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# MASTER WEAVER

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## TEACHING •

All teachers can be divided into four classes: 1. Those who know the subject, and know how to teach. 2. Those who know how to teach, but are not too familiar with the subject. 3. Those who know the subject, but not how to teach it. 4. Those who do not know either.

In handweaving only very few teachers are to be found in the first group; the majority belong to the third. This is only natural, because most weavers have taken up this craft as a hobby, without any intention of teaching.

Yet many weavers are called upon to become instructors, amateur or professional. They start by demonstrating their skill to guests particularly children; continue by helping a beginner, having a talk in their Guild, and before they realize it, they are involved in real teaching.

Since this is a fate hanging over most of us, we might as well learn how to make our teaching efficient, yet painless for both the instructor, and the student.

The first thing to do, when we approach a new student is to find out exactly how much he already knows, and very approximately: what is it that he wants to learn.

This first step is extremely important. We must never take the student's word as to his previous experience. Better give him a few problems on paper, examine samples of his weaving, and observe him in action when he is weaving simple cloth on a good loom.

Then regardless of what the student wants to learn we must make a plan of lessons with the view of filling gaps in his basic education, that is: elementary drafting, general knowledge of weaving equipment, of weaving operations, and particularly of the coordination of movements during weaving itself.

The lack of basic training is much more common among the handweavers than one would expect, and the more advanced the weaver, the more reluctant he is to admit his shortcomings. Yet it is of primary importance to complete this basic training before going any further.

So this is the answer to "what to teach?".

Another question is "how to teach?".

When teaching theory we must be sure that the student is following. Asking him from time to time whether he understands is absolutely useless. Each step must be illustrated by examples, and problems made by the student. Next step comes only after the previous one is thoroughly mastered.

During demonstrations of practical weaving the student must take notes. Then he repeats the operation which was demonstrated, consulting his notes. For instance each step of warping and beaming is started by the instructor, and finished by the student. As soon as possible the student performs the whole set of operations entirely by himself.

When explaining anything at all we use as few words as possible. We speak slowly, stop at each term which may be new to the student, and see to it that he makes a note of it.

It happens quite often that a student may be brilliant in the theory, that is he will make beautiful draw-downs from any draft suggested by the teacher. He may also be quite proficient in practical weaving. Yet he may not see any relationship between his paper work, and the reality of the loom.

If the repetition of the first lessons of drafting does not help, about the only thing we can do is to supply the student with a small sample frame, and to show him how to make samples of very heavy yarn, such as rug filler (white for warp, and black for weft) with a darning needle. Let him make samples of several basic weaves, and then let him compare these samples with his draw-downs of the same weaves. Finally let him make the same samples in finer yarns on a loom, and again compare all three.

In the early stages lessons of theory must be parallel in time with the lessons of practical weaving. Only a very experienced weaver can take advantage of lessons of theory alone.

What about the time necessary to teach a beginner enough to

reach the stage when he can proceed more or less by himself, when he can learn from weaving literature, observation, and from his own experience? What should be the ratio: theory to practice?

An average beginner will need about 100 hrs of supervised work: about 20 hrs of theory and 80 hrs of practical weaving.

Here is a suggested time-table for these lessons, all of one hour duration. Also the correlation of the lessons.

THEORY	PRACTICE
1. Yarns, their origin, properties, count.	1. Collecting samples of yarn. Estimating the count.
2. Principle of weaving,	2. Getting acquainted with the loom & equipment.
3. Warp, figuring out.	3-5. Warping on a frame.
4. The Draft: threading, tie-up, treadling, draw-down.	6-10. Beaming, threading & Sleying.
5. Basic weaves: Tabby.	11-13. Tying-in. Correcting mistakes. Adjusting the loom.
6. Basket. Tabby edges.	14-15. Throwing the shuttle. Tabby.
7. Biased twills & variations.	16-20. Weaving a sampler of basic weaves (tabby, basket, biased twills, wave, dornick in weft. stockinet, broken twills, Satinet, mixed twill & tabby, fancy twills).
8. Broken twill & variations.	21-22. A short project in twill.
9. Herringbone & variations.	23-26. Re-threading the loom for diamond twill.
10. Diamond twill.	27-32. Sampler in diamond twill.
11. Principle of woven-as-drawn-in treadling.	33-36. Projects in diamond twill.
12. Overshot. Theory of drafting.	37-39. Second warp made on a warping mill.
13. Overshot, Variations.	40-45. Beaming and threading for Overshot.
14. Short drafts & analysis.	46-50. Sampler in Overshot.
15. Modern Overshot.	51-55. Projects in Overshot.
16. Crackle. Theory of drafting.	56-60. Re-threading for Crackle.
17. Crackle. Treadlings.	61-68. Projects for Crackle.
18. Summer-&-Winter.	69-72. Re-threading for S-&-W.
19-20. Review.	73-80. Projects in S-&-W.

We are aware that opinion differ as to how to proceed after the basic weaves are taken care of. In our opinion the traditional approach is best, at least in this country. Thus after Twills we take Overshot, Crackle, & Summer-&-Winter. The student may never have much use for them in his future career, but their study involves a variety of theoretical problems which give the student a solid base for the theory of pattern weaving of any kind. The theory of Overshot and later of Crackle is much more involved and instructive than for instance the theory of Damask.

The above schedule applies only to individual lessons, or to small groups with all members of about the same ability to learn. With larger or less uniform groups the progress will be slower.

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A student who is decidedly not interested in pattern weaving, and intends to specialize in yardage, may substitute to the lessons 11 to 20 (theory), and 40 to 80 (practice) the following sequence: 11 - texture overshot; 12-13 - huckaback and variations; 14 - waffle; 15-17 - Bronson; 18-20 - irregular textures. Not all of it can be taken in the 41 lessons of practical weaving, because of the variety of warps required.

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This amount of knowledge is the absolute minimum for any beginner regardless of his interests. There can be no question of "creativity", self-expression", and of other fashionable pursuits unless and until the student acquires a fair degree of self-assurance based on his familiarity with the technology of weaving.

It should be obvious from the above what are the requirements for a certificate of Instructor Weaver. Besides passing the appropriate test in weaving, one grade higher than the level on which the candidate is supposed to teach, he must be able to plan lessons, or courses for individuals, small and large groups, and schools. He must be able besides teaching the theory, to demonstrate in slow motion if necessary all weaving operations. He should also be familiar with weaving literature, and weaving organizations.

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 IT IS TIME TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS FOR OUR WEAVING LESSONS in 1961  
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