



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of* EDINBURGH

# Small Group Teaching



2016

# Learning objectives

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

- Recognise the aims and challenges of small group teaching and identify how to maximise learning
- Select, adapt and use appropriate teaching techniques, resources and aids for use with small groups

# Shape of today

Slides: getting the most out of your small group

Break

Having a go: trialling methods and giving feedback



# Please can you ...

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!



# Over to you...

- In pairs
  - discuss the aims and challenges of teaching small groups
  - select your top 3 of each
- Time
  - 3 minutes

# Teacher or student centred?



# Facilitator Skills

Consider objectives, structure, adult learning principles

Think about how to **engage** your learners

Is it a “one-off” or a series?

Remember... small group work hinges on **preparation**



# Facilitator Skills

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





# Asking questions

## Differentiation

consider stage, experience and ability of learners

## Closed questions

facilitate recall

## Open questions

allow reflection and higher cognitive functioning

# Asking questions

## Clarifying questions: what?

check understanding of underlying principles

## Justifying questions: why?

access reasoning behind response

## Probing questions: how?

extend thinking, explore options

(eg 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



# Methods to try

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





4 rules operate

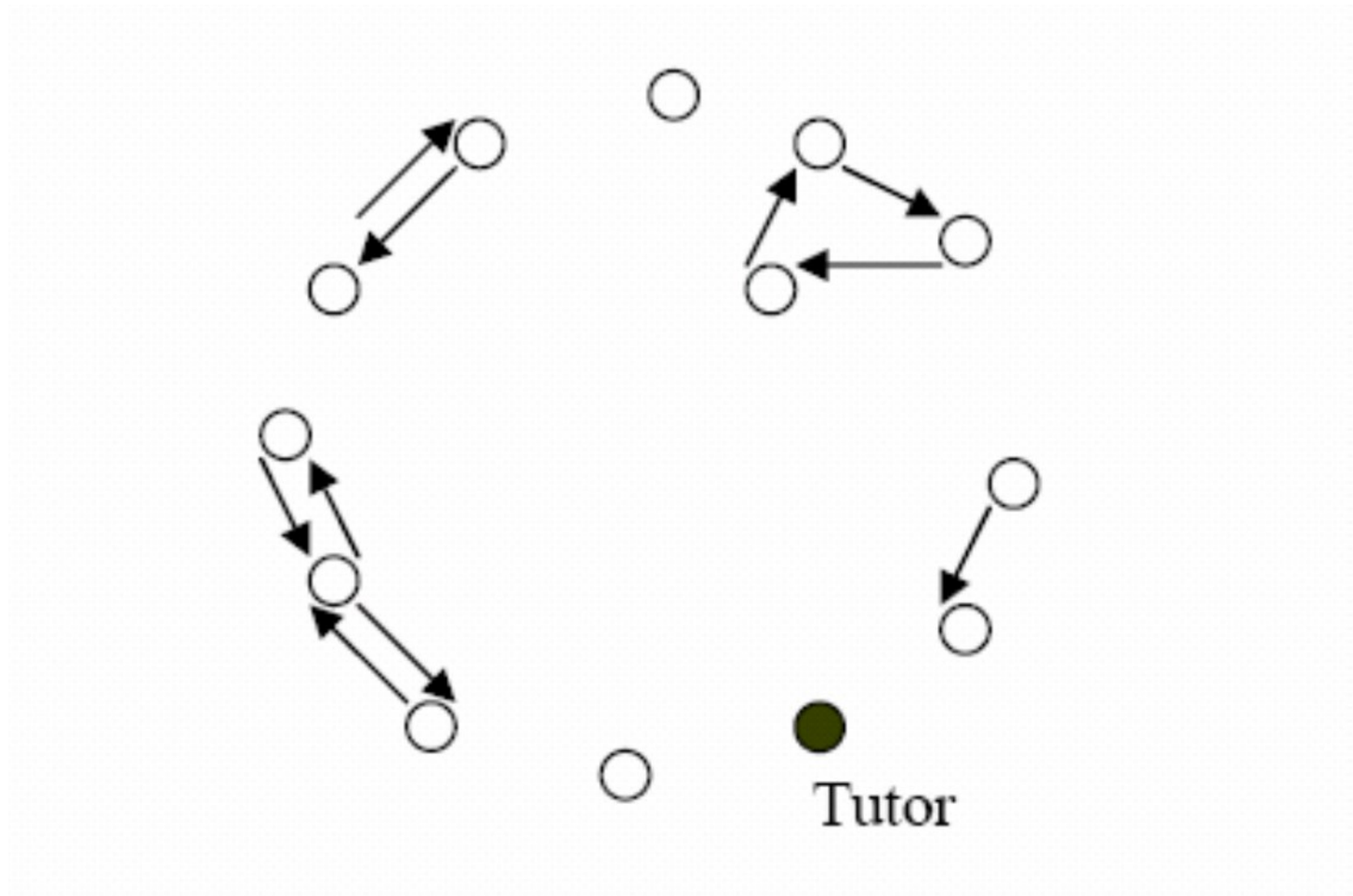
evaluation and criticism ruled out

free-wheeling welcomed

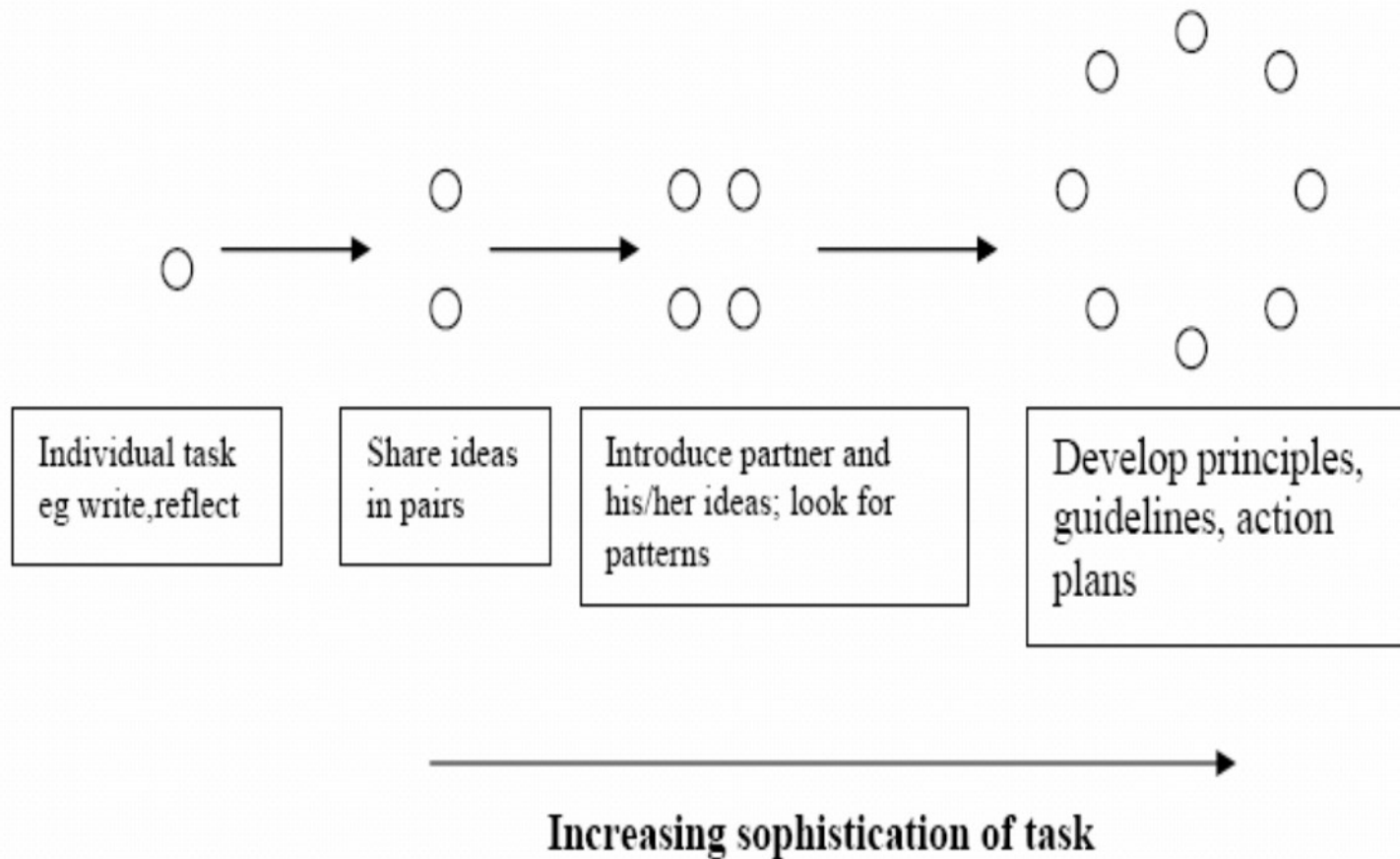
quantity wanted

combination and improvement sought

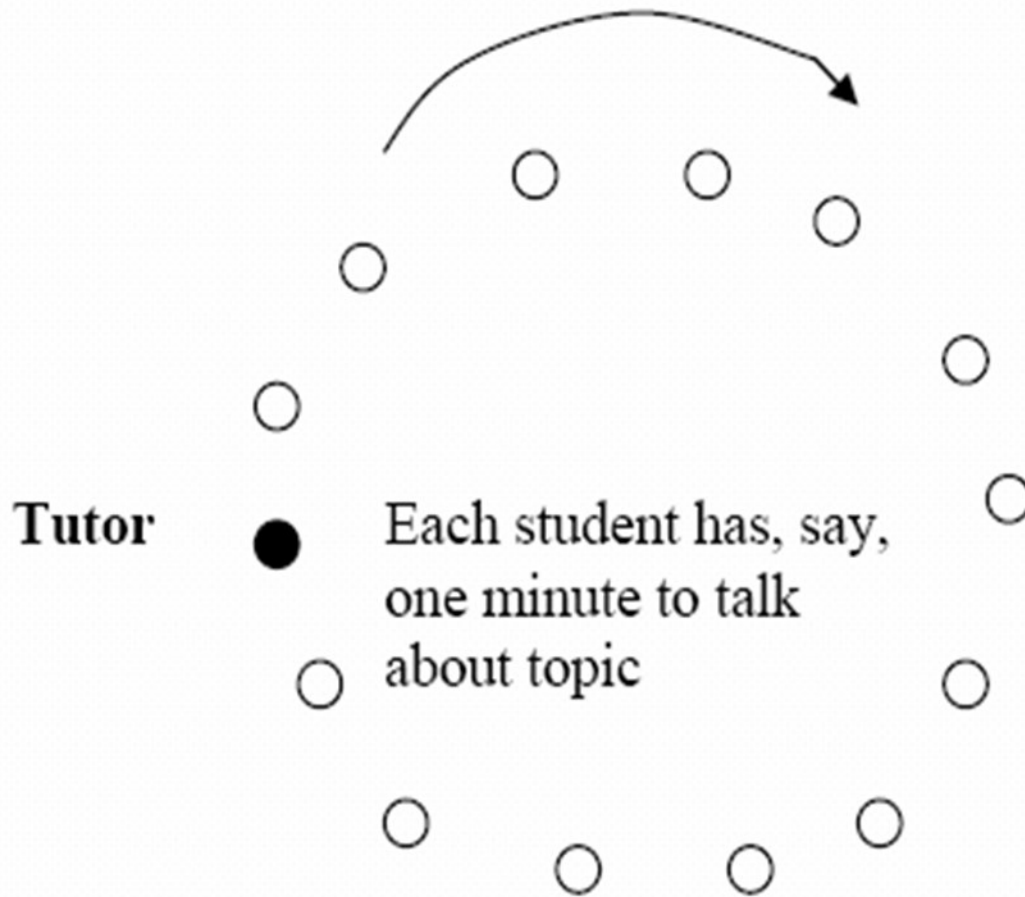
# Buzz Groups



# Snowballing

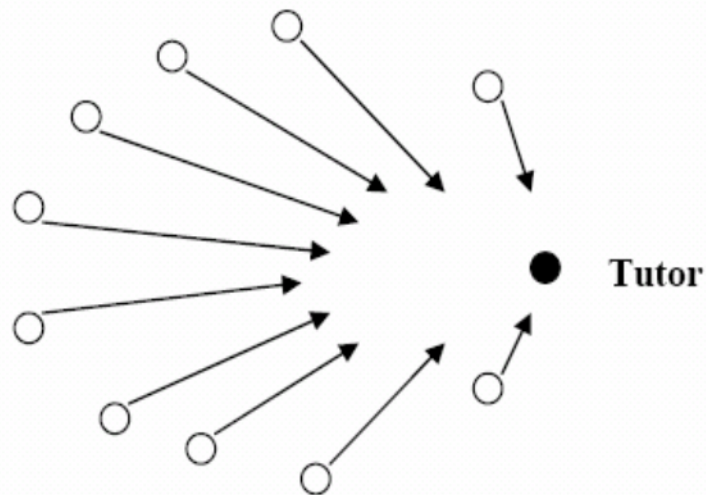


# Rounds

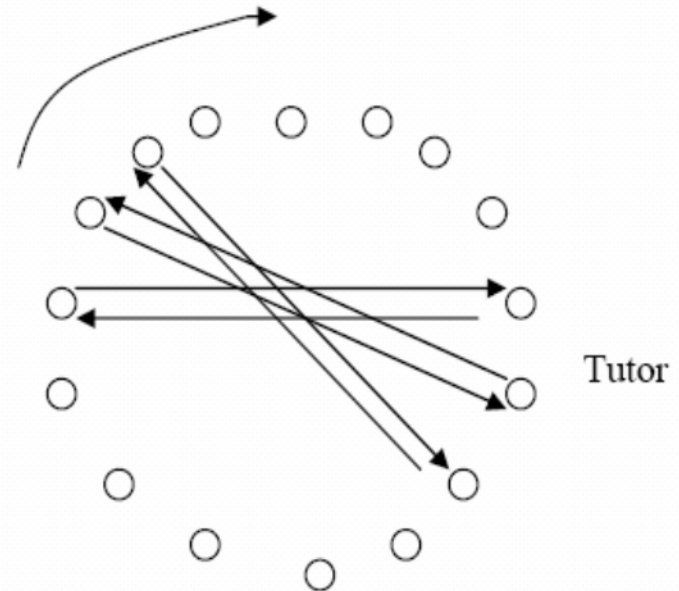




# Circular interviewing



Traditional interaction



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

# Line-Ups



# Role play





# Over to you...

## Practising some small group techniques

- We will split the group into three. Each group will facilitate one technique with the others playing the role of their students.
- For each technique, please note:
  - what goes **well**
  - what could be **improved**
  - how the technique might be **adapted** for your needs

# So where do we go from here?



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