



Small-group teaching

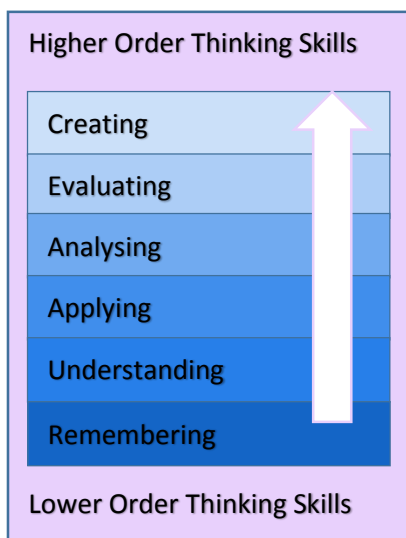
Common problems

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Group is unresponsive | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find out why (whose problem?); Teacher talking too much? Wrong type of dialogue?• Demonstrate the relevance of material – deviate from script.• Environment/reassurance – Maslen's hierarchy of needs.• Discover / activate prior learning• Preparation issues – see below |
| Individuals don't participate | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find out why. Shyness? Cultural reasons?• Invite contributions by name or hand gestures.• Start with easy (definitional) questions and build on them – Bloom's taxonomy• Use small groups for discussion• Use written contributions• Don't answer students' questions – ask other students to provide answers – generate dialogue |
| Preparation is not done | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't do the work for the students. Ask questions anyway.• Were instructions clear/ill-defined?• Ask students to do work in class. |
| Dominant students | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid the situation with warm-ups, introductions, ground-rules.• Use names: "John thinks this, what do others think?" |

Dos

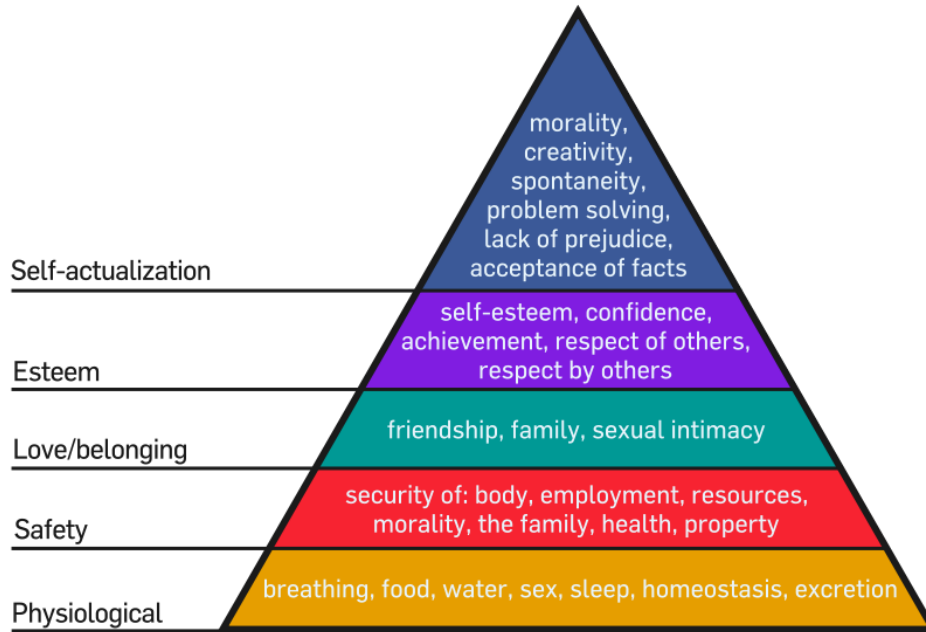
- Learning objectives should be clear (and aligned with those of the unit)
- Find out where the students “are” intellectually (prior learning). Where do they want to go?
- Make sure the environment is comfortable
- Resist the temptation to lecture
- Motivate the material – explain why it is relevant/interesting
- Make the students participate.
- Evaluate (time yourself speaking; ask the students what they learnt; find out why they haven't prepared)
- Be supportive and inclusive
- Take risks

Bloom's Taxonomy



- Create: Design; Speculate.
- Evaluate: judge, defend, justify
- Analyse: what are the assumptions?
- What is the evidence?
- Apply: What would you do in this situation?
- Understand: Compare, explain difference
- Remember: What is...; give me an example of...

Maslen's Hierarchy (1954)



Some alternative ways of organising seminars

Organisation	Activities
Individual work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silent reading • Preparing individual answer to question set • Recalling; thinking; working on own ideas
Working in pairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare answer to a question • Clarification of ideas • Compare individual answers and arrive at a joint answer • Marking each other's work
Working in fours or fives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debating topic and arriving at a team view • Preparing answer for plenary session (use of flip-chart paper) • One or more members present team view to whole seminar. • Project team with division of labour
'Envoys' or 'Crossover groups'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One person from each group joins a different group to inject new ideas into discussion. • Groups are split up and re-formed to share ideas.