

Learning Partner Discussions

We would like to increase the amount of reflection that the candidates do on the course and have found that they are most likely to engage in helpful reflection when they are discussing with someone else, but not in the presence of instructors. We have therefore decided to put a small change into the demonstrations that you run on the provider course. One instructor, for example the course director or an instructor who is also a GIC instructor, should take responsibility for managing all of the Learning Partner discussions.

Encourage the instructors to practise the demo and then run it for the candidates, making sure that it demonstrates

- well-functioning set up with the equipment
- high quality management by the 'candidates'
- minimal intervention from the 'instructors' *unless the team leader needs help*
- a supportive and encouraging atmosphere.

Finish the demo when the candidate completes the scenario and do **not** model a learning conversation debrief. Use that time instead to get the candidates doing a bit of work. Ask the candidates to find a learning partner – someone who is in another group. This person should remain their learning partner throughout the course. If you are really well organised, get them to sit next to their learning partner when they come into the room to watch the subsequent demos.

Ask the candidates to discuss a question with their learning partner. You should choose **one** of the following questions immediately after the demo has finished, and give them a couple of minutes to discuss.

- **Why was that demo good?** (a good starting question to get them identifying strengths)
- **How has that demo made you change what you think?** (this encourages analysis and making connections with their previous practice which aids conceptualisation)
- **What specifically do you want to go away and practise now?** (by verbalising what they want to do, they are more likely to actually do it)
- **What puzzles you having watched that demo? Can your partner resolve the puzzle for you?** (this gives the opportunity for learning partners to teach each other, or to resolve dilemmas together)
- **Was there anything in that demo that surprised you?** (this allows for a discussion of strengths or weaknesses of the demo without specifically pointing the candidates in one direction)

Instructors do **not** need to be involved (it is best if they are not) and you do **not** need to get the candidates to relay back their thoughts. The process of them verbalising in a safe setting is where the learning occurs. Remain vigilant throughout their discussions so that they can see you value the work they are doing. It is good practice to take the time to ask if there are any questions, just in case their conversations have raised some unresolved issues. Keep a close eye on time. There are several demos on the course, choose a **different** question each time to encourage the learning partners to have thoughtful discussions.

Once the groups are in their rooms and doing simulations you will still have learning conversations facilitated by one of the instructors with the group joining in with their observations, reflections and comments. This helps them work out what the benchmark is, so make sure that you allow them to have focused discussions as part of the learning conversation.