Learning Theory: Concrete Examples

Definition: Taking an abstract concept and creating an example based off real-life experiences to solidify the meaning of the concept. For example, a “quarter” could be thought of as taking one slice of pizza out of four equally sized slices.

Effect: Presenting students with concrete examples can significantly enhance conceptual learning for declarative concepts.

Why it works:


Key Points from the article:

- Providing illustrative examples enhances conceptual learning relative to providing concept definitions, as evidenced by more accurate classification of both studied and novel examples.
- Varying levels of familiarity may mediate the effect of illustrative examples. Lower-familiarity students achieved better classification accuracy in the definition-then-examples group than did those in the definitions-only group. There were minimal differences in achievement for higher-familiarity students.

Curricular Design Application at the Larner: Students need to have a rich understanding of material that spans different topics. We structure pedagogy in a way that encourages using elaborative techniques so that students can create more durable memories and transfer and apply knowledge to new situations.

1. Vignette Style (Board Style) questions in assessments

2. Incorporating patient experiences and stories in pre-clinical years

3. Case-based learning sessions
Other Resources: Study Strategies - Concrete Examples