

Instructional Design Project 4-H Archery Whistle Commands

John Tong

University of Georgia – EDIT 6170

Author Note

John Tong, Enterprise Information Technology Services, University of Georgia

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to John Tong at jtong@uga.edu

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I am an archery coach for Madison County 4H and the Girl Scouts as well as an active member of the local traditional live weapons group of the Society for Creative Anachronism. There is a set of established whistle commands that is used to coordinate archery practices across all those groups, and they allow practices to proceed smoothly and safely even with a large number of participants. It is often said by beginners that the whistle commands are one of the most intimidating aspects of starting group practices. I decided to create material to support the learning of those commands in a quick and efficient manner.

The target audience of this instruction are generally in the 5th grade range. Running through the introduction of the whistle commands is initially daunting to the new archers and will often take a significant portion of the first practice. With a practice in some cases only being an hour making the learning of the commands more efficient is very important to get the students right into the practice itself. Laying out the lesson clearly using the ID4T methodology and having the supporting material will hopefully speed the learning process.

Instructional Goals and Objectives

My goal was to create instruction that allows new archers to quickly understand, learn, and follow the whistle commands to safely participate independently in an archery practice. The instruction will be a lecture, a demonstration, then an opportunity for the student to practice and demonstrate the newly learned skills. The demonstration can either be narrated live with one of the coaches acting as the new archer, or a pre-recorded video. The assessment is to demonstrate

the proper behaviours with a coach within arms reach to certify that the student can complete the behaviours safely and successfully and will be a pass/not yet pass evaluation.

The student should be able to demonstrate the proper safe behavior during a cycle of an 'end'. An 'end' in this use means one or more relays of archers shooting at a target, retrieval of the arrows, and being ready to start the next 'end'. In order to facilitate this in a large field with sometimes hundreds of archers, whistle commands are used. Our objective is to have the students obey the whistle commands. The whistle command objectives, in order, are as follow:

- Demonstrate the appropriate response to two whistle blasts by retrieving their bow and straddling the shooting line. (Archers to the Line)
- Demonstrate the appropriate response to one whistle blast by nocking and firing three arrows, then backing away from the shooting line. (Archers may fire)
- Demonstrate the appropriate response to three whistle blasts by walking to the target line near the target and retrieving arrows. (Archers may retrieve)
- Demonstrate the appropriate response to 4 or more whistle blasts by letting down any drawn bows, unnocking the arrow, and grounding their bow. (STOP! Safety issue on the range!)

Evaluation

I created the base material during the class as part of the weekly assignments. I went back and integrated feedback and expanded the material from just one whistle command which was the original assignment to the entire lesson after the assignment was graded. Thanks to several new people joining over time at different events, I was able to present the material several times to groups over the semester. These were generally smaller groups and the other coaches or range officials were very happy to play a part in the demonstration. I did not get to prepare a video for these impromptu opportunities.

What went well

The value of having a VERY detailed assessment which was derived from clear and concise objectives can not be over emphasized. Having gone through the exercise of breaking down all the tasks really cemented all the key points and I was able to present the lesson essentially using the assessment as key bullet points, breaking down each activity via task analysis made sure I wasn't missing anything. The other coaches assisted with the demonstration of the skills with the students and since they were all trained the same way I felt comfortable with them maintaining safety and verifying that the students were performing the correct behaviours even if I did not coordinate that part with them in advance.

From my past experience observing last year, the normal way the class would be presented is a coach would stand and deliver an ad-hoc lecture, then move directly into what I have designated here as the 'assessment phase'. During the first attempt, coaches would have to repeat the lesson almost on an individual basis. It is here that I feel we gained the most benefit in the new explanation (lecture), demonstration and practice model. I feel that the students were also able to learn a great deal by watching, and have the lessons reinforced by watching both students go before them and after them during the evaluation. I feel that also contributed greatly to their learning having that repetition even if it was not them performing the tasks.

What could be improved

Though I feel that the lesson went well and that I felt confident in presenting the material, and the students did well, I do not have any metrics to show improvement in a quantitative fashion. I can say that we went through the demonstration and had the new students up and going in a single end, and that we got to that point much sooner and had almost a full practice worth of

shooting, which is not normal for a first practice. The other coaches, when asked for feedback, did state that it was decidedly more concise and comprehensive than they have presented in the past, which is mostly in an ad-hoc fashion. I would want to have some timings, and other observations to be able to numerically quantify the improvement, along with having another coach present the materials to help reduce the chance that it was just me instructing or that particular group of students, but I don't believe we'll want to go back to that method after the improvements we've seen in getting folks up and going for their first shoot.

Conclusions

I have learned a great deal about the ID4T methodology in this course. It provides an excellent framework for creating instructional material that emphasizes the alignment of objectives, assessment and instructional material. I was able to apply it to an often used lesson, the whistle commands, that is common across multiple organizations. The results were fantastic and resulted in improved and faster learning on part of the students and we were able to get into the regular practice much sooner using this course model than not using it. I feel that the best gains came from two areas. First, having a much more tightly focused lecture, thanks to teaching to the carefully decomposed assessment tasks, and secondly the learning improvement by using the lecture, demonstration, then assessment model.

It seems intuitive but from experience it is surprising how misaligned many courses are both from undergrad and my current graduate school coursework. Having the methodology and diverse readings we've had during this course have played a great part in giving me confidence in my instruction.

Appendix A: Objectives

The Objectives:

The student should be able to demonstrate the proper safe behavior during a cycle of an 'end'.

An 'end' in this use means one or more relays of archers shooting at a target, retrieval of the arrows, and being ready to start the next 'end'. In order to facilitate this in a large field with sometimes hundreds of archers, whistle commands are used. Our objective is to have the students obey the whistle commands. The whistle command objectives, in order, are as follow:

- Demonstrate the appropriate response to two whistle blasts by retrieving their bow and straddling the shooting line. (Archers to the Line)
- Demonstrate the appropriate response to one whistle blast by nocking and firing three arrows, then backing away from the shooting line. (Archers may fire)
- Demonstrate the appropriate response to three whistle blasts by walking to the target line near the target and retrieving arrows. (Archers may retrieve)
- Demonstrate the appropriate response to 4 or more whistle blasts by letting down any drawn bows, unnocking the arrow, and grounding their bow. (STOP! Safety issue on the range!)

Appendix B: Assessment

- This assessment is to be completed on the archery field and may be conducted during the regular practice with the same whistle commands that more experienced archers are using.
- Upon successful completion of all the whistle commands, the archer may participate in practice without an instructor.
- Each student **MUST** be accompanied by an instructor for each step within arm's reach to correct any unsafe behavior.
- Student who fail to observe **ALL** the steps in a particular whistle command should be corrected immediately and continue to the next assessment along with the rest of the archers but must still complete another full cycle until they are successful.

Two whistle command:

- Success criteria:
 - Upon hearing two whistle blasts, the student should retrieve their bow from the bow stand.
 - The archer should approach the shooting line.
 - The archer should straddle the line with one foot on each side.
 - Archer should await the next signal.
 - NOTE: The instructor should assume the coaching position immediately beside the student on the other side of the bow, ready to correct any unsafe behavior.
- Failure criteria:
 - Failure to execute the behaviors above.
 - Running is a failure criteria.
 - Student should **NOT** draw an arrow at this point. Doing so is a failure criteria. If they do, the instructor should stop them and remind them not to draw or nock any arrows until the next command.

One whistle command:

- Success criteria:
 - Archer may nock and fire three arrows.
 - Archer will then back to the safety line and hang up their bow on the bow rack.
- Failure criteria:
 - Failure to execute the behaviors above.
 - Failure to keep the arrow pointed down range at all times while nocking.
 - Failure to shoot safely.

Three whistle command:

- Success criteria:
 - Archer walks to the target line 5 feet in front of the target and waits.
 - ONE archer at a time retrieves their arrows then returns to the safety line.
- Failure criteria:
 - Failure to execute the behaviors above.
 - Running to the target line is a failure criteria.
 - Multiple people retrieving at once is a failure criteria.
 - Advancing past the target safety line is a failure criteria.

Four whistle command:

- Success criteria:
 - IF the student has an arrow drawn, they are to let down the draw without firing the arrow.
 - The student is to un nock the arrow.
 - The student is to ground their bow (placing it on their toe will suffice).
 - Student is to wait for further instruction.
- Failure criteria:
 - Failure to execute the behaviors above.
 - Firing any drawn arrows is a failure criteria.
 - Waiting with an arrow nocked is a failure criteria.

Appendix C: Lesson Plan

Introduction: Lecture

The instructor will give an introductory speech and explain the purpose of the whistle commands as well as an overview of the whistle commands. Key points:

- Archery practices and competitions can get VERY large, sometimes hundreds of shooters in a line. Consistent Whistle commands allow for a safe way to conduct shooting for everyone.
- Proper execution of these commands helps ensure a safe experience for everyone
- Whistle commands:
 - Two whistle blasts: Archers retrieve their bows and approach the shooting line.
 - One whistle blast: Archers may nock and fire three arrows and then back to the safety line.
 - Three whistle blasts: Archers walk to the target line (5 feet away from targets) and retrieve their arrows one at a time and return to the safety line and wait for the two whistle blast command.

Demonstration: Video

Instructor may play the video that will demonstrate each whistle command along with a voice over of each step and the reason for each step ensuring that the video emphasizes the success criteria, the failure criteria and why they are failure criteria (safety hazards). The script for the activity can almost be copy pasted directly from the assessment! What will need to be added is WHY the failure criteria exist and what the risk is.

Practice Activity: Practice with coaches

Each person is to be accompanied by a coach for their first run through. The coach is to assume a position immediately in front of the archer, within an arms reach away so as to be ready to immediately correct any unsafe behavior. Ideally several coaches will be on hand to lead several archers through at once.

1. Each student should be equipped with proper safety equipment: arm guard, finger tabs, a hip quiver, three arrows and know which bow they are going to be using.
2. Have the new archers line up in as many lines as there are coaches.

3. Have one coach blow two whistle blasts, and the first set of students retrieve their bows and straddle the line in front of the coaches. Coaches may reiterate that archers are NOT to nock any arrows yet.
 - a. Coaches are to observe for the success and failure criteria listed in the assessment.
4. One coach blows one whistle blast and the students may nock and fire three arrows. Coaches should be watching for any safety issues but not to coach on shooting form yet.
 - a. Coaches are to observe for success and failure criteria listed in the assessment.
 - b. Students are to return their bows to the bow stands after shooting their three arrows.
5. Once all bows have been returned, one coach is to blow two whistle blasts and the next set of students retrieves their bows and approaches the shooting line in front of a coach.
6. Repeat steps four and five for as many students remain, this is practice for how relay shoots are performed.
7. Once the last student has returned their bow, one coach is to blow three whistle blasts and observe the students.
 - a. Warn them against running.
 - b. Remind students to stay behind the target safety line.
 - c. Remind students to retrieve their arrows from the target one at a time.
8. Once the last archer has returned to the safety line. Repeat the exercise, but for each relay, one coach should blow a series of whistles (4 or more, may be continuous) and observe for proper behavior as listed in the assessment.
9. Coaches may repeat as many times as needed or as time allows.

References

There are no sources in the current document.