Chapter 1

Domains of Teaching

Introduction

This chapter establishes the domains of teaching as one of two “pillars of instructional technology” and offers the necessary grounding in the history and evolution of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor teaching.

The cognitive domain encompasses intellectual objectives that deal with “the recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills.” The affective domain takes in individual “changes in interest, attitudes, and values, and the development of appreciations and adequate adjustment.” Finally, the psychomotor domain embraces physical skills and the performance of actions involved in learning described as “the manipulative or motor-skill area” (Bloom, 1956).

Cognitive Domain

Definition

Cognition refers to mental activities, an approach to teaching that focuses on the very process of delivering information and imparting new concepts. To
understand the connections between concepts, information is parsed and rebuilt with logical connections. As a result, the retention and recall of that material increases.

**Concepts**

Cognition involves the mental processes of knowing, perception, reasoning, attention, learning, memory, thought, concept formation, language, problem solving, judgment, and the development of behavior in children. Research has opted to understand cognition from, among others, the perspective of teaching. For example, one aspect of the cognitive domain is remembering previously learned material. The skill involves recall of a wide range of instructional material, from specific facts to complete theories. But any recall of information requires the same basic brain functions shared by all learners. Another perspective of cognition is the ability to grasp meaning of instruction evidenced by translating new information from one form to another, by interpreting material, or by estimating future trends or effects. The ability to teach in new and concrete situations includes the application of rules, methods, concepts, principles, laws, and theories while a further aspect of cognition concerns the ability to break down material into its component parts so that it may be better identified, analyzed, and understood. Further refinement of this technique requires the teacher to assemble the component parts to form a new whole. Defining cognition culminates in ability to value instruction based on definite criteria and a network of internal and external standards of success. At its pinnacle, meta-cognition has been recognized as an essential skill for teaching to learn. Cognitive strategies are employed to help an individual achieve a particular goal (e.g., understanding a text) while meta-cognitive strategies ensure that a particular goal has been reached. Knowledge is considered to be meta-cognitive if it is actively used to achieve an overarching instructional goal. Knowing how one learns is a critical strength in the cognitive domain.

**Theorists and Their Theories**

Robert Gagne is recognized for turning the art of instruction into a science and heralding the advent of cognitive teaching. His unique contributions were