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TEACHING METHODS

by Fred King, Instructor Evaluator

Introduction

There are three components in the teaching process: the organization, the student and the teacher. The organization or institution is usually a group set up to promote the interests of a segment of society. This interest often recognizes a need for specialized education and/or training in the organization's area of interest.

The student comes to the organization for a variety of reasons. The most common reason for attendance is based on an identification of an educational need that appears to be compatible with the educational offerings of the institution. ASA is the institution that has come to be recognized by the public as providing premium education based on safety and proficiency in all aspects of sailing.

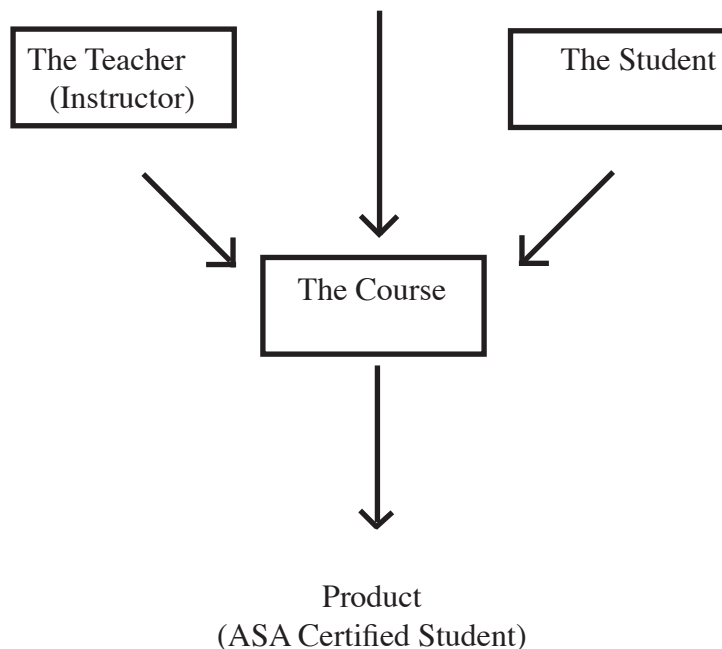
The teacher has the task of teaching programs in accordance with the standards set forth by the organization. The teacher is also involved with the organization for a variety of reasons ranging from the dubious to the idealistic.

This manual addresses the following three components as they pertain to the process of teaching and learning. Since no component is able to function successfully while independent from the others, some of the interrelationships are established. However, the topics to follow will be discussed in the context of identifying the characteristics, benefits and implications of various teaching methods.

The Components of Education

The Organization or Institution

AMERICAN SAILING ASSOCIATION



Responsibilities of the Organization

The organization is responsible for the teacher, the student, and the quality of the educational product.

The instructor is responsible to the organization, for the student, and the product.

The students are only responsible for themselves.

Items Provided by the Organization

1. Appropriate Skills and Knowledge Requirements. While the organization sets up an initial set of standards, these can only be realistic and relevant if the individual instructor and Instructor Evaluator recognize their responsibility to push new ideas that they recognize to be important. Further, the organization must be structured in such a way as to allow democratic evaluation of new ideas and incorporate them if they are deemed valid.

For example, a given school could develop an improved alternate course apart from or above the ASA standards. If, however, five new ASA schools open up locally and erode the ASA standards, the original school suffers because the standards have been diluted. Therefore, it is important to bring up new ideas to promote the overall growth of the organization and raise the standards for everyone in the organization.

2. Recognized Standards. Members of the organization (I.E.s, instructors and officers) are responsible for keeping the organization relevant. Specifically, if any member of the organization observes a weakness, the individual is responsible for remedying the situation by bringing it to the attention of the organizational body as a whole. Strong, active, flexible organizations provide avenues for change to originate at the active level: the school or the instructor.

3. Recognition certificates. In order to draw students, these must be perceived as valid, desirable and have acceptance in the sailing community. The quality of the product will have a great effect on this.

4. Up to Date Curricula. The means of evaluating a student's adherence to the standards must be the result of realistic compromise and consensus among the members of the organization. These educational platforms will develop from the identification and implementation of standards of skills and knowledge.

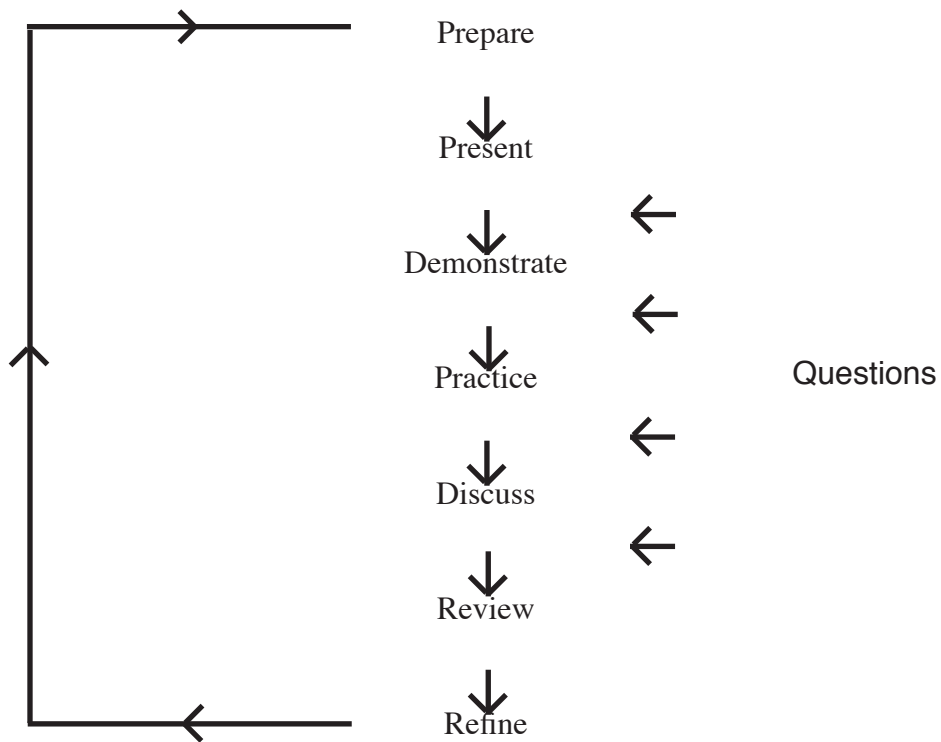
5. Reasonable Criteria for Locations and Facilities. The facilities should be adequate to provide for on-the-water training and classroom instruction. They should be such that the ASA approved course can be adequately taught. The result will be a consistent experience for every student and hence a consistent level of education.

All of the above considerations have implications with which every ASA instructor should be familiar.

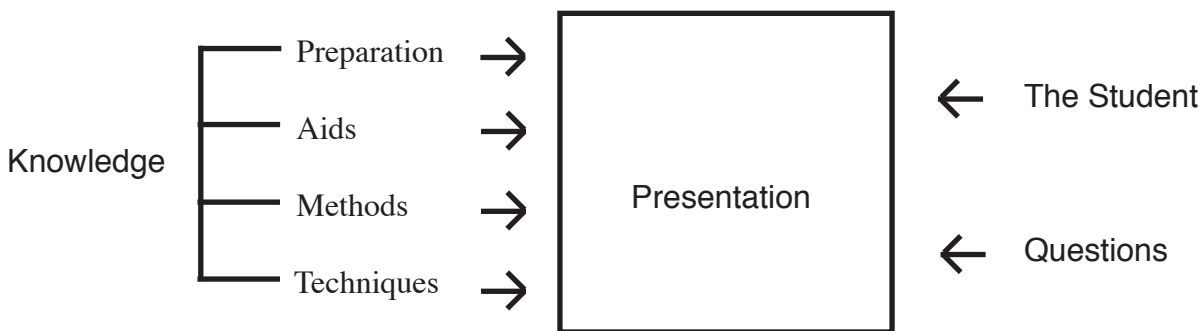
First Steps to being a good ASA Instructor

1. Know the ASA courses.
2. Know the ASA resource material available.
3. Support the ASA standards.
4. Participate in ASA course development.

The Teaching Cycle



The Presentation*



* The Presentation includes all the items in the first diagram.

KNOWLEDGE

It is essential that an instructor know his or her subject area and material, but knowledge itself is not enough without preparation. As an instructor, the measure of success is not what the instructor knows, but how much he or she is able to convey to the students. It is what the student knows at the end of the course that measures the competence of the educator.

Knowledge of subject matter is only the beginning of the teaching process. Knowledge of how to get the subject matter across is equally important. The realization of this fact is integral to successful preparation in the selection of aids and in choosing methods and techniques.

PREPARATION

Preparation is necessary if educators are to convey their knowledge and instruct in the most effective and efficient ways. Focus on the selection of aids and methods. For example, a class on safety equipment is probably most effective if the safety equipment is demonstrated to the class and a 'hands-on' technique is used: everyone gets to handle the equipment.

For a class on real and apparent wind in which a whiteboard presentation is likely to be the method selected, the preparation would necessarily involve careful development of the whiteboard diagrams that are going to be used. They should be written down and tested for accuracy before the presentation.

When teaching on the water, the boat should be prepared for teaching and the educator should have prepared him or herself by knowing the training program.

When preparing an on-shore class select the most suitable aids available. For example:

Chalkboard	Overhead Projectors
Flip Charts	Side Projectors
Actual Equipment	Movie Projectors
Models	Video Equipment
Charts, Books, Pictures	

Whatever is available and whatever is selected, use of the equipment should be practiced beforehand. Questions an educator should ask himself are: Can I write legibly on a chalkboard? Are my chalkboard drawings recognizable? Would a photograph be better, or perhaps prepared drawings on a flip chart or overhead projector?

The most effective lessons are those that are the result of cycling through the total process illustrated at the beginning of this section. Just as your ability to sail competently is a result of preparation, practice and experience, so is effective teaching.

1. Explain to the students what you are going to tell them.
2. Tell them.
3. Then tell them what you told them.

Two Rules to Remember

The KIS Rule: It stands for KeeP It Simple.

Inexperienced teachers usually make the mistake of overwhelming the recipient with information and technical jargon. They often confuse conveying what they know with what the student needs to know and what the student can absorb. All presentations should be kept as simple as possible by using the minimum number of technical terms and by clarifying these terms throughout the whole presentation.

The 15% Rule

On a good day only 15% of the material that is presented is actually absorbed. This is why the 'practice and review' part of the process is essential. For the same reason handouts and permanent copy are also very important. They enable the student to absorb the other 85% of the material at his/her own pace. It also makes the review process much more effective. If the chalkboard is being used and the instructor sees that notes are being taken, he or she should organize and present the material so that the notes will make sense when reviewed later. Use simple, clear diagrams and record data in 'bullet' form.

The Aha! Principle

Learning is not a linear process. It often seems to take place with flashes of understanding (Aha!). It is especially true of endeavors that involve having some feeling for the elements (sailing and skiing are examples). By understanding this point, an educator can see that continuous practice is essential. Further, an individual should not be considered to be a failure because his or her learning speed does not coincide with the written curriculum or popular expectations. If the course and instruction have been effective, the student will be able to catch up later at his or her own pace.

PRESENTATION METHODS

1. The Lecture Method

A formal or semiformal discourse in which the instructor presents a series of events, facts, or principles, explores a problem or explains relationships.

Uses	Advantages	Disadvantages
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To orient students2. To Introduce a subject3. To give direction on procedure4. To present basic material5. To set the stage for a demonstration / discussion6. To illustrate application of rules, principles & concepts7. To review, clarify, emphasize or summarize	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Saves time2. Permits flexibility of class size3. Requires less rigid space requirements4. Permits adaptability5. Permits versatility6. Permits better control over content & sequence	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Involves one way communication2. Poses problem in "still teaching"3. Appeals mainly to one sense4. Encourages student passiveness5. Poses difficulty in gauging student reaction6. Requires highly skilled instructor

2. The Demonstration Method

A method of instruction where the instructor, by actually performing an exercise or doing a job, shows the student what to do, how to do it, and through explanation brings out why, where and when it is done. As an example see the last page titled Sample Lesson Plan.

Uses	Advantages	Disadvantages
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To teach manipulative operations or procedures2. To teach trouble shooting3. To illustrate principles4. To teach operation or functions of equipment5. To teach teamwork6. To set standards of workmanship7. To teach safety procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Improves learning2. Minimizes damage and waste3. Saves time4. Can be presented	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Requires careful preparation and rehearsal2. Requires special classroom arrangements.3. Requires equipment and to large groups aids

3. The Discussion Method

A method in which group discussion techniques are used to reach instructional objective.

Uses	Advantages	Disadvantages
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To develop imaginative solutions to problems2. To stimulate thinking and to secure student preparation3. To emphasize main teaching points4. To supplement lectures, reading, or lab exercises5. To determine how well students understand concepts and principles6. To prepare students for application of theory or procedure7. To summarize, clarify points or review8. Prepares student for instruction which follows9. Determine the effectiveness of prior instruction	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increases student interest2. Increases student acceptance and commitment3. Utilizes student knowledge and experience4. Results in more permanent learning because of high degree of student participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Requires highly skilled instructor2. Requires preparation by students3. Limits contents4. Consumes time5. Restricts size of groups6. Requires selective group composition7. Can result in pooling of ignorance

4. Problem Solving

A method in which students are given an exercise or a problem to solve and left to solve it.

Uses	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Determines student progress and effectiveness of the prior instruction	1. Increases interest 2. Utilizes student knowledge 3. Results in more permanent learning 4. Instructor can clarify questions with individuals 5. Maximizes participation	1. Time consuming 2. Requires careful preparation

5. Role Playing

A method in which the group or an individual takes on the part of something or someone and learns by playing a specified role.

Uses	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. To develop imaginative solutions to problems	1. Increases interest 2. Increases participation 3. Could draw out shy students	1. Requires a comfortable base to work

6. Guided Discovery

A method where the students are left with basic instructions to discover an answer on their own. The teacher acts as a resource person.

Uses	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Makes the student think of the answer him or herself	1. Increases student interest and motivation 2. Increases student participation 3. Utilizes previous knowledge of student	1. Time consuming 2. Students must be able to work on their own 3. Lack of direction could lead to frustration

7. The Experiential Method (Practice)

A method where the student learns by doing. The advantages and disadvantages are the same as the guided discovery method above except that the student does not look for an answer but learns by doing. Other names for this method are 'The Practical', 'The Laboratory' and 'Field Experience'. As in the previous method, the success is related to the prior preparation by the teacher. The more thorough the preparation the more efficient, valuable and effective this method will be.

This method is useful not only in testing the student's ability but in measuring the teacher's preparation, presentation and demonstration.

QUESTIONS

Positive Aspects of Student Questions

1. They reflect that an instructor is establishing contact and that the audience is comfortable enough to ask questions.
2. They bring awareness of weakness, errors, or omissions in a presentation.
3. They can relieve the tedium of a monologue and they can help pace the lecture.
4. They can function as a monitor of the degree of comprehension and comfort.

The presenter can call on specific students for questions but should not do it in such a way as to intimidate the individual. Until you know the class, it is better to keep the questions open for any individual to answer.

Negative Aspects of Student Questions

1. They can take the instructor away from the subject at hand.
2. They can be phrased towards demonstrating the knowledge of the questioner, or the ignorance of the instructor, rather than towards getting a needed answer.
3. They can result in one or two people taking over the class and derailing the presentation.

Handling Questions

1. Make sure the question is understood and repeated to the student.
2. Make sure that it is relevant to the discussion.
3. If the instructor does not know the answer he or she should say something like 'I'll have to come back to that later', or 'I don't know but I'll find out'. The instructor should not attempt to answer the question unless the answer is known.

4. If the question is not relevant, an acceptable response would be: 'It's a little outside the scope of this subject'. 'I'll talk to you about it afterwards.' If it turns out that the question is relevant, the answer can be taken up later.
5. Put-down or sarcastic answers should always be avoided. One sentence can destroy the instructor's relationship with the class.
6. Assume that there is no such thing as a 'dumb question'. The only dumb question is the question that is left unasked.
7. Questions should be encouraged, as should timid questioners. This starts and continues participation and sharing in the learning process.
8. 'Public opinion poll' types of questions are useful especially as the class relaxes. The 'yes', 'no' answer is the easiest type. Everyone in the class should be included. 'Don't know' should be considered a valid response'. The answers can be used as a vehicle for discussion.

DISCUSSING. REVIEWING. REFINING

During all phases of teaching, questions and discussions arise. In effect, a question can cause the presentation to be reviewed and refined at the moment it is asked. A response given in answer to a question can actually be better than the original prepared lecture. In that case, the refining process would be the incorporation of the new approach.

Instructors should continuously review and refine their material. One of the best resources available for revision is the knowledge brought to the course by the students.

ASA cruising courses are generally addressed to adults with many professionals as students. The successful incorporation of the knowledge that these participants bring to the class is achieved if an instructor adopts a personal attitude that is one of openness and honesty. The successful educator will conduct him or herself in a way so as to use these different perspectives rather than argue with them.

The wisdom of successful teachers is that 'the shadow of our ignorance is infinitely larger than the light of our knowledge'.

Every course or program should contain a written course evaluation form. The ASA instructors' training program evaluation is attached. If the general consensus is negative, the course requires revision and/or the teacher's performance needs to be reviewed.

PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES AND SKILLS

Assuming the instructor has the requisite knowledge, has adequately prepared his/her material, selected the method and chosen the aids, there now remains a number of other factors which influence the outcome of the presentation.

They are the intangible factors. They are the subjective perceptions that the students form from the way an instructor appears and the way an instructor acts. While there is no replacement for competence, concern or interest on the part of the educator; there are certain negative consequences if the importance of presentational techniques or skills is neglected. There are a number of factors that must be considered.

Appearance

If you appear bored and disinterested, the apparent attitude will be reflected by your audience. Enthusiasm and interest are conveyed and reflected by the same means. Do not drape yourself over lecterns or lounge against the walls.

Movement

Do not stand as if rooted to the spot. Move around but do not bound around like a hyperactive rabbit.

Mannerisms

The worst of these are short, repetitive actions such as throwing chalk into the air and catching it or rapping a pen continuously. They are distracting and cause tension. Monitor these and avoid the worst of them.

Voice

Modulate your voice; avoid speaking in a monotone. Use standard grammar. Particularly avoid separating phrases with 'er' and ending each sentence with 'ok?'. Do not speak to the chalk board. Face your audience when speaking as much as possible.

Nervousness

This is best overcome by slowing down, not going faster. Take a little extra time to draw a diagram. If you have a handout, give it out to each individual and thus make contact with each person. Going through the class list and identifying and greeting each person serves the same function. Control your breathing. Especially at the beginning, preparation and knowledge of your material is very reassuring.

If you are new to teaching or if you are going into an unfamiliar situation, try starting off with a class exercise, written or verbal: anything to get 20 pairs of eyes off you! Remember the KIS.

Rule. Set your initial priorities realistically. Initially they are not to convey knowledge but to get you, the teacher, relaxed. If you can do this, and you have adequately prepared, the rest will follow.

Attitude

Attitude contributes to your perceived position such as a sarcastic, bored, overbearing, dictatorial, patronizing, ineffectual instructor (to name the negative ones). These perceptions can be accurate, but they are often the result of some of the factors mentioned above. An appearance of being overbearing can be a reaction to nervousness.

Command

Command involves being in command of your material and in command of the situation. Command is not taken; it is allowed (at least in the case of adults) because of your position and the learning situation. The position of the commander or captain of a vessel is based on the needs of the situation. Your command, however, is validated by performance. Command is established by competence.

Rapport

Rapport is the way you get along with the class. It is the end product of your perceived attitude and competence. Good rapport acknowledges your leadership and command, but it also requires that you are perceived as human, warm, approachable and understanding.

Confidence

Confidence comes from success; the success of preparing and presenting courses over a period of time. It is quiet and it is reassuring to your class and to you.

Knowledge

Know your subject material. Remember that although good teaching cannot compensate for lack of subject knowledge, poor teaching techniques can result in your knowledge not being conveyed to the students.

Keep your sailing skills up to the level that will demonstrate your competence, but remember that competence is not demonstrated by flamboyance or risk-taking.

Honesty

Assess all persons equally, regardless of your personal likes or dislikes. Do not compromise yourself, the school or the ASA with covert 'deals' with clients. Do not try to cover up lack of knowledge or errors by resorting to ploys of lenience in evaluation. Rectify the problem.

Responsibility

As a professional instructor you are responsible for the quality of the course. Take steps to remedy problems whether they are your responsibility or that of the school. As the instructor you have the responsibilities as the captain of a vessel. The school might be responsible for buying safety equipment but you are responsible for departing in an adequately equipped vessel.

Choice

You do not get to choose your clients and, in general, they do not choose you. However, they are paying you for your services, either directly or indirectly. Your job is to teach them as best you can. People build up techniques for coping with their inadequacies; some are positive, some are negative. You will have your own inadequacies and prejudices as everyone does. (Age, male, female, race, attitude, etc.) The learning process will be best served if you avoid emotional reaction in negative situations. Try to let it pass; try not to get sucked in. Don't try to 'psych the person out'. Talk to your superior about the problem. But, most of all, remember that the number of jerks taking the courses is a small minority. Your duty will be best discharged by keeping knowledge, honesty and responsibility in the forefront of your mind. And in the end, coming through one of these experiences with your integrity intact will certainly make you a much more mature and valuable instructor.

Encouragement and Restraint

Those who have a fear of sailing have to be encouraged to overcome their apprehension. This is best done by avoiding marginal sailing. The fear of heeling is not overcome by sailing for two hours with the rail under. Reef early. In general: be sensitive to the state of mind of the class and individual students.

On the other hand, if the class is young and gung-ho, it is often necessary to exercise restraint in the name of good seamanship. Remember your responsibilities and act in such a way as to restrain them rather than to demonstrate that your foolhardiness exceeds theirs.

Integrity

This is wholeness, soundness and honesty. It should be the goal of the program and of the instructor.

Psychology

- The least said the better.
- Don't try to psych people out.
- There's not much you can do to change people (or yourself).
- Concentrate on the task.
- It takes two to play games.
- Stay away from ego boosters at others' expense.
- Don't try to come up smelling like a rose.
- Let things pass.
- Provide a basis for security and trust. This will give a sound foundation for learning.
- The major barrier to learning is usually the teacher.

EDUCATION IS MOTIVATION

Sample Lesson Plan

Subject: Knots

Speaker: Gretchen Stevenson

I will teach the class how to teach a figure 8 knot		
30 seconds	INTRODUCTION - include personal introduction wrote name, topic and objective on the he board	Audio Lecture Board or Chart
30 seconds	WHY sailors need to know how to tie a Figure 8 stopper know	Audio Lecture Picture of the Knot
30 seconds	TRACE a Figure 8 Knot	Kinesthetic Experiential Picture of the Knot 8 & Crayons/Markers
1 minute	PASS out a piece of line for each student with a finished Figure 8 knot - have the students examine	Kinesthetic experiential Line for each student
1 minute	SHOW how to Tie Figure 8	Visual Lecture Piece of Rope
1 minute	SHOW steps to tie Figure 8	Visual Lecture Piece of Rope
3 minutes	STUDENTS tie the Knot	Kinesthetic Experiential Piece of Rope