



**Phenomenon-Based
Learning:
The Affective Domain
MODULE 1 LESSON 1
TRANSCRIPT**

SLIDE 1

Welcome to the first Lesson of Module 1 on the Affective Domain. What is the Affective Domain, you ask? Why do I need to know about it? Such great questions!!!

I'm going to answer by asking YOU a few questions!

How many hairs have you pulled out of your head just this week because your students are driving you crazy? My hair has just turned grey from all the years I didn't know how to do what I'm about to show YOU!

You have created the world's best lesson and half of your students have their heads down because they don't want to participate. But WHY, you're asking. I'll give you a few really possible reasons – and solutions!!! You want to plan project-based lessons but you're wondering how in the world your students are going to work together effectively, right? It's all about...well – it's all about the Affective Domain!

In this module, you're going to learn the techniques to reach your students' so that they're

Cooperative

Patient

Respectful

Curious

And involved

How can that be?

Well, it turns out, that if we don't make the Affective Domain a priority when we are planning our projects, a lot of our other planning becomes much less effective. That's why, in a whole course of PhBL, we begin with the Affective Domain.

I am going to show you **WHAT** it is, **WHY** it's so important to focus on it, and **HOW** to transform your learning environment into one with a strong Affective domain in which students feel safe, cared about, seen, heard and valued so that they not only learn, but they can't wait to come to school to learn more every day!!! How does that sound to begin charging from the gate!!! I'm so excited to share these strategies with you!

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Quick reminder – there's a scaffolding activity that introduces the key concepts of this video. There's double value with this scaffold: 1) it will help you pre-learn the information from the video *and* 2) you can use the same scaffold with your students!

So if you haven't gone through the scaffold yet – go ahead and stop the video, take 5 minutes to do it, and then come back and you're going to see how important scaffolds are in assimilating the information that's presented in the lesson.

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Now, you're going to hear this a lot in this and other modules – and we'll go further into depth each time. At the bottom of all that we're doing, what do we really want from our students? Well, I've spent more than 30 years as an educator, and what I realise is is that as unsettling as the idea may be for us, our students don't really need the content we're presenting in our lessons as much as they need to develop those skills that will help them t qualify for whatever professional career they want in the future. And what are those skills?

Well, what the World Economic Forum, the OECD and the United Nations say are most important - and I'm completely open to you messaging me to refute any of these - are the following:

(read the 21st century skills)

The really great news is that your choice to present information through PhBL projects is exactly how these skills are developed.

First, though, first, we need to create the ideal atmosphere so that our students are active participants in their own learning, they flourish in the learning environment we have created. That's what the Affective Domain is all about and that's why you can pat yourself on the back for signing up for this module.

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One of the easiest ways we can create a powerful Affective Domain right off the bat – right from the start is by sharing the objectives – for the day, the week, the month, the year. And not just share them, but co-create them be open to listening to the opinions of your students and use them to consider making changes – or at least explaining your perspective and why you aren't going to make changes – this time.

Even if you make a small difference in the objectives. you'll be giving your students the message that you value their opinion, that they are participants in the learning environment, that they can feel empowered inside and outside of the classroom to express their opinion and feel that it matters. With this simple beginning to each session, you will set the tone that the learning environment is cooperative – not just between students but between all the people in the classroom.

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The objective for *this* lesson is the biology behind the Affective Domain. We're going to look at the three domains of learning laid out by Benjamin Bloom and his team, and see why biologically the Affective Domain needs to be addressed before any of the others.

And, just as I mentioned before, I believe in a collaborative learning environment, so even though these lessons aren't synchronous, I encourage you to send me messages with suggestions whenever you wish about the course. I am more than happy to consider ways to improve the learning experience for the future, and thank you in advance!

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How do we learn?

I've noticed that I forget what it means to be a learner until I begin learning something. It's not always a really nice sensation. Now I'm naturally curious and I love learning, but if I'm at a conference or a workshop and it's not something I chose, but rather it was an obligation for me to be there, I'm not a happy camper.

Think about it – for our students it's the same. They don't have the choice to come to our classes every day. If they're 15 or under, in any country, they are obligated by the government and those older students, by their parents. That's a fact.

So if that's why they're there, it behooves us to everything we can to make it a wonderful place to be. Why not?! Isn't it part of our responsibility on this planet to raise the vibration and bring more positivity into as many aspects of life as possible?

So, let's think about the following questions. I'm going to pause after each because they're really important to reflect on. Reflection is one of our superpowers as teachers and the more we think about our choices, the more effective educators we become.

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And one more thing: Be honest with yourself. No one but you will hear the answers so it's a valuable time for you to evaluate your reactions to being in a learning environment that may not be ideal.

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Are you surprised by any of the answers that came up?

Did you find that you react more emotionally than you expected to?

But more importantly, what do your emotions have to do with effective learning? And your students learning? Well, pretty much everything.

There is a biology behind the connection between learning and emotions and its biological. What we understand about the brain is that our ability to learn is tied directly to our emotions, and our emotions affect the way new

information is processed when it enters the brain. In the educational world, this is called a 'weak' or 'strong' Affective Domain.

And where did this term come from?

Alright, now we're getting down to brass tacks.

You may be familiar with the name Benjamin Bloom. we mentioned him when identifying the objective for this lesson.

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Well, in the 1950s he and his team of educational psychologists began studying the school systems and were disturbed – well a bit horrified - by what they saw: virtually all teacher-centred lessons that included almost 100% lower-order thinking questions and tasks.

Aside from the fact that these students were required to be in the classroom, had virtually no autonomy, were punished if they went against the teacher's rules – many times cruelly and corporally – hitting students was legal. This methodology meant that students were learning passively and rote most of the day, and so Bloom and his team saw that students were not required to think deeply in any way.

They made it their mission to find a way to shine a very harsh light on this dynamic and change it for the good of a healthy future society.

Yes – this is the part where I get dramatic – but it's true. With a methodology that was created to produce perfectly obedient soldiers and factory workers (we'll get into that in another lesson) - the future of a population incapable of independent and divergent thinking was reaching a disturbing and rapidly advancing threshold. Bloom created taxonomies to stop this trend.

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He developed what we now know as Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains His objectives with the taxonomies was to help teachers to broaden the scope of their lessons, to engage the students more in the learning process, to develop learning centered on the students, and to have tasks geared toward higher-order thinking. I mean – pretty ideal, right?

The domains they delineated are as follows:

The Cognitive Domain that includes content knowledge and the development of intellectual skills.

The Affective Domain – which includes: emotions, attitudes, values, beliefs, opinions, interests and motivations.

The Psychomotor Domain- that includes physical movement, coordination, and use of the motor-skill areas.

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Now, if you're familiar with Bloom's Taxonomy what you've probably used is the taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain, and probably didn't even know that there are two others.

The Cognitive Domain is usually presented in that flashy pyramid, but has morphed into a whole slew of shapes and presentations. They're all the same and extremely powerful.

However, however...

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...the Affective Domain has been largely ignored until now by most..although now – with you involved - its going to finally gain its rightful place as the taxonomy that needs to be addressed first so that we have a healthy learning environment.

Why? Because Emotions actually have primacy over knowledge.

What in the world does that mean?

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I'll give you an example: when I began teaching I used the authoritative model, (no, that's not really me. I never had such a clean shirt when I was a primary teacher!!!) What I mean is that I entered the classroom as the uncontested ruler of the classroom. I told the students what to do, I showed my deep displeasure if they didn't do it, there was no collaboration – I had the first and last words.

Did my students like to be there? *I* didn't even like being there!!! I went home every day feeling angry, unsatisfied, and then finally disturbed. This was not a healthy atmosphere to be in either for myself or my students. Something had to change.

Again, not me. Shirt still way too clean.

I reconsidered how I spoke to my students, and who they were in relation to myself and to themselves. I came to the conclusion that my students were people – though they hadn't been on the planet many years – they were people nonetheless - who had the right to be in a safe place where they felt valued and seen and to participate in their own learning.

Once I came to these realisations, magic happened. The students began looking me in the eye, speaking more softly, raising their hands more often, and generally showing more eagerness to be around me and in the classroom.

I didn't understand until much later that the brain is actually wired for this to happen – when we focus on creating a strong Affective Domain, we give our students the opportunity – literally – to learn more effectively.

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So, we go back to the last message that the Affective Domain has primacy over the other two domains, which means that if it isn't strong, the cognitive

and psychomotor areas of the brain will have great difficulty in processing information.

So let's see why this is so.

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It's really very simple. The brain is powered by electricity, just like any electrical appliance. It is made of billions of tiny wires which in this case, are called neurons. Neurons send electrical impulses across various regions of the brain.

and they need power to send and receive signals; that power comes in the form of brain chemicals. So what? you may be thinking.

(Ken Burns effect)

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Well, this is why the Affective Domain is so important before we plan any lesson. Are you ready? Because effective and efficient learning is about managing the power supply of these brain chemicals.

Information enters the brain through the brain stem and the very first section to receive it is the Limbic System which is also known as the emotional center of the brain. Whether those brain chemicals flow fluidly or become a bit static is the decision of the limbic system.

And how does the Limbic System decide?

Now we're at the very crux - the connecting factor: emotions are the deciding factor.

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The limbic system doesn't evaluate the *information* going in. What it evaluates is the *environment surrounding* this incoming information. If the limbic system registers a positive, healthy external environment, it relaxes and the tollbooth raises it's arm so the information flows past it. On the other hand, if the limbic system is triggered by unpleasant sensations, the tollbooth slams down its arm, information stops where it is, and the person attached to that brain does not or has extreme difficulty assimilating the new material. Think of the limbic system screaming: 'Danger, Danger, Will Robinson!!'

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We can say that the Limbic System has an on/off switch. The off switch is when a student feels

- that her teacher doesn't like her,
- he's uncomfortable around a classmate
- she's upset about something at home,
- they're anxious about an upcoming test,
- he's sad, depressed, or stressed, for any reason,
- they're disengaged or simply bored,

On the other side of the coin, if the limbic system registers positive messages and we feel safe, happy and content, the 'on switch' is activated, and learning is fluid.

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Whether the affective domain in our classroom is weak or strong, it affects our

feelings...towards learning
motivation...for participating in lessons
attitude...toward the successful completion of tasks
enthusiasm...to begin working collaboratively
appreciation...for the opportunity to improve
values...in how we feel appreciated by our teachers

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Now you have key information that is critical – why having a strong Affective Domain is so important in the planning of a PhBL project. You are going to see almost immediately how this information transforms the learning environment. I did and the way my students responded, was incredible.

You can spend hours designing a project that will engage and ignite the interest in your students, and then watch it go nowhere because they don't feel emotionally safe – for reasons you *now* can anticipate and plan for.

So how are we going to move on. Now that you know the biology behind the Affective Domain, we're going to take a good look at nine triggers that are most common in the classroom that weaken the Affective Domain, and concrete activities to counteract them so you can create a powerfully strong Affective Domain.

So, be sure to do the activity for this lesson, and then the formative assessment. Go have some fun and see how much you've learned!!!