



Some ideas for
Instructing
Agility classes

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INTRODUCTION

1. The different ways of organising classes.
2. What to train.
3. How to instruct, including demonstrations.
4. Design a training session.
5. Run a training session.

HOW TO ORGANISE A CLASS

SET UP.

1. Arrive on time – instructor and class.
2. Everyone helps set out gear and/or put away.
3. Produce three plans/use letters so that one person can put out the letters, the rest can put out the gear, instructor can tweak.

MAKING UP YOUR GROUPS.

1. Keep groups small, up to 6-7 per instructor.
2. Arrange the class so people are training not standing in line. To do this either make classes small, or set up two exercises.
3. Have dogs with similar **skills** in same group.
4. At Beginners/puppy level should be very structured, no real variation.

HOW LONG IS A CLASS?

Between 30-60 mins depending on number of people. Eg. 1-2 people = 30 mins maxm, 3-7 people = 60 mins maxm.

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE CLASS?

1. Repetition on the same exercise so dogs/handler learn something.
2. Exercises should be about 7-10 obstacles in length. This allows speed to be built up, no one can monopolise the gear for too long, and is about half a course.
3. Encourage people to try different ways of handling the same sequence to see which ones work best for them.
5. Allow practice on every piece of equipment every week.
6. Do NOT try to instruct and train your own dog, it does not work.
7. Can combine sequences to make a course at the end.
8. Start with a simple sequence and simple handling method. Get dogs familiar with the sequence and build confidence. Add to this by:-
 - a. Different handling methods
 - b. Slight changes to equipment to add risk
 - c. More before and/or after.
 - d. Repeat over a number of weeks.

WHAT TO TRAIN.

- Ask yourself ? what level is the class
?list of skills – what can they do
? what is the goal – where are you taking them – formulate a training schedule.
? How long have you got
? How many in the class/different heights
? be realistic! Set class participants up for success.
? should you be doing individual obstacles, short sequences
? ask them what they would like to train

Resources: Books, Videos, last weekends courses, Clean run, Link, what someone else did, Internet.

Design a training session that answers the above questions.

Formulate a training schedule that

- starts easy and gets progressively harder,
- uses repetition
- is closely aligned to the goals
- is interesting

TRAINING METHODS.

Warmups/Play/Excite the dog away from the gear

Food in a fluffy container

Always train a hungry dog

Backchaining

Focus, spend time on a sequence, analysing it and **repeating successful runs**. Don't stop when you succeed once, repeat and lock in the method.

COACHING – not the “traffic monitor”

You identify and set the challenge. Watch and see if its appropriate and be prepared to change it quickly if it does not work.

Watch each person closely. Suggest different ways to handle the same sequence, while the dog does the same thing.

Be positive, be buoyant, be bossy – challenge them to move out of their comfort Zone.

Think continuously – how could you do this differently so that its better, faster, smoother.

Tell them where it was not perfect. Be honest, they wont know if you don't tell them.

Walk with them around the exercise, ask “where are the risks/challenges? How will you handle it? What is plan B?” This will make them think!

Point out one or two things you think are challenges to get them going.

If they fail, either

Suggest they do something different and get them to think what.

Tell them what to do.

Make the exercise easier so they will succeed. Then make it harder again.

Don't let them keep failing. Train to succeed. Get the basics right. Don't be limited by how you run your own dog and your own skills.

Hint as a coach, people and dogs as individuals, customise training,

DESIGN A SESSION.

For this session you will need:-

- An agility course
- A pen/pencil
- A plan of the training area drawn to scale.

EVERYONE: Your task is to produce a class plan for a 15 minute session, based on a part of your chosen course. You must:-

1. produce the plan/layout, to scale on paper
2. identify the source of idea
3. outline what skills will be developed
4. list at least one way to make it harder/easier.
5. How could you vary it easily/add more?
6. What tips/advice would you give anyone following your plan?