

## Doing Their Thing

This is now going to be a term, "DTT".

Imagine you are for the first time being asked to drive a complicated, modern tractor (I am presuming you have the basics for a car but not this beast). You have some idea, but will need time to blend your previous learning of cars with this learning of a tractor. Although they may be similar and you feel the familiar actions you will need to adjust your previous actions for this particular tractor.

As you are doing this, you want simple patterns, you can repeat as many times as you need until they move into the conscious competent (go look it up if this is new) phase. Then you will benefit from more practice of these simple patterns until you move into unconsciously competent, at which point you are ready to take on new information to blend with this pattern.

If this is rushed the fall out will be:

- incomplete learning, which can be inaccurate, rushed, clumsy, frustrating
- frustration, that you cannot even do the things you are familiar with
- a jumble of information that you find hard to access or memorise.

This are all indications of "pressure" to learn at a faster rate than you can.

The time it takes to assimilate new information (*Yes I hear what you are saying*), process this with information that you already have (*oh ,but I understood something different*) apply this information into actions (*let me try this slowly*), review whether what you are doing is what you have heard, and then blend this with other actions and skills - is INDIVIDUAL, and it will take as long as it takes.

It is important that we give this learning process for each new action the time it needs to be learned. This should be evidenced before we move onto the next phase or lesson or piece of learning.

*This is from the Build the Learning course if you want to explore this further, learning is quite a complicated process.*

## Evidence of learning

If we are to be effective teachers we need to be able to measure the progress of the learning and what they are learning to know that it is happening as we had planned. This is applicable to you as a learner as well as the dog.

We can look for:

the **QUALITY** (standard) of that learning. Most significantly: is the standard maintained over repetition or does the quality vary?

the **EASE** of which it is executed. Some learning may come easily or take months to achieve a level of ease.

how long you are able to **SUSTAIN** or repeat it, to ensure that success is not a single event or lucky chance.

**CONSISTENT** and stable, without variations, without weaker areas.

**FLEXIBLE** and can be adapted to different conditions.

These criteria are applicable to both you as the learner and the dog as the learner. Give yourself time to practice the skills, until it seems to occur with ease, good form (quality) and sustain it.

Further down the line I will ask to see you adapt it in different activities, watching everyone's video and walking them through for yourself (prompt the person to do what they are going to do before they do it) is a useful way of adapting your learning and mentally practising the prompts for the actions.

You are looking for this in your dog as well - ease, (fluency) good form (probably holding the distance), and it repeats well.

Do not over cook it, give the dog lots of space for the processing.

If you are rushing it too much, the stress may show with:

frenetic biting of the toy,

rushing at you,

unable to respond to previously learned cues (although the predatory state can also inhibit that).

barking, verbalising or growling over the toy

biting the ground

I know none of you want to stress the learning, as the outcome is never good and the ground will be much harder to cover again when we have to go back.

So in one of the classic collie phrases: "Take Time".

Look for the moments where the dog is saying:

**"Give me more stuff to learn, I got this....."**