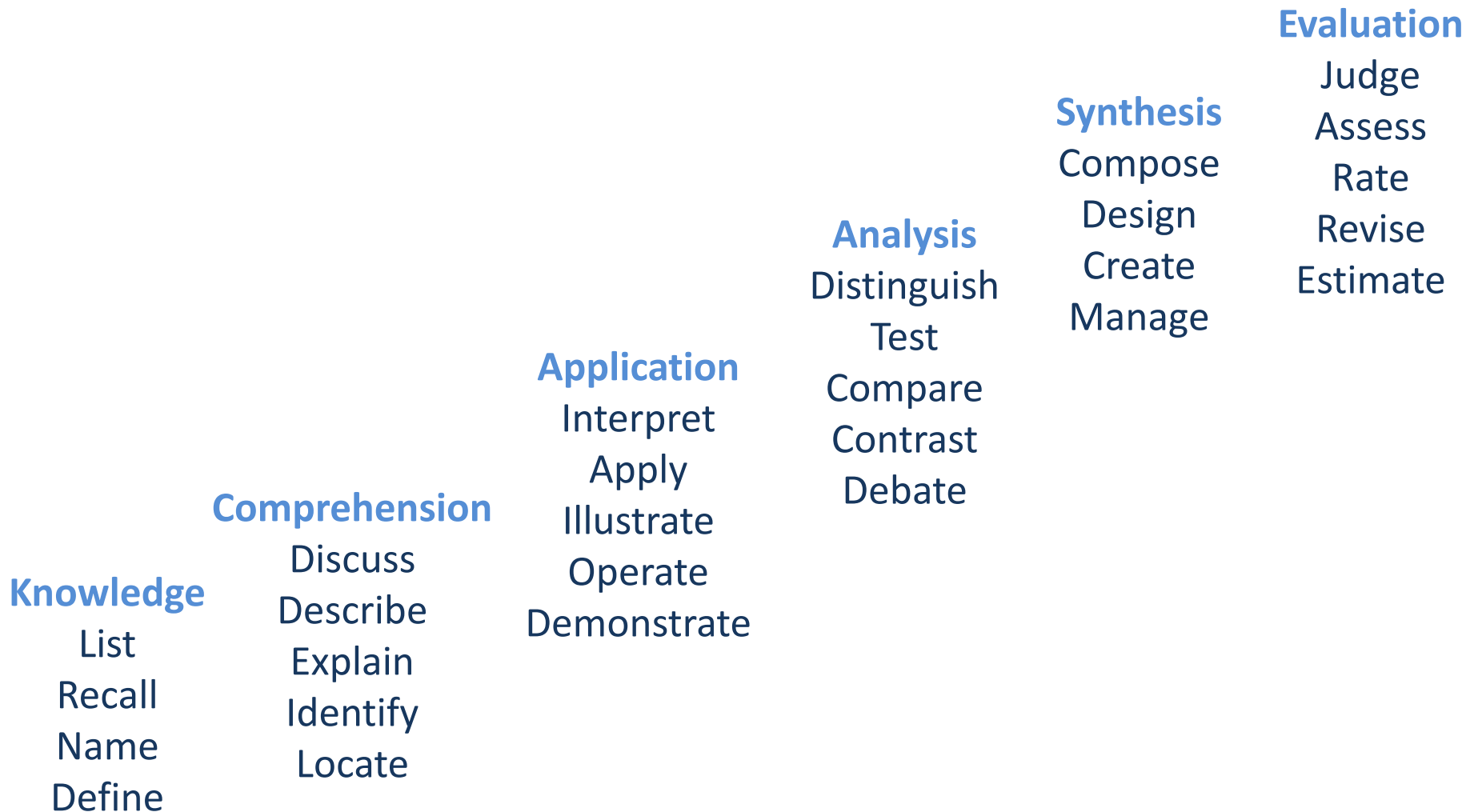
Can you spot any ambiguous verbs?

- to understand
- to list
- to think
- to construct
- to recall
- to recognise
- to know
- to state
- to define

Can you spot any **ambiguous verbs**?

- **to understand**
- to list
- **to think**
- to construct
- to recall
- to recognise
- **to know**
- to state
- to define

Hierarchies of Learning: Bloom (1956)



A good objective should be SMART

- S** Specific should specify what learners want to achieve
- M** Measurable be able to measure whether learners are meeting the objectives or not
- A** Achievable are the objectives achievable and attainable?
- R** Realistic can learners realistically achieve the objectives with the resources available?
- T** Timebound by when should the learners have achieved the set objectives?

Over to you

Return to the objective that you wrote. Based on what we have just talked about, **refine it**.

You have **2 minutes**

Facilitator Skills: Asking Questions

Differentiation

consider stage, experience and ability of learners

Closed questions

facilitate recall

Open questions

allow reflection and require higher cognitive functioning

Facilitator Skills: Asking Questions

Clarifying questions

check understanding of underlying principles

Justifying questions

access reasoning behind a response

Probing or hypothetical questions

extend thinking, explore options

(e.g. to develop differential diagnosis)

Final Thoughts on Questioning

Make sure you allow thinking time, alone or in groups
It's easier to be stupid in pairs

Provide prompts

Rephrase the question

Listen to response



Introducing interactivity

Interaction: methods to try

- Brainstorming
- Buzz groups
- Snowballing
- Rounds
- Circular interviewing
- Line-ups
- Role play





4 rules operate

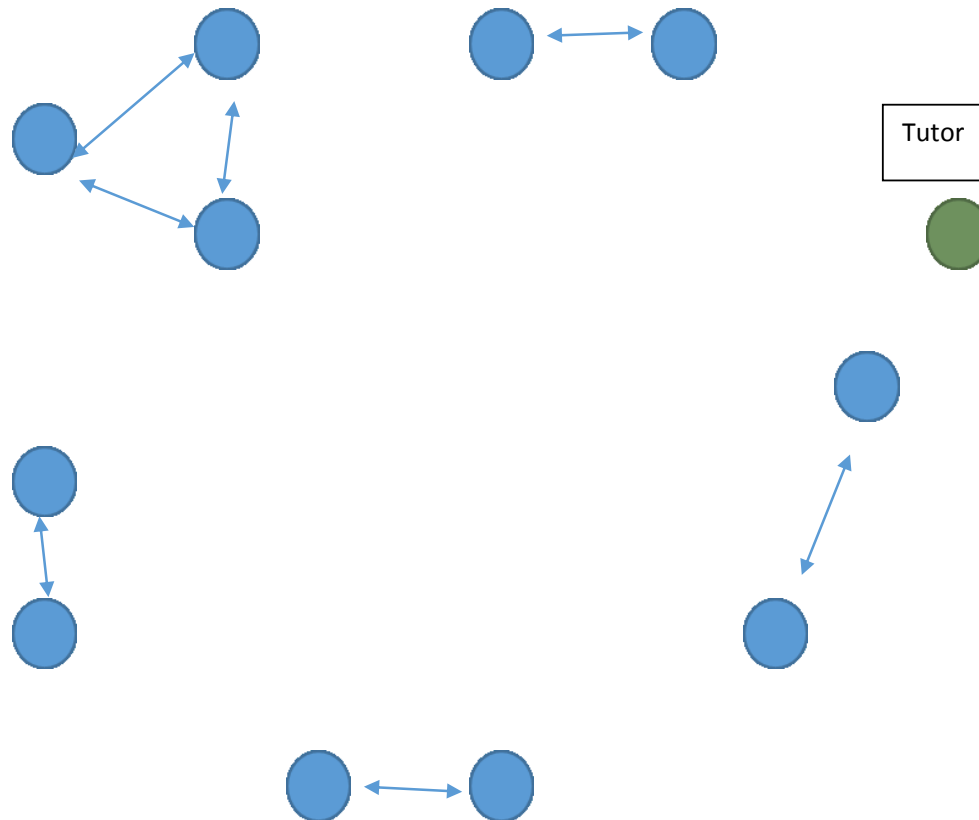
evaluation and criticism is ruled out

free-wheeling is welcomed

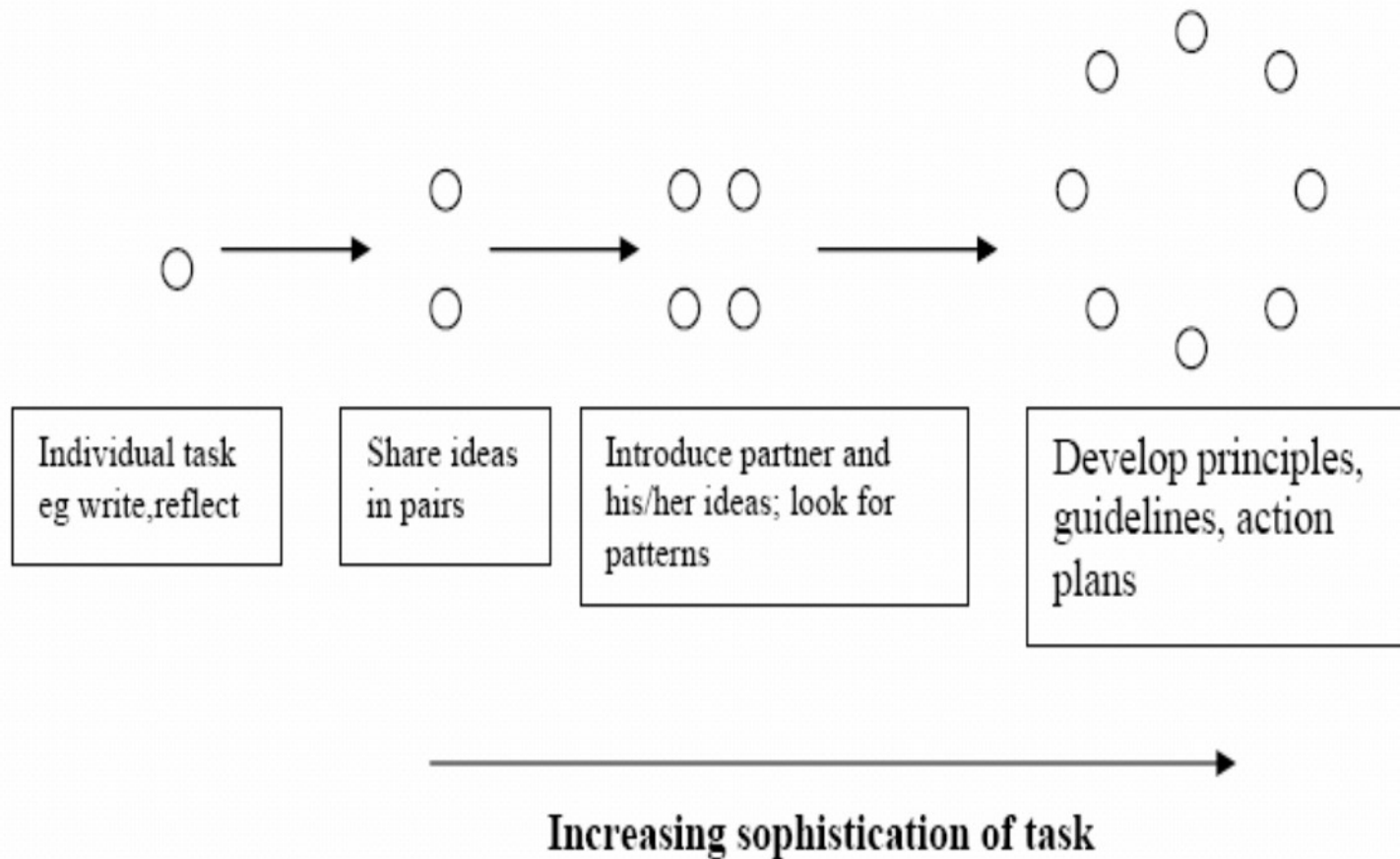
quantity is wanted

combination and improvement are sought

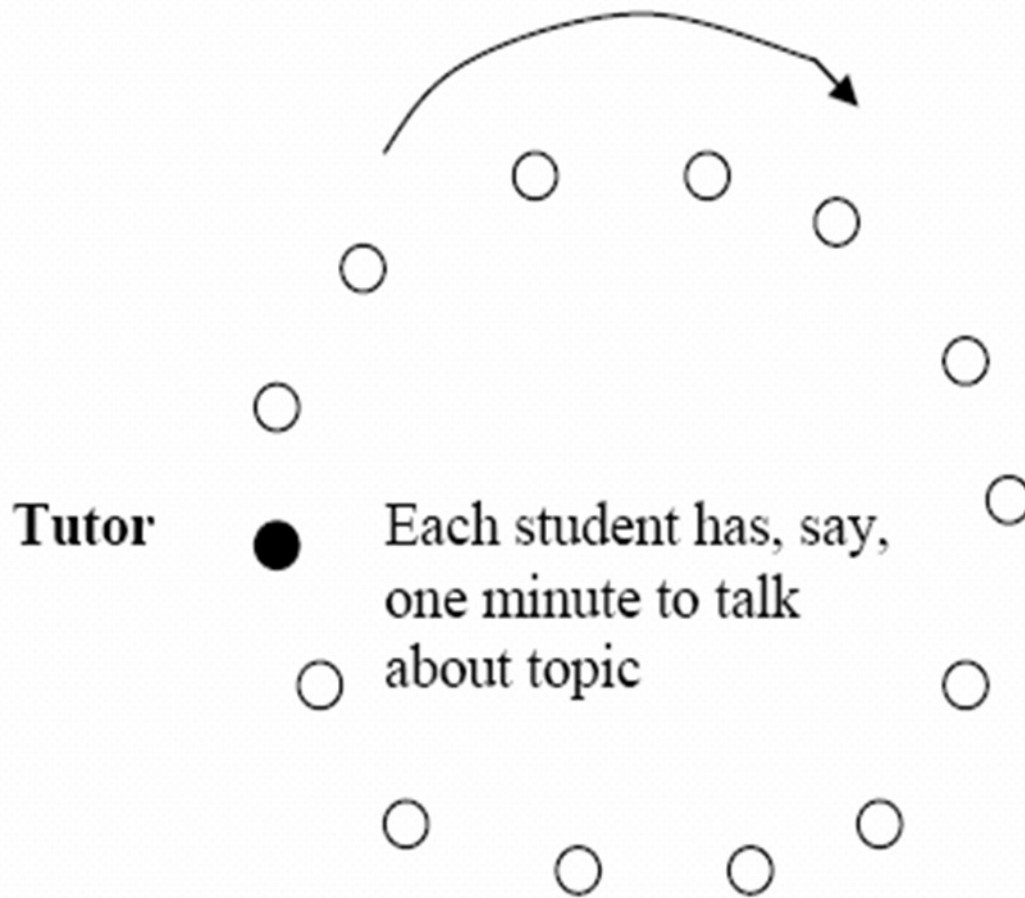
Buzz Groups



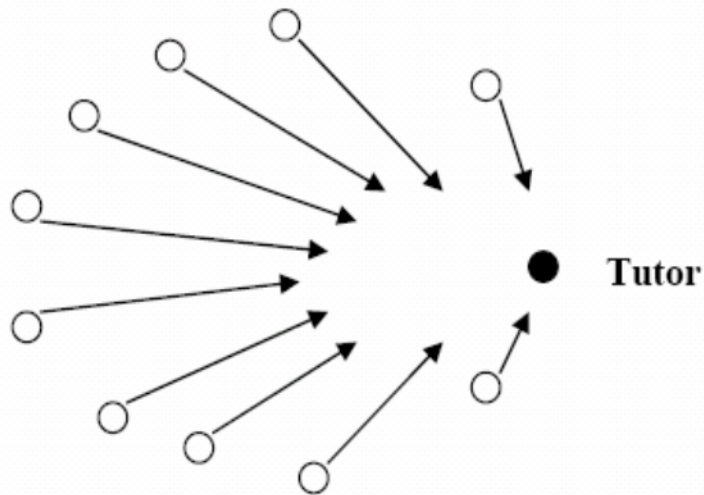
Snowballing



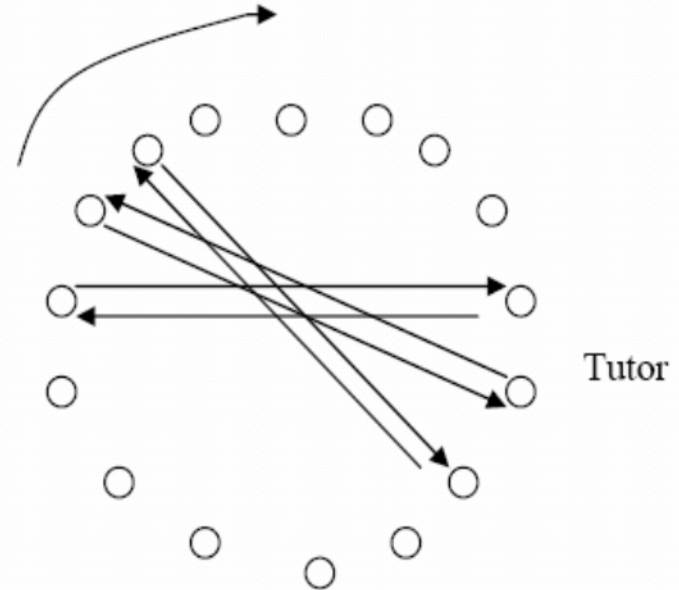
Rounds



Circular Interviewing



Traditional interaction



Students ask questions of each other (prepared on cards?)

Line-Ups



Role play



Over to you...

Practising some small group techniques

- Form into your groups. You will be allocated a small group technique and some roles.
- Choose a topic or use my example. Prepare to facilitate your activity for our whole group. You have **10 minutes** preparation time.
- You will then have **8 minutes** to facilitate the activity.
- As a group we will then discuss how things went.

Any questions?



Recap and Summary

- Small group teaching hinges on preparation
- Remember the principles of adult learning
- Make sure your session has a structure
- Have 2-5 clear objectives
- Include interactivity

So what might you do in your practice?



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References

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