



Principles of Effective Continuing Professional Development

The following tips and techniques are provided to help make your CME visit an effective continuing professional development session.

Adult Learning Principles

- Adults learn best when actively engaged in the learning process and where the learning builds on their prior knowledge and experience.
- Learning must be relevant to their work or some other aspect of their lives.
- Adults learn best when they feel that learning is necessary in order to solve a practical problem (professional or otherwise).
- Learning is often focused on performance.
- Adult learners tend to be independent and to maintain responsibility for their own learning.

The Application

- Listen to and respond to learners' needs, even while the activity is underway. Make a point of noting their concerns while in their presence.
- "Localize" your presentation. This means finding out the clinical challenges and practice situations that THEY are dealing with everyday, versus how things are handled were you practice. This might include different equipment, human resources, pharmaceutical availability and special population health issues.
- Participants should be encouraged to share their experience through discussions between peers.
- Learning situations should encourage active participation and opportunity for agreement as well as disagreement.
- Preparation of questions that require critical thinking.

Advantages for the Facilitator

- Verify the current knowledge and comprehension level of the participants.
- Promotes discussion and application.
- Adds variety to all portions of a session.
- May be used to manage group behavior.

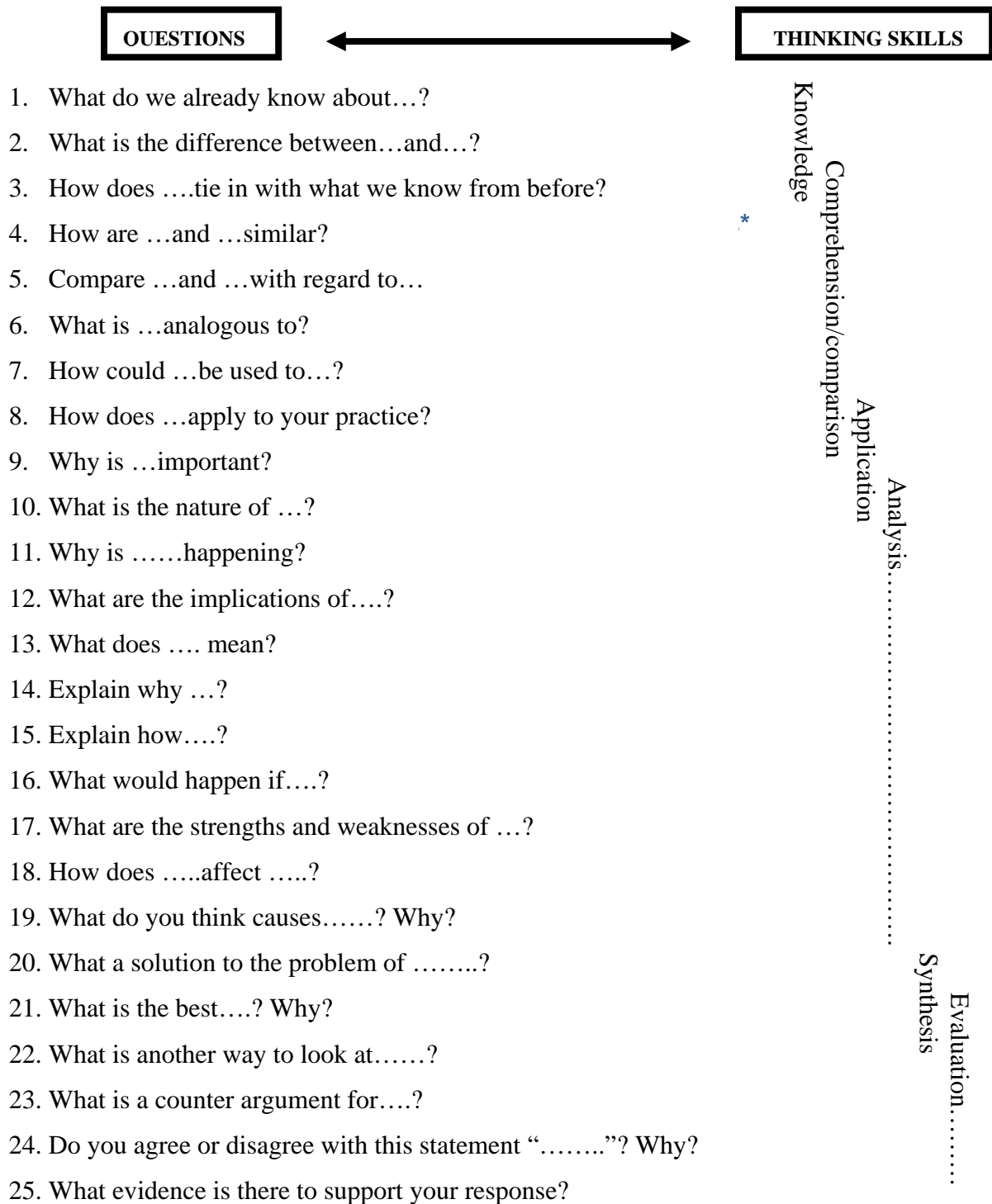
Advantages for the Participants

- Establish current level of content understanding.
- More enjoyable situation as an active participant.
- Assists with developing critical and creative thinking skills.
- Increases motivation and confidence through participation.

- Stimulates learners to seek out additional information or direct them to assess new possibilities for solutions to issues.
- Enables learners to apply new knowledge.

Questions generated by participants may be used to:

- Identify or clarify their personal knowledge/comprehension gaps.
- Identify knowledge/comprehension gaps common to several group members.
- Increase familiarity with issues/problems in similar community practices.



*excerpts used with permission from "Working & Learning in Small Groups: Suggestions from U of M Professors", Instructional Development Program, The University of Manitoba, 1996.

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