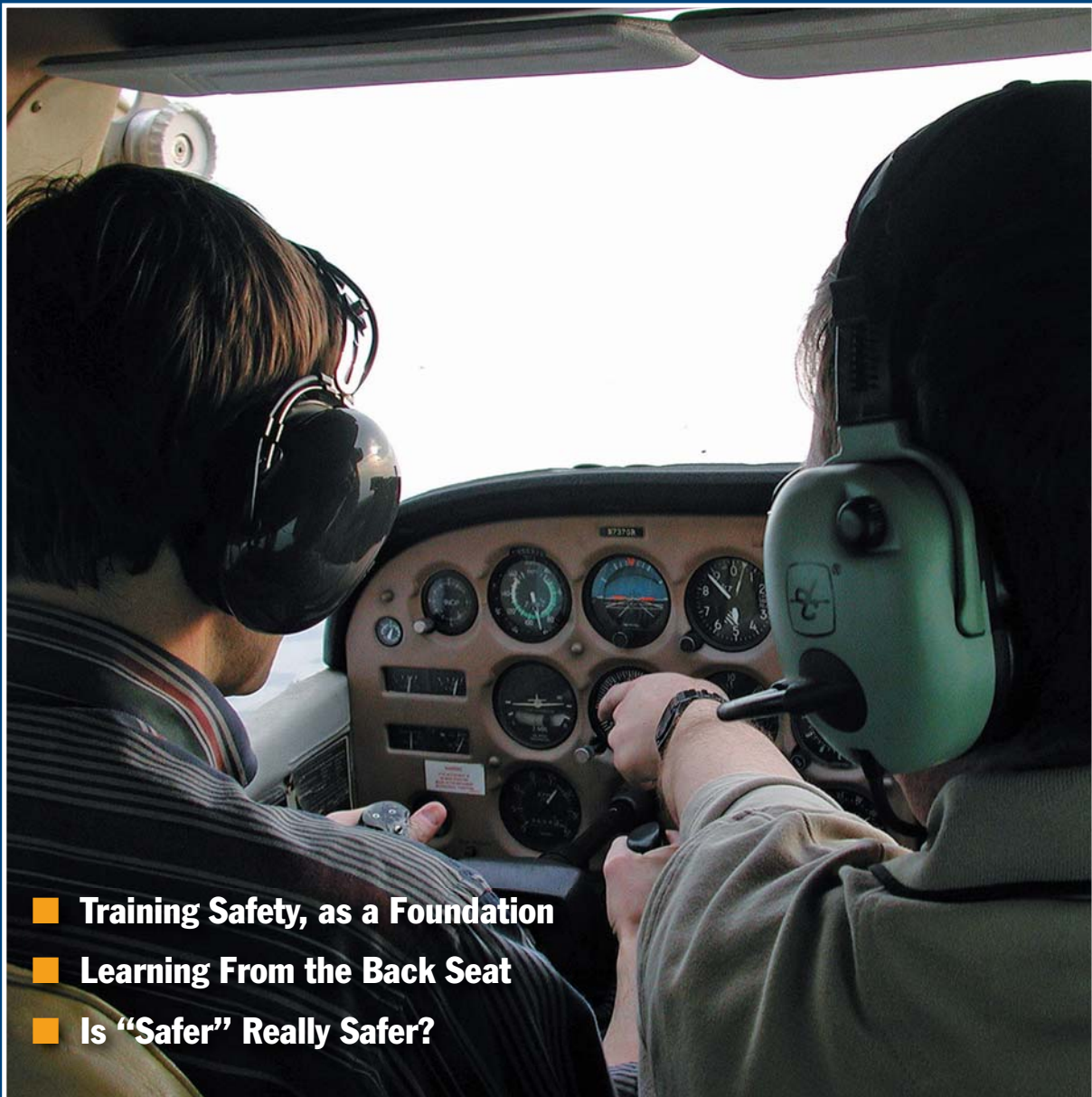


THE PROFESSIONAL FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR MENTOR

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- **Training Safety, as a Foundation**
- **Learning From the Back Seat**
- **Is “Safer” Really Safer?**

position Report

Another Set of Eyes

A second opinion improves your students' training

Sometimes, the instructor doesn't know everything. To be sure, there are things we forget to teach. I know—this is an earth-shattering statement for an instructor to make—but it's true.

None of us want to tarnish the image that we know everything there is to know about flying, or that we work tirelessly to impart as much of our detailed knowledge as our ever-so-willing students can absorb. But the fact is there is so much information that a student can learn that even if we did know everything, the time constraints of training simply don't allow us to teach everything possible to each student.

This occurs to me as a result of my recent work with Brady Lane, EAA's multimedia journalist who's pursuing his sport pilot rating. He's blogging about his training, and on each lesson, we're being watched by video cameras for posting on www.EAA.org/wings.

One of the things that I do when I'm teaching is to schedule my students to take a couple of lessons with other instructors during their training. As we

teach, we fall into a pattern, and in that pattern, we occasionally miss things. Sure, we teach them other things that serve students well, but that doesn't mean we—or they—catch it all.

So, a few weeks ago, when I knew I was going to be gone for the week, and we wanted to keep his instruction going, I set Brady up with a substitute. In fact, I did this twice; the previous week, he went to breakfast with a third instructor. In both of these occasions, he learned things he hadn't learned from me yet.

As Brady and the instructor talked over breakfast, the instructor did as most good ones do—he quizzed the student. When he asked about the location of the tie-down points on the aircraft, Brady had to say he didn't know. We always fly the aircraft from the hangar, so that's something that hadn't come up in our training yet.

And when he went flying with the other instructor, she asked why he hadn't given her his "pre-takeoff brief" prior to departure. His response was that he had given his passenger brief already, but that wasn't what she was looking for.

She was interested in the briefing that describes what the pilot would do in the event of an emergency on takeoff. Again, it was something Brady and I hadn't gotten to yet.

Both of these examples demonstrate why sending students with other instructors can be a beneficial thing. But that's just one more benefit to finding an instructor in your area that you can trade students with. Helping them overcome learning plateaus is another.

When a student reaches a learning plateau, simply hearing the information presented in a different manner, in a different voice, can be enough to make the light bulb go on. In Brady's case, he has had a tendency to keep a little extra left rudder in on landing—it's something I've mentioned on virtually every landing. When he flew with another instructor, he noticed she pointed it out, too. That flipped the switch for him. It wasn't just his mean old regular instructor being hard on him; someone else saw it, too. It was a small fix, but it was something that he's even more aware of that's helped to



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Executive Director

One of the things that I do when I'm teaching is to schedule my students to take a couple of lessons with other instructors during their training.

improve his flying.

When we send our students for flights or ground sessions with another instructor during their training, we give them the opportunity to hear material presented in another way. For that reason, sending your students out with another instructor doesn't mean you are a bad instructor who isn't capable of completing their training.

In fact, it means the opposite. It shows to your students that you're dedicated to their training. By using a team approach, you're making an effort to ensure their training is well rounded and complete—more so than one humble instructor can do. ■