

Tactical Teaching

Tactical by definition:

1. of, relating to, or used for a specific plan that is created to achieve a particular goal in war, politics, etc
2. of or relating to tactics: as (a) : of or relating to small-scale actions serving a larger purpose (b) : made or carried out with only a limited or immediate end in view

Teaching by definition:

1. to guide the studies of
2. to impart the knowledge of
3. to instruct by precept, example, or experience
4. to make known and accepted
5. to conduct instruction regularly
6. to provide instruction

Tactical teaching would be imparting knowledge while conducting instruction with precept, example and experience to achieve a particular goal with an immediate end view.

Teaching hunter education is TACTICAL TEACHING! We impart knowledge laid out in the IHEA standards while using our personal experiences and examples to instruct students with the goal of students successfully achieving their hunter education certification in a given time period. Our goal is to use a small-scale course to have a larger purpose of developing life-long, responsible, knowledge and ethical hunters.

LEARNING STYLES

To do this effectively, we have to understand how people learn. There are 3 basic types of learning styles:

1. **AUDITORY:** 40% of the population learns best by hearing.
 - These students need to hear it. They are usually talkers.
 - **TIP:** when you have auditory students, they need to be stimulated every 10 minutes. **ASK QUESTIONS!!!**

2. **VISUAL:** 40% of the population learns best by seeing.
 - These students tend to take lots of notes and sit in the front of the class.
 - **TIP:** to engage these students you need to have things to show and visual aids.

3. **KINESTHEIC:** 20% of the population learns best by doing.
 - These students need to touch and do in order to retain information.
 - **TIP:** Having hands-on material is a must.

In a University of Missouri study, researchers brought in 6 test groups and where presented the material 5 different ways.

- Test Group 1: participants **READ** all of the material.
- Test Group 2: participants **HEARD** (read to) all of the material.
- Test Group 3: participants **SAW** all of the material.
- Test Group 4: participants **HEARD** and **SAW** all the material.
- Test Group 5: participants **HEARD**, **SAW** and **DID** all the material.

Two weeks after being presented the material the groups retained the following percentages of information.

- Test Group 1: 10% of the information retained.
- Test Group 2: 50% of the information retained immediately after material was presents, but dropped to 12% after 2 weeks.
- Test Group 3: 30% of the information retained.

- Test Group 4: 50% of the information retained.
- Test Group 5: 90% of the information retained.

So how we teach affects how our students learn. Communication is the key. Communication can be verbal or non-verbal.

Verbal communication is transferred to another person through actual words and makes up 7% of all communication. Verbal communication uses voice tone, inflection, and pitch to put words into intended meaning

Non-verbal communication is translated to another person through gestures, body language, and facial expressions. Non-verbal communication makes up 93% of all communication.

TEACHING TECHNIQUES

There are four basic forms of instruction:

1. LECTURE: Speaking

ADVANTAGE: Accommodates large groups.
Deliver a lot of information in short time.

DISADVANTAGE: Instructor goes too fast.
No feedback.
Loss of interest and retention.

2. VISUAL: Seeing

ADVANTAGE: Can aid in understanding.
Can establish more feedback or questions.

DISADVANTAGE: Everyone must be able to see.
Not everyone perceives what they see the same way.

NOTE: Never ASSUME that what you say or show in class is being understood by the students. You need to get feedback.

3. HANDS-ON: Doing

ADVANTAGE: Increases interest and retention.
Provides more/better understanding.

DISADVANTAGE: Requires small groups.
Requires training aids and equipment.

4. DISCUSSION: Two-way Communication

ADVANTAGE: Interchange of information.
Increases interest of students.

DISADVANTAGE: Can be difficult to control.
Can cause course to get off-track.

NOTE: Remember communicate is a two-way street, not a one-way road.

TEACHING METHODS

Instructors should explore methodologies of learning, teaching, speaking and evaluation. Experience and practice will make you a better instructor. There will be times an instructor needs to reach beyond the methods listed. *DO WHAT WORKS!* And remember, what works associates itself with the learning side – not the teaching side. Be creative and imaginative. Teaching and learning are dynamic because of human interaction.

The following guide might help you select an approach to teach in remembering to evaluate the approach from the student's point of view after it is tried.

Learning is more acceptable and retained for a longer duration of time if several methods of teaching are employed. A description of some of the more widely used methods is provided so the instructor can decide which method will best teach a certain piece of information.

Actual Experience:

In most cases, "learning by doing" is the most effective. Ideally, students learn to hunt by going hunting with the safe and experienced hunter. However, in the Hunter Education program, most lessons are taught during classroom and field exercises.

Simulated Experience:

This type of instruction involves going through all the motions without actually doing them. It should always be followed by the actual experience when possible, and should come as close to reality as possible.

Dramatization/Role Playing:

Having students enact situations can bring out different ways of looking at a problem, and is a good evaluative tool for the instructor.

Demonstration:

A demonstration works well with either small or large groups. The instructor should “say” and “do” at the same time, making each step in the process clear. When you have students repeat a demonstration for the class or for themselves, encourage them to “say” as they “do.”

Teachable Moment:

This is a situation that arises unexpectedly with either the student or the instructor and can be used as a chance for effective learning. For example, you may have students participating in a live-firing exercise when one of them shoots a “misfire.” After giving the range command “cease fire” and gathering the students together, show them the misfired cartridge and explain why it did not properly dislodge the bullet (i.e., primer mishap, firing pin stroke, etc.).

Leading Discussions and Encouraging Student Involvement:

Hunter Education instructors must be knowledgeable in their field; further, they must have the skills to transmit the knowledge to students. One of these necessary skills is leadership. Good classroom leadership includes things such as:

1. Directing Productive Discussions
 - Guide the discussion, but don’t try to dominate the thinking of the group.
 - Keep the group moving forward; restate essential points. Beware of bogging down in details or “war stories.”
 - Instructors should not let their personal opinions overshadow the class.
2. Controlling Undesirable Behavior
 - If a disruptive individual begins to question you in non-productive ways, they may be seeking attention. Comment “interesting point” and then suggest you meet after class to discuss it further.

- If a student is inattentive, direct a question to them about material just covered; involve them in an activity.
- In extreme situations of disruptive behavior, call a break for the class and discuss it with the “problem” student. If necessary, ask the student to leave. Document incident.

Encouraging Student Involvement

Acceptance skills: Promote participation.

EXAMPLE: “Thank you, Bill, for your comment.”

Supporting skills: Support person having trouble expressing themselves. Make person feel like a worth-while member of the group.

EXAMPLE: “Go ahead and express it any way you can.”

Encouraging skills: Encourage those who are reluctant to contribute to discussion.

EXAMPLE: “Does anyone have anything to add to what has been said?”

Handling errors: To avoid embarrassing students so that participation won’t dry up.

EXAMPLE: “Can you give us more information on what you just said?”

Open Meeting: Instructional Approach to Group Discussion

One process used for teaching values is the open-ended group meeting. This type of meeting is when the instructor leads a class in a discussion ... free of right and wrong answers about topics that relate to responsible hunter behavior in relationships to self, fellow hunters, the game being pursued, landowners and non-hunters. The open-ended meeting encourages individual involvement.

Brainstorming

This method is perhaps the best for “opening up” or “loosening” a non-talkative group. Brainstorming is a form of student involvement in the learning process. It is the first step in the concept called “processing.” Brainstorming is creating and listing ideas that pertain to a specific topic and is used to draw out and expand ideas, attitudes and beliefs. Here are some examples of questions when a typical approach is taken.

- Why are there problems with hunter/landowner relations?
- Why do hunters violate rules and regulations?
- What are all the steps taken when preparing for a weekend of hunting?

Trigger Films

This method involves the use of a three- or four-minute film segment that depicts a situation or set of circumstances that will “trigger” a reaction and decision-making process in the mind of the viewer.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

To most instructors, classroom management is related only to classroom behavior. However, set-up of the classroom and actual logistics directly affect the classroom behavior.

Logistics

Logistics is the handling of the details of an operation. Basically it's the things that must be done to plan and organize a complicated activity or event that involves many people.

1. Classroom Set-up: This may depend on the actual facility being used and the number of students that are attending.

If your goal is to engage everyone in conversation and discussion, having the horseshoe layout is best, but this will limit you on class side. When using the horseshoe configuration, you want everyone around the horseshoe. People outside the horseshoe are less likely to be engaged.

You also want to make sure that everyone can see everything, especially since people retain more by seeing the information.

2. Breaks: Taking breaks is essential to retention. The old saying, "The mind can only retain what the butt can absorb" is a true statement. Taking appropriate breaks at appropriate lengths is essential.

Breaks should never be more than 5-10 minutes and should be taken every 1 to 1½ hours.

Use your breaks effectively- when you are taking a break, address questions that may not have been essential to instruction. Great time to let little Johnny tell his story. Use breaks for extend instruction such as allowing students to handle the firearms

3. Food and Drinks: While instructors should not be eating during instructional time, if your facility allows food and drinks I strongly urge you to allow participants to do so, especially if the class starts or runs into traditional meal times.

With the 6hr format, if you planning on running a course in one day, make sure to have an extended break for a meal. This would need to be calculated in your advertised time and should also be noted on the registration page.

EXAMPLE: Class will be from 9am-4pm on Saturday with a 1hr meal break. Please make plans for lunch.

4. Facilities: Facilities should have: 1) appropriate number of restrooms, 2) be handicap accessible.

Instructor Preparation

Lack of instructor preparation for course, will only issues for the atmosphere of the class. If you appear not to care, then the students will not care. Preparation should include:

1. Class Size: Quantity does not equal quality in teaching. The perfect class size is 15. This allows you to have a large enough group of participants to get a variety of experiences for discussion purposes, but a small enough group to have hands-on portions be 5 groups of 3 people (how many firearm actions to we have? ☺).
2. Material and handouts: Each student should receive the same material. Always check prior to the course that you have at least 5 more of everything than you actually need.
3. Equipment and training aids: Prior to course, make sure all of your equipment and training aids are prepped and working. If you are using a facility's equipment, especially audio visual equipment, know

how to work it BEFORE the class. You do not want to waste precious minutes trying to upload a 30 second video clip.

4. Know your content: if you are a seasoned instructors you have years of experience not only in field, but also in front of a class. New instructors may have no teaching experience at all, and combined with making sure of covering all the necessary material, disaster can be imminent.

Before you first class, contact seasoned instructors and ask for advice. Assist them with a course (or several) before yours.

USE THE LESSON PLAN! The current HE Lesson Plan lays out all the information on the state certification exam and meets the current IHEA standards. Master the need to know vs. nice to know concepts. There is a lot of material in the hunter education student manual. There is a lot of content that is nice to know, not need to know. Following the lesson plan, covering the material on the test, and most importantly covering all safety aspects of hunting is the need to know. Make certain that anything extra you do is valid to the course, not just your favorite subject.

KISS: Keep it Simple (Stupid) Make sure that as an instructor, your years of experience both in the field and in the classroom does not out you in a false sense that this particular concept of object 'everyone knows'; your students may not. You do not teach want to teach beyond someone's comprehension. Remember the 8 to 80 rule.

5. Time management: Teaching takes time. And in a basic hunter education course, as elsewhere, there's never enough of it. Like any executive responsible for the efforts of others, you will find that managing time — yours and the students' — is one of your biggest challenges.

Time management is the thread running through almost all aspects of teaching — organizing the course, organizing the classroom, deciding how long and how often to teach various subjects (see lesson plan provided), recording student progress, or keeping time-consuming problems (such as little Johnny having a story to tell about everything!) to a minimum. There is only so much time in your hunter education course.

The essentials of time management involve:

1. Paring down paperwork (How much time are you taking for registration?)
2. Planning- plan your work and work your plan (start on time!)

Behavior

When a course is open to the public, you always run the chance of having behavioral problems, especially with younger students attending without supervision. Make sure that parents that drop students off understand that if there is a problem or issue that arises with that child, you will be calling to have them picked up.

On the rare occasion that a major issue or confrontation takes place with an adult, you need to ask them to leave the course. If they refuse and an enforcement officer is not present, contact your local enforcement officer. If he/she is unavailable, contact the local sheriff's department. You should never remove someone physically from a course or have any type of altercation with him/her.

The key to both of these scenarios is to DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, and DOCUMENT!!! Make sure you have your bases covered if anything is every put into question about your actions. Include in your documentation:

1. Date and Time of incident
2. Location of incident

3. List of witnesses
4. Narrative of what happened, including your reaction to the incident.
5. What type of action was taken (example: student warnings, how many warnings, etc.)

Make sure that even if it's a minor incident, notify your local hunter education specialist and make them aware of what happened. Nothing is worse of our staff than getting a complaint from the public and having no knowledge of the incident.