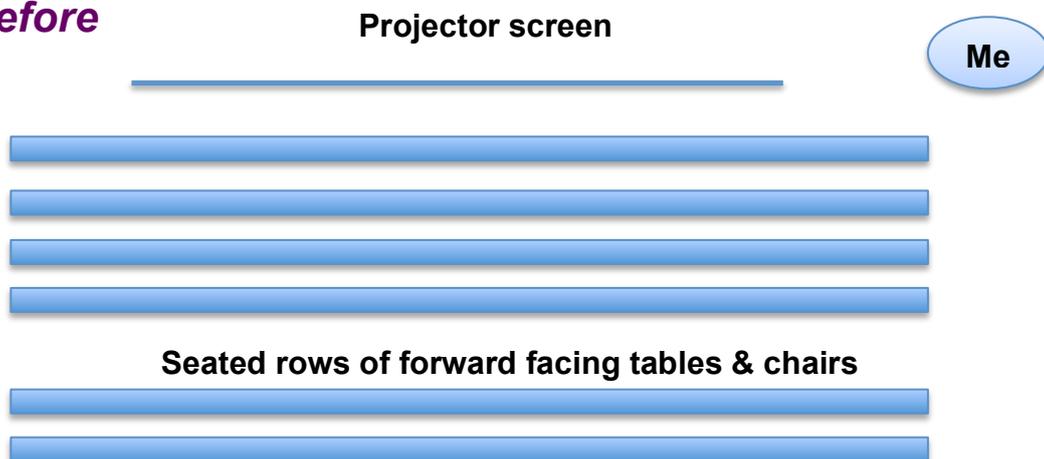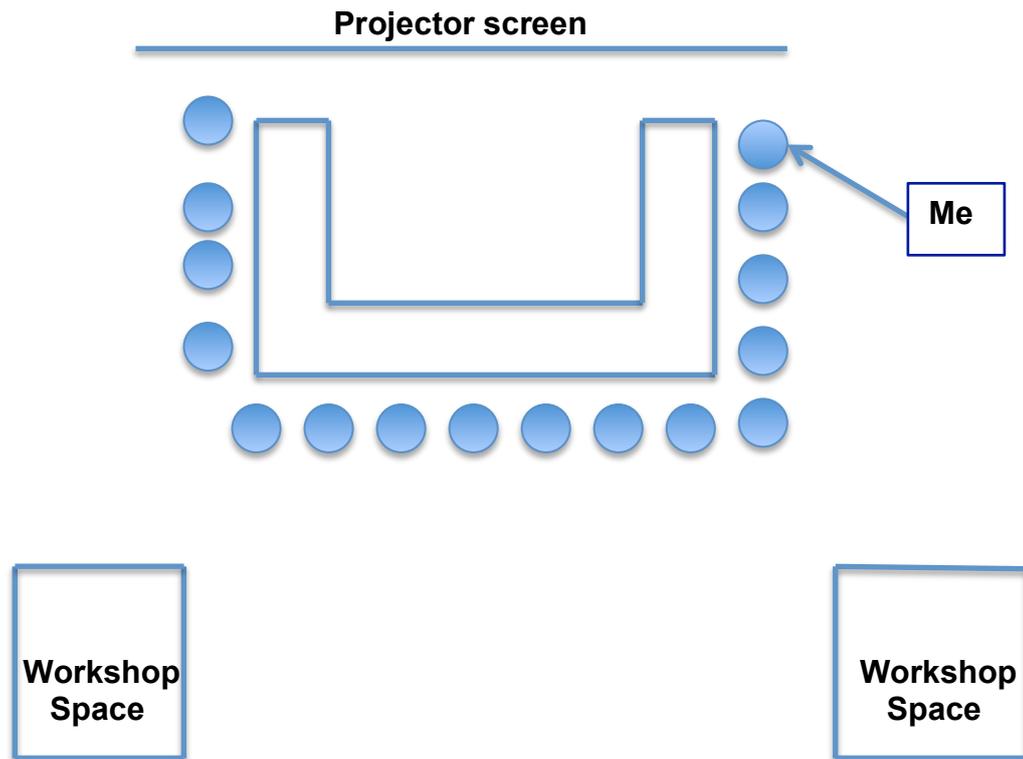# Know Pain Planning

## The learning environment

As the learning experience was held at the University, I felt happy that the learning environment would be controlled.  Cross et al., (2006) suggest education within University environments is more predictable than practice-based settings.  However, upon arrival, I had overlooked a request for a room change within the University.  I had already adapted the room for the learners and had no time to set up the workshop in another room.  This made me feel anxious and underprepared.  Fortunately, I was able to remain in the same location and the students relocated.  Hinchliff (2004) argues educators must prepare for uncertainty.  This experience taught me that all learning environments carry a degree of unpredictability and that I must always account for such eventualities.

The following diagrams show how I changed the learning environment to promote collaboration.  I arranged the room to enable PAL and PBL within a range of learner group sizes.  Fernandes, Huang & Rinaldo (2011) found students showed increased engagement and higher order thinking skills when seated within inclusive clusters.

*Before*

Projector screen

Me

Seated rows of forward facing tables & chairs

## *After*

**Projector screen**



Me

Workshop Space

Workshop Space

Henning, Weidner & Marty (2008) suggest PAL environments provide opportunities for feedback, mentoring and leadership.  Examination of the group's evaluation forms (Appendix B) shows a common theme of open, active participation in the learning process (see Figure 1).  I felt pleased to receive these comments as they reinforced my transition from a traditional, didactic approach to education.  Previously, I would have sought control of learning by maintaining the room's original layout.  Knowles, Holton & Swanson (2011, p. 257) suggest the desire for educators to ensure efficient and effective learning "often leads to concentration on what they are doing rather than what the learner is doing."  On reflection, although didactic methods gave me assurance through authority, I recall restricted learner participation and uncertainty regarding assessment of learning.

The move away from an expert model of teaching is considered by Turner-Bisset (2012) to be a reaction against the technical rationale paradigm.  Schon (1983) argues professional practice is chaotic and requires ongoing reflection.  To adequately explore the cluttered complexities of

biopsychosocialism, the learning environment needed to promote reflective group engagement.  My development of Socratic questioning and active listening skills during patient education groups has been invaluable for this.  As a facilitator, I'm aware of my increased attentiveness to the thoughts and actions of the group.  As a learner, I previously mistook the facilitation model of education as casual.  However, as an educator, I'm able to see the concealed effort required.

*Figure 1*

**Evidence of collaborative engagement**