THE DOGS ARE EASY…WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?
Teoti Anderson, APDT Conference 2002, Portland, OR

3 DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES

1) **Visual**
   sight oriented
   learn by watching
   tend to sit in front of classroom (so can see)
   tend to take lots of notes
   tend to close their eyes to visualize
   benefit from illustrations and colorful presentations

#1 COMPLAINT:
People don't pay attention to them (*if people don't make eye contact with them)*

HOW WE HELP THEM:
demonstrate your exercises
"Do you see what I'm showing you"?

4) **Auditory**
   sound oriented
   learn from listening to your lecture
   tend to sit where they can hear
   don't necessarily need to watch you as you demo
   learn by reading aloud
   remember by verbalizing lessons to themselves

#1 COMPLAINT:
People don't listen to them

HOW WE HELP THEM:
explain the exercises
"What did you hear that was confusing to you"?

4) **Kinesthetic**
   hands-on
   learns by doing
   tend to sit by door so can get up, take breaks
   fidgety
   need to be active
   rely on what they can directly experience or perform
   must be get a chance to do it, won't remember it as well if they can't
   you will lose them if you have too much lecturing and not enough doing
   will remember what was done, will have trouble recalling what was said

#1 COMPLAINT:
People are insensitive (*others perceive these people as rude because they are fidgety)*

HOW WE HELP THEM:

give them lots of hands on opportunities to practice
"How did you feel about this?"

TEACHING ADULTS

Adults learn different than kids
have chosen to be there
need something they can use, has to be useful
want to make change for the better
maintaining self-esteem is important
- don't want to be embarrassed in front of peers – we must be aware of this!
- they think if their dog is a failure, people will think they are too

not always interested in knowledge for its own sake
- don't care about learning theory
- just want the dog to SIT

have different challenges in their life
- great competition for time – kids, spouse, older family member, etc
- sometime they don't do HW because of time limitations
- teach them how to train dogs in real life
- respect, acknowledge the their time constraints

take errors personally
its riskier for them to try something new in front of a group
they have expectations of us as trainers

HOW TO HELP THEM

make sure they are physically comfortable
get them up and moving
need to relate material to what they already know
- if new info conflicts with what they already know, takes them longer to process it
- they have no baseline, hard to switch gears

need to use "How-To" info
guide them to their own knowledge
- not so much lecture – don't tell them what to do, help them get there
- make them part of the process

Cleint says to you: "You make it look so easy"

be sure to thank them for the compliment
"I've been doing it longer"
"I'm a professional, don't try this at home." ☺
reassure them they will get there
when they say this they are really saying:
- Help!
- I'm inept!
- I'm afraid!

STRESS

may cause client or you to lash out
be sure to recognize signs in you and your clients

- headaches
- deep sighs
- get moody
- tired
- etc….

do things to help reduce your stress

COPING TIPS for clients that lash out:

Give people the benefit of the doubt
- they may have had a bad day, trouble at home, etc

Q-TIP principle
- Quit Taking It Personally

Oreo Effect
- good way to deliver criticism
- say something nice – criticism – say something nice

Find trainer/friend to vent, but be sure to focus on great clients too

Sometimes you just have to let the client go

DIFFICULT CLIENTS (some examples)

Know-It-All
- needs assurance
- needs attention

The Bickersons –usually a couple, criticize each other
- one is usually a backseat trainer
- separate them (tactfully)
- give backseat trainer something else they can do – take notes, etc

Pessimist (related to the "Yes But-er", nothing you suggest will ever work
- acknowledge their frustration, point out their dog may be frustrated too
- explain negative vibes are translated to dog thru leash
- needs reassurance/reinforcement
- needs success
- break it down, reward smallest thing the person does right

Overachiever – wants their dog to do everything – NOW!
- unrealistic expectations for dog
- acknowledge their plans
- remind them the dog is just a baby
- explain to them how to set individual goals for the dog – to set the dog up for success, not failure
- needs recognition

Elevator – toy breed owner who won't let dog's paw touch the floor
- they baby the dog
- tell them we need to build dogs confidence
- tell them they need to be more confident and this will help the dog
- this person is afraid

Brickwall – you repeat, demo, explain and they still don't get it!
- may have a different style of learning than the info you are giving them, adjust the way you are presenting the material

How Humans learn:

There are many models for explaining how humans learn, but the one that I like to use best is the experiential learning model. In this model, imagine a clock. At twelve is a concrete experience. then an arrow to three, where there is reflective observation. Another arrow takes us to six, where there is abstract conceptualization. another arrow takes us to nine where there is active experimentation, which has an arrow taking us to concrete experience again.

Concrete experiences are the situations where the learner can be exposed to the material. Take teaching a dog to go over an agility jump. Initially, the learner has no idea what this looks like, so they must be exposed to the idea first. So an initial concrete experience would be to show the learner your own dog going over a jump.

Reflective observation is the part of the cycle where the learner reflects upon what they have just experienced. You as the teacher can ask them for feedback about what they saw when your dog jumped the agility jump for instance. You can ask them questions such as "when did I cue the dog?" or "when did the dog take off" or "where did the dog land" or "how high did the dog jump". You can generate discussion at this point about the jump, the dog, your part, etc.

Abstract conceptualization is the part of the sequence where you give a technical explanation for what is happening. You may need to use demonstrations or diagrams to explain what is happening. In my example of teaching people to get their dogs to jump, I would work without my dog and walk slowly towards the jump and point out how I hold my body, explaining why it is important to cue the dog when I do and pausing and telling the audience when they should turn, pause, cue, speed up or slow down. I would point out where the dog took off and where he landed and explain why, including information about the why this particular dog jumps the way he does. Questions may be asked and answered at this time for clarity, but you want to keep it in the realm of the conceptualization, you are looking for questions that indicate a deeper knowledge of understanding than just "how high, when, where, or how many".

Active experimentation is the next part of the cycle. I would allow limited experimentation with a group of handlers who were new to the exercise and allow them to try the jump only three or four times. Each time they jump, they will learn something, and there is a lot to be said for figuring it out yourself...but that can also lead to errors and difficulties becoming fluent in the behaviours and theory. so after the group had tried the jump a few times I would call them back in for.....

> A concrete experience. I would likely offer to let a student jump my dog and then....
>
> get some Reflective Observation going, asking them things like How did your dog jump compared to mine, where did I make mistakes, how could they get their dog to jump more effectively and so on. Please notice that in the second tour through the cycle we are able to ask questions that reflect more depth of understanding at this stage and of course.....
>
> In the Abstract Conceptualization phase, we can talk about the specifics of their dog's performance and compare structures to successes and so on, and then....
>
> Allow for another stage of Active Experimentation, where everyone can try several more jumps. At the end of the second round, you might want to change exercises...or you could choose a demo dog from one of the more or one of the less successful jumpers so that you can get some Reflective observations about their own work, and then lead a discussion of the abstract concepts that are behind the behaviours you are working on, and then of course....actively experiment again.

Each of us learns best in one of the four quadrants of this model. And these best learning situations change as we grow and learn. When I first learned about this system of describing learning, I was an Active Experimenter all the way. Over time though, I have become much more of an Abstract Conceptualizer. I doubt I will ever be a concrete experience learner (I just don't get it by watching), although I may become a better reflective observer.

We tend to teach from the area we are strongest in, but classes of students learn best when all areas are taught. When teaching very large groups (50 or more) we tend to teach mostly from concrete experiences (demonstrations etc.) and abstract conceptualization (explanations). when we work one on one, we tend to do lots of concrete experience and reflective observation to begin with and then spend more time in abstract concpetualization and active experimentation later on.

It is unlikely that the exam will frame their questions in the context that I have described this model, but understanding the model can help to develop an understanding of how learning works.

Another part of learning that is very important is Bloom's Taxonomy of Critical thinking and Mazlo's Hierarchy of Needs. Again, these are unlikely to be on the exam itself but an understanding of them may help you to frame your answers on the exam.

Bloom's Taxonomy can be used as a framework of evaluation of understanding and for helping teachers to set their lessons to the appropriate level for their learners.

In very short (and believe me, this is the coles notes of the publisher's synopsis of the author's outline version) there are three domains or areas of Classification:

Cognitive (understanding)

Affective (feeling)

Psychomotor (perception and response)

Within each domain there is a hierarchy of comprehension.

The details of that are a little esoteric (like I say...this is the short form of short forms!) and probably not necessary for this exam. what I find relevant is the Process verbs that we can use to indicate where the learner is functioning in any of their learning. they are as follows:

Knowledge:

define, repeat, list, name, label, memorize, record, recall, relate

When the teacher uses these words and the student is able to respond well to them, they have a basic knowledge of the material being presented. These are the words I might use in the first round through the learning cycle I described about above. I might ask students to:

Relate what you saw when my dog and I moved through the jump sequence.

Or

List the things my dog did from the start through to the end of the exercise we just did. the next stage is:

Comprehension: restate, describe, explain, identify, report, tell, discuss, recognize, express, locate, review

In my explanation above, I might use these words in the abstract conceptualization stage of the cycle AND then again during the reflective observation stage on the second time through. for instance:

Discuss how giving the dog the cue to take off may affect the height at which he is jumping.

The next stage is:

Application; translate, apply, employ, use, practice, shop, interpret, demonstrate, dramatize, illustrate, operate, schedule

I might ask all the students to demonstrate how they can now get their dogs to jump over an agility jump.

The next stage is the Analysis: distinguish, calculate, test, contrast, criticize, debate, question, solve, analyze, appraise, differentiate, experiment, compare, diagram, inspect, inventory, relate, examine.

I might use these words in terms of asking the students to try different jumping options (verticals, spreads, hog's backs, etc.) and see how they worked out by: Contrast the results of your dog's performance when you put a ground line 12 inches out from the vertical versus when there is no ground line. (this of course would be in the reflective observation....VBG).

The next stage is....

Synthesis: compose, propose, formulate, assemble, construct, set up, manage, plan, design, arrange, collect, create, organize, prepare

In this stage I might ask the student to: Set up a novel jumping situation and guide your dog through the sequence using what you have learned so far about jumping your dog.

And the final stage is....

Evaluation: judge, evaluate, compare, score, choose, estimate, predict, appraise, rate, value, select, assess, measure.

I might ask experienced students to observe newer students and their jumping dogs, and: Assess which dogs are prepared to jump the higher jumps and which dog need further work. So if you have made it this far, you should now have at least a working knowledge of learning using this particular model and a basic understanding of some of Bloom's taxonomy. for some of us, learning and learning about learning is a great pastime....

And yes, BTW...I do teach this stuff.

-Sue Alexander Dogs in the Park