



Small-group teaching

Common problems

Group is unresponsive

- Find out why (whose problem?); Teacher talking too much? Wrong type of dialogue?
- Demonstrate the relevance of material – deviate from script.
- Environment/reassurance – Maslen's hierarchy of needs.
- Discover / activate prior learning
- Preparation issues – see below

Individuals don't participate

- Find out why. Shyness? Cultural reasons?
- Invite contributions by name or hand gestures.
- Start with easy (definitional) questions and build on them – Bloom's taxonomy
- Use small groups for discussion
- Use written contributions
- Don't answer students' questions – ask other students to provide answers – generate dialogue

Preparation is not done

- Don't do the work for the students. Ask questions anyway.
- Were instructions clear/ill-defined?
- Ask students to do work in class.

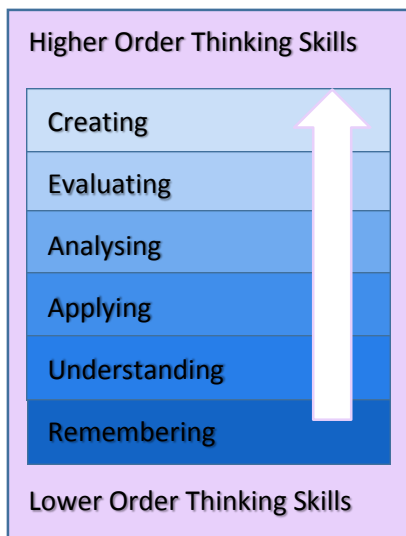
Dominant students

- Avoid the situation with warm-ups, introductions, ground-rules.
- Use names: "John thinks this, what do others think?"

Dos

- Learning objectives should be clear (and aligned with those of the unit)
- Find out where the students “are” intellectually (prior learning). Where do they want to go?
- Make sure the environment is comfortable
- Resist the temptation to lecture
- Motivate the material – explain why it is relevant/interesting
- Make the students participate.
- Evaluate (time yourself speaking; ask the students what they learnt; find out why they haven't prepared)
- Be supportive and inclusive
- Take risks

Bloom's Taxonomy



- Create: Design; Speculate.
- Evaluate: judge, defend, justify
- Analyse: what are the assumptions?
- What is the evidence?
- Apply: What would you do in this situation?
- Understand: Compare, explain difference