



Pocket Guide to Teaching for Clinical Instructors

Fourth Edition



Edited by
Kate Denning, Kevin Mackie
and Alan Charters, Andrew Lockey



**Resuscitation
Council UK**



**Advanced
Life
Support
Group**

A charity dedicated to saving life by providing training

WILEY Blackwell

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Foreword

It is fascinating to see this fourth edition of the *Pocket Guide to Teaching for Clinical Instructors* (commonly known as the 'Blue Book') as an evolution of medical education, evolving alongside the experience and increasingly robust evidence base that underpins adult education.

It is worth taking a moment to consider the impact that this book has had since the first edition was written back in 1998 by medical educators engaged with the RCUK and the ALSG to support the Generic Instructor Courses (GIC). At that time the focus was on equipping educators to deliver the GIC, and it took a pragmatic approach to improve the learning experience of candidates through the education of the educators. I would also argue that the true educational impact of the Blue Book (and the GIC courses in general) has extended far beyond the life support courses they were designed for, and into the wider healthcare education setting. Nearly all of the instructors and candidates who attend our courses also work in clinical practice, and thus directly or indirectly treat patients. I frequently see educators use to good effect the techniques pioneered in the Blue Book in their practice, clearly demonstrating the widespread adoption of its principles.

This fourth edition embraces our understanding of how clinicians learn, and how that can be translated into practice. It is surprisingly rare to see educational texts that make the link between theory and advice in such a concise, practical and clear way, and this is perhaps the greatest achievement of this book. There is a subtle shift in this edition from specific instructional techniques to a more adaptable approach reflecting the current evidence base

that advocates a more flexible and bespoke approach which brings learners and educators together. It is great looking back at how much has changed over four editions, reflecting changes in the wider educational context.

Although designed to support the GIC courses, the book is relevant to all involved in clinical education, can be read in a weekend, and will undoubtedly improve the learning experience at a time when service pressures mean that every educational moment is precious. What is clear in the text, and also on the GIC courses, is that teaching and learning can be taught and improved. There is much to learn here and I would recommend this text to all involved in clinical education and not just those completing a GIC course. For current instructors the linkage of theory to practice is even closer in this edition and I will personally be using many of the techniques described, especially with regard to the careful use of language in small group facilitations. That, like many others, is a great example of how subtle changes from the educator can make really meaningful differences to the learner. The book is full of such examples and they are all worth revisiting.

In recent years there has been a much greater understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion in education, although there is still a long way to go in many settings. This edition provides guidance and a better understanding of issues such as neurodiversity (especially important in assessment settings) and increases our understanding of how to maintain standards, whilst also adapting to the variability, needs and challenges that our learners face. This is an area that I see developing over future editions and was especially pleased to see focused on here.

Ultimately, the aim of clinical education is to improve the care of patients. Learning and education are an essential component of high-quality care, and by improving the education and learning of thousands I have no doubt that the Blue Book has a remarkable legacy for educators, learners and patients.

Simon Carley

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Preface to the fourth edition

Welcome to this fourth edition of what has become known as the 'Blue Book'. This edition has been extensively revised to reflect changes in the educational delivery of many provider courses. We have tried to simplify the academic language to make it more readable, applicable and accessible, and we hope the more modern style of the book will be engaging for our diverse range of readers.

There is some new content that reflects the nature of contemporary teaching and learning; with equality, diversity and inclusion and psychological safety being covered much more thoroughly than in previous editions.

As with previous editions the book is intended as an aid to reflection: something which you can, and hopefully will, consult on many occasions before, during and after your courses. It does not contain all the answers, but it will provide something against which you can test your experiences. You will not find a blueprint for teaching here, rather some thoughts about the basics which we hope you will adapt to your personality and creativity. In the end, of course, it is what works for you and your learners that matters.

If you have read any of the previous editions, you will find a change to some of the language used on the Generic Instructor Course. We use 'Prepare, Open, Facilitate, Close' throughout this edition as a framework for planning and facilitating learning and the book is much more about facilitating learning than teaching through instructional techniques.

We would like to thank all of the authors and contributors for their hard work in writing, refining and editing this edition. We also thank our instructors (new and old, local and international) for many fruitful conversations and for giving their time so freely to support our mutual aim of saving lives by providing training.

Kate Denning – Lead Educator for ALSG

Kevin Mackie – Lead Educator for RCUK

Alan Charters – Clinical Lead for ALSG

Andrew Lockey – Clinical Lead for RCUK

Acknowledgments and dedication

A great many people have put a lot of hard work into the production of this book, and the accompanying Generic Instructor Course (GIC). The editors would like to thank all the contributors for their efforts and all the GIC instructors who took the time to send us their comments on the earlier editions and for their continued hard work in delivering the course.

We would like to thank Catherine Giaquinto for producing the excellent figures that illustrate the text. Thank you to Jessica Denning, Ellie Mackie, Mary Mackie and Emmeline Venn for their generous support and providing thoughtful feedback during development.

Many thanks, in advance, to those of you who will engage with all aspects of the GIC (this book, the online learning, the face to face course and the instructor candidacies); no doubt you will have lots of constructive criticism to offer.

Finally we would like to dedicate this book to Mel Humphreys who educated alongside us, and inspired so many instructors during a long career as a pioneer educator. Sadly Mel passed away while the book was in its editorial stage, but her voice can still be found within these pages.

Learning

Introduction

By reading this book, you may have already made a decision to reflect on how you teach and learn. You may be thinking about experiences you have had, positive and negative, and want the opportunity to understand why sometimes education is great, and sometimes it really is not. Or perhaps you have been told that you have to read this text and feel just a bit resentful about that. Whatever your motivations this is a chance to explore some of the issues that underpin our responses to education, whether we are teaching, learning or engaged in a bit of both.

Theories of learning have historically been based on observations of the way people learn, and for academics they help to bring some understanding to learning behaviours. The educators who write the curriculums and course materials for life support courses have applied some of these theories to ensure that learning is optimised for our target learners.

In this chapter, we will give a broad overview of relevant learning theories. We will then look in the rest of the book at how we can apply these principles when we are facilitating others.

First, however, we will consider a number of evidence-based strategies that can be used to make us better learners, so that we can consciously and mindfully use this knowledge when we are teaching.

Learning outcomes

This chapter will enable you to:

- Identify how our brains hold and retrieve information
- Employ effective learning strategies
- Compare and contrast teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches to education
- Consider some of the educational theories that underpin life support courses

How we learn

Working memory

It is generally agreed that we have a long-term memory and a working memory (short-term memory). Long-term memory has a limitless storage system. You might, for example, have stored your childhood car registration in your long-term memory and be able to recall it years later. In contrast, working memory is thought to only last around 30 seconds. An example is remembering a phone number for long enough to type it into your phone. Unless this specific piece of information is attended to multiple times it will not pass into long-term memory and will be forgotten.

The role of our working memory is not only to hold pieces of information for a short period but also to *process* that information (i.e. do something with it).

All new memories have to pass through working memory in order to make it into long-term memory. Working memory has a limit and is easily overloaded. Most of us, without any specific brain training, are able to hold in our working memory a surprisingly small number of discrete pieces of information. This has implications for our