

How to Plan and Teach a Class

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Objectives

- State the components of a measurable learning objective
- Explain Gagne's events of instruction
- Describe Bloom's Taxonomies and their utility
- Describe the levels of Foshay's Folly
- Describe the key aspects of different kinds of classes
- Describe different kinds of handouts, their characteristics, benefits

Introduction

(Self intro)

Think about classes you've taken, both in and out of the SCA. There have been a lot of them, right? Some good, some ok, some a real waste of time. As we go through the material today, think back on those good and awful classes and see if you can connect the dots to where those classes either did these things well, or utterly failed.

Foundations

Measurable learning objectives

- A. Audience - Who will do the deed? Who are you talking to? What do they already know? (Prerequisites - very important to determine in advance!)
E.g., General populace, fighters, archers, scribes, new heralds, etc
- B. Behavior - What deed will they do?
What *observable and measurable thing* will they be able to do when class is over?
- C. Condition - Given what, constrained by what?
What tools and materials need to be at hand?
- D. Degree - How will you decide how well the deed is done?
Less important in an SCA context except where safety is a concern

Examples of measurable learning objectives

- A member of the general populace will, when prompted, name five different herbs and correctly state their properties without referring to the handout.

- An authorized rapier fighter will safely and correctly use a buckler to block four standard attacks in a sparring bout.
- Given a lucet, several yards of yarn or string, illustrated instructions, and one-on-one coaching, the member of the general populace will correctly thread the lucet and produce at least an inch of cord.

Gagne's events of instruction

Good teachers often do this instinctively, but it's useful to be aware of it and plan it into the class (where appropriate - you can't always do all of the steps)

1. Gain attention
2. Inform students of the objectives
3. Stimulate recall of prior learning
4. Present the content
5. Provide learning guidance
6. Elicit performance (practice)
7. Provide feedback
8. Assess performance
9. Enhance retention and transfer

Examples of Gagne's events of instruction

Remember my introduction? I gained your attention, stimulated recall, and informed you of the objectives. Now, I'm presenting the content. And that's really about as far as we can go given the constraints of this format. If this were a workshop rather than a chalk-and-talk, I'd be having you write objectives for your class, preparing a lesson plan and handouts, etc.

Eik & Silverthorn's penannular brooch class: Learning guidance, practice, feedback - when to anneal, don't hold your arm like that, it'll kill your elbow. Tap here to bend it that way.

In lecture classes, we don't have exams, but I do like pop quizzes. (What are some of the steps of Gagne's Events?) The "testing effect" is real and powerful. *Use it.*

Review & summarize - better yet, have the students review and summarize - to enhance retention and transfer (transfer = linking to their other existing knowledge)

Feedback

This is one of Gagne's Events, but it merits a discussion of its own.

Feedback is the natural or artificial consequence of performance - either success or failure.

If you fail to block the wrap shot, your butt will get immediate natural feedback. But most of the time, we need to build feedback in, just as we build practice in. In the context of most SCA classes, this is often just not practical due to time constraints. But when you have the luxury of doing so, be deliberate about providing opportunities for students to practice, make errors, and learn from those errors.

The timeliness of feedback is important. [Describe paper-wad video] Interestingly, research shows that for “book-learning” content, delaying feedback by a day or two increases its effectiveness. However, that same research shows that students hate delayed feedback and want it immediately.

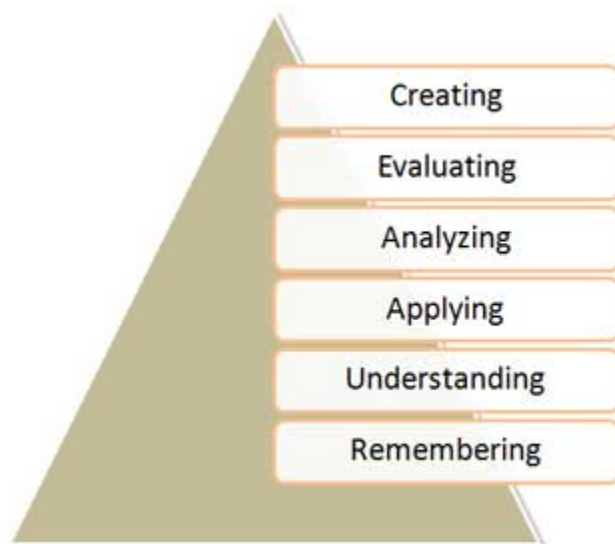
For physical skills, immediate feedback should be followed by a correct performance, preferably repeated at least three times. However, if the learner is showing fatigue after several repeated failures, take a break, because you’re only practicing the error and getting better at it. You may need to simply slow down, and break down the motion into component parts. (e.g. playing guitar)

We mentioned physical skills and book-learning. That’s a good transition to...

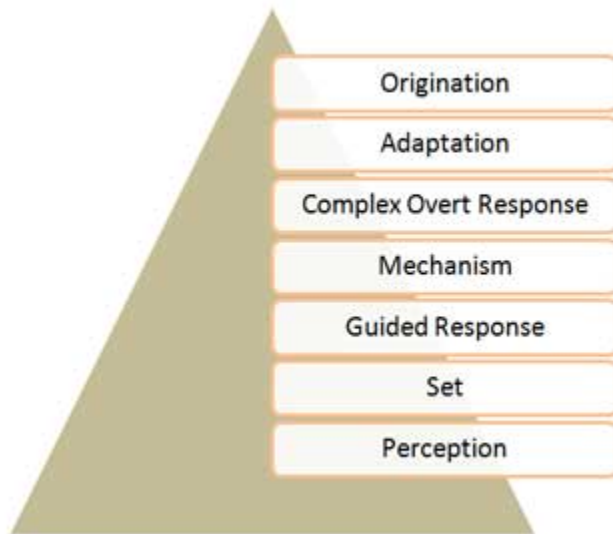
Bloom’s Taxonomies

You can easily find lists of observable, measurable verbs that match each of the levels.

Cognitive - Knowledge & Ideas



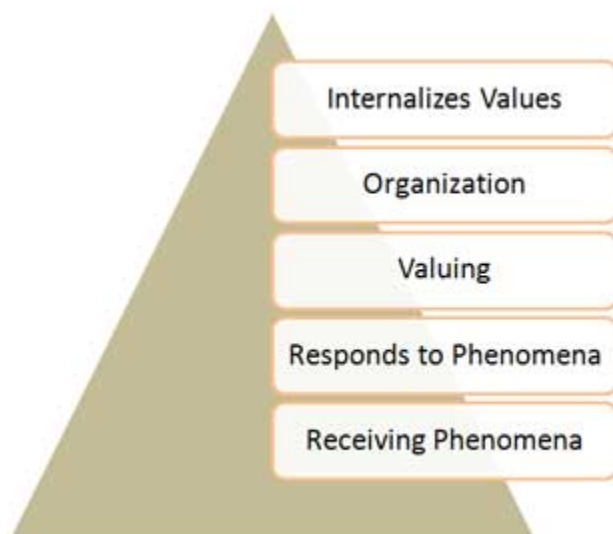
Psychomotor - Skills



- Perception: **I see it**
- Set: **I'm ready to do it**
- Guided Response: **Novice performance**, needs a LOT of help, lots of trial & error
- Mechanism: **Journeyman performance**, can perform basics with confidence
- Complex Overt: **Expert Level 1 performance**
- Adaptation: **Expert Level 2 performance**
- Origination: **Mastery**

At the higher levels, you can probably see how they map to the Cognitive domain.

Affective - Attitudes



We don't really see a lot of this in SCA classes, though it's starting to show up esp. w/r/t DEI. Just be aware that attitude and emotion is a definite component of learning, and there are formal structures that can help you build classes in these areas.

Foshay's Folly

I learned this useful method of organizing cognitive information from an old mentor, Rob Foshay. It doesn't have a formal name, so I just call it Foshay's Folly out of my fondness for the fellow. You can see how it maps to Bloom's Cognitive taxonomy.

Facts

Things that are simply true

Mnemonics, humor may help

Usually exist in a structure, so teach the structure explicitly - or else

Structure enhances retention and recall

Typical structures

- Chain (e.g, alphabet)
- Hierarchy (e.g. org chart)
- Table (e.g. characteristics of herbs, metals, dyes, SCA award structure...)
- Network (more complex things...)

Concepts

Facts in relation to each other

There's that structure again

Learning a concept is a discrimination task - one of these things is not like the others

Sorting into buckets - Kinds-of concepts

Lots of examples: Critical attributes vs non-critical attributes (e.g. different eras of Viking art)

Parts-of concepts - how parts fit together, e.g. components of a scroll, elements of commedia

Principles

Concepts in action

If-then, condition-when

What happens if?

Why did that happen?

Failure points

Procedures

How-to

Steps in order (there's that fact chain!)

Rote procedures - the same way every time (rituals) e.g. lighting a forge, reciting a poem

Meta-procedures - basic principles don't change but specific execution does e.g. telling a story

CRITICAL: Recognizing and recovering from errors - can you save it?

Problems

Well-structured: One (few) solution, one (few) solution path

Moderately-structured: Few solutions, Few solution paths

Poorly-structured: Many solutions, some more optimal than others. Same with solution paths (usually - a blacksmithing project may have many good solutions, but the path always involves the same basic processes & techniques)

Kinds of classes

Lecture

- Example: “The Use of Animal Motifs in the Book of Kells”
- You are the “sage on the stage” sharing your knowledge
- Audience is largely passive, though there may be Q&A
- Visual aids
- Physical samples (textiles, leather, metals, etc.), handouts

Demonstration

- You are showing how something is done, but not expecting participants to actually do it.
- Example: Online blacksmithing class, spear techniques video, hand-sewing leather
- Key point is making the steps visible to participants.
- Camera placement, lighting
- Slow down the action so viewers can follow and understand
- Handouts to show step-by-step

Hands-on

- Participants actually perform the task (with guidance and feedback - Gagne’)
- Make-and-take
- Workshop
- Lab / shop class
- Kits

Handouts

- Great way to let the audience “take you home with them” afterward.
- Include illustrations (cite sources)
- Make them legible - standard academic format (MLA, APA) is a good start
- Great way to share references and resources
- Can give a jump-start on A&S documentation
- Distribute before or after class?

- Danger of distraction - participants reading the handout instead of listening
- Note-taking handouts can encourage engagement (fill in the blanks)
- Step-by-step instructions great for reference hands-on classes (e.g. embroidery stitches)
- Neat idea for printed handouts - include a QR code to the online version so participants can access the latest updates. (credit Signore Tomasso Francesci)

Dealing with distractions

- Background noise, wind, etc.
 - Most A&S classes let you specify issues / needs (e.g. flax demonstration is dry but messy. Natural dyeing needs fire and is wet.)
 - Sometimes you just have to manage the venue as best you can e.g. Pennsic wind & heat (not to mention storms), KWCB seeking shade
- “Master Knowsmore Thanu”
 - This is YOUR class.
 - If they wanted to teach they should’ve signed up.
 - Be respectful but firm.
 - “I would be *delighted* to go down the rabbit hole with you - *after* the class. I’m sure it’ll help me for the *next* time I teach this topic. But I need to respect these good folks’ time and stick to the agenda.”

For further investigation

Writing measurable learning objectives, Emmanuel College (includes all 3 domains)

<https://eclearn.emmanuel.edu/courses/1285497/pages/how-to-write-measurable-learning-objectives/>

Gagne’s Events of Instruction, Northern Indiana Univ Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning

<https://www.niu.edu/citl/resources/guides/instructional-guide/gagnes-nine-events-of-instruction.shtml>

Bloom’s Taxonomies, Donald Clark’s website

<http://knowledgejump.com/hrd/bloom.html>

http://knowledgejump.com/hrd/Bloom/psychomotor_domain.html

Foshay’s Folly, EDUC2300 Playlist, Corrie Bergeron

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUnQ8kbGoSLNjGuk9UcaYLUWU92jw_yhYm

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