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CFI to CFI

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—Editor

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THE LINGERING FLIGHT REVIEW

I disagree that a flight review should take four to five hours. I agree it should consist of the basics with emphasis on leading accident causes. Keep it simple. If deficiencies are found, don't sign off and schedule another flight. Explain why. The pilot can do the ground portion online with the results presented to the CFI. It is pretty easy to quickly discern a pilot's competence and judgment. There's no need to run him or her through the wringer. Make it fun.

—William G. Mangan

Do some basic groundwork: weight and balance, performance, and flight planning along with technology training. Weather and notam review is also important. The online prep and review is a good idea. I'm going to "borrow" it. There's a lot of good info for the iPad/Foreflight online. As for the flying portion, depending on the pilot, after about 1.5 hours or so he or she starts to become saturated and the learning curve goes flat or negative. Making it fun is absolutely right: It's not a checkride, it's a review.

—Larry Owsowitz

COLLECTED WISDOM: TRICKS OF THE TRADE

I like to add, "listen" to the "L" in "landing light on within 10 miles of the airfield" (**WORLD Cue**). Make clients tune the CTAF and listen 20

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BY JASON BLAIR

ENTRY-LEVEL FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

AS A NEW INSTRUCTOR, RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU KNOW YOUR STUFF. KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW—BE HONEST IF YOU DON'T BUT STAND YOUR GROUND WHEN YOU DO.

Airlines have been increasingly hiring pilots in record numbers, and a significant number of those pilots have been coming from the ranks of certificated flight instructors (CFIs). As CFIs with enough hours to qualify for minimum hiring levels are scooped up by airlines, those left to train new pilots tend to have limited time and experience in the instructor's seat. This presents challenges and opportunities for the CFIs and their students.

There is a common perception that experience automatically makes someone a better teacher. While this is true to an extent, in some cases, being "wet behind the ears" can have both benefits and challenges when it comes to being a new CFI.

A new CFI has the basic training the FAA requires relating to the teaching process and how to instruct other pilots for ratings or

certificates, but in reality he or she has not actually practiced it. The first few students really are the proverbial guinea pigs on whom they test and hone their skills as they improve their teaching methodology.

Does this mean that if you are a new instructor you are going to do a bad job for your customers? Not at all. In fact, I have seen some "senior" instructors provide inferior instruction compared to a "newbie." In two recent cases, I am confident that the applicants I saw on practical tests probably would have passed if they had worked with a newly certificated instructor instead of working with their old part-time CFI who had obviously not read the *Airplane Flying Handbook* or a practical test standard within the last decade.

New instructors are current on training requirements and expectations for practical

tests. They may also be more current in aircraft commonly used in flight training and more proficient at maneuvers than a part-time CFI who normally flies a Cessna Citation but took on a student on the side just to help out a friend.

Some of the challenges and opportunities that new CFIs face are not always spelled out as they go through their training and start with their first students, so as an instructor and examiner who has made it a few thousand hours into the instruction game, I have some advice for "newbie" instructors.

YOU WILL HAVE CUSTOMERS WHO THINK THEY KNOW MORE THAN YOU

As a new instructor, your hours may be low. This doesn't mean you don't know what you are talking about. Part of becoming an instructor is learning things that the average pilot does not know. In particular, regulatory requirements



AS AN EXAMINER, I ACTUALLY GET A LITTLE NERVOUS WHEN I GET A CALL FROM A CANDIDATE FOR A PRACTICAL TEST WHOSE INSTRUCTOR HASN'T SIGNED ANYONE OFF IN A FEW YEARS. I TEND TO FIND MISSING ENDORSEMENTS, INCOMPLETE TRAINING, OR EVEN THAT THEY HAVE BEEN IMPROPERLY TRAINED ON CURRENT MANEUVERS PROCEDURES.



IT IS EASY FOR A NEW INSTRUCTOR TO OVERSTEP EXPERIENCE BOUNDARIES. I GET IT. YOU WANT TO TRY NEW AIRCRAFT, GET MORE HOURS, FLY NEW AVIONICS PACKAGES, OR GET PAID TO FLY THAT EXTRA FLIGHT FOR THE WEEK. BUT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR INSTRUCTORS AND CUSTOMERS TO RESPECT THE EXPERIENCE LIMITS OF NEW INSTRUCTORS.

and the fundamentals of instructional processes are specifically focused on in flight instructor training.

Pilots who have more hours may think their experience trumps a low-hour instructor's knowledge, but in some cases hours really don't matter. It is important to recognize the knowledge gained achieving the CFI certificate and that the training incorporated in this process develops different knowledge and skills than the average pilot who flies an aircraft for pleasure or business.

Be willing to use resources to teach from, to refer to if you have questions, and to document answers for customer questions. It is also a good idea to have a more senior instructor as a "mentor" who can help you if you have questions. Find an active, experienced CFI you can call upon when you need some guidance. If you can't

find one, call me. I'll help. I answer questions from instructors around the country every week. None of us know everything, and we can be great resources for each other.

As a new instructor, recognize when you know your stuff. Know what you know—be honest if you don't but stand your ground when you do.

YOU WILL NEED TO GET MORE TRAINING

Just because you have a flight instructor certificate doesn't mean you are done learning. It also doesn't mean you won't have to pay for more training. If you want to specialize in providing transitions to owners in a Pilatus, you must get trained in that aircraft. This means you may need to take a job flying one for a charter operator or owner who will pay for your training, or you may need to pay for it yourself. This is

where newbie instructors must consider their long term professional development goals.

Part of being a good instructor is continuing that learning process after you get the initial certificate and expanding your knowledge and experience base. If done correctly, it will yield better paying instructional opportunities.

It is easy for a new instructor to overstep experience boundaries. I get it. You want to try new aircraft, get more hours, fly new avionics packages, or get paid to fly that extra flight for the week. But it is important for instructors and customers to respect the experience limits of new instructors. If the fastest aircraft you have experience in flies approaches at 90 knots, trying to instruct in an aircraft that flies approaches at 130 knots, in hard IMC, for the first time is not only ineffective, but potentially dangerous.



NO INSTRUCTOR SHOULD TRY TEACHING IN SOMETHING THEY AREN'T FAMILIAR WITH: IT'S UNFAIR TO THE STUDENT IF THE INSTRUCTOR IS LEARNING THE AIRCRAFT OR AVIONICS WHILE TRYING TO TEACH.

A little humble pie on the part of the instructor in the beginning goes a long way to developing a reputation as an instructor who knows their limits and doesn't waste a customer's time and money learning at their expense—or worse, putting them at risk.

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO INSTRUCT IN EVERY AIRCRAFT

You likely have only flown a few aircraft makes and models. An instructor who trained in a 1977 Cessna 172RG with round gauges isn't going to be the best training a customer in a Cirrus SR22 with a Garmin Perspective avionics package. It doesn't mean that you can't ever do it, it just requires additional learning before you will be effective. No instructor should try teaching in something they aren't familiar with: It's unfair to the student if the instructor is learning the aircraft or avionics while trying to teach.

Know your limitations and be honest with your customers. This is an important part of instruction. A savvy customer will respect an instructor who honestly indicates that they do not have the experience in a particular make and model of aircraft.

Conducting an IPC for a customer who knows their Piper Saratoga may be okay if you have never flown one, but providing initial instruction to a pilot who just purchased a Cessna 414 when you have only flown a Diamond Twin Star is probably a no-no. Providing add-on instruction to a customer in an aircraft with which they already have familiarity is one way a new instructor can gain experience in different aircraft. This can be a great building block approach for a new instructor to gain experience in an unfamiliar make and model or avionics package.

YOU ARE A GREAT OPTION FOR STUDENTS SEEKING CERTIFICATE AND RATING TRAINING

If you have just gotten your CFI, CFII, or MEI you're well versed in the mechanics and training requirements of completing the ratings and certificates associated with these qualifications. In fact, you were recently tested on them. Additionally, you'll be more likely to make sure all the little details are taken care of than someone who has been an instructor for 20 years but may not have signed anyone off for a practical test in the last five years. Leverage this strength when you are starting out.

As an examiner, I actually get a little nervous when I get a call from a candidate for a practical test whose instructor hasn't signed anyone off in a few years. I tend to find missing endorsements, incomplete training, or even that they have





been in:properly trained on current maneuvers procedures. It can be frustrating as a new instructor to find yourself stuck with private pilot students in the same old Piper Warrior in which you just did your training. I know you probably want to make the jump to something bigger, faster, and cooler, but it will take time. The initial CFI certificate is the first step for many pilots in long careers of flying in varied aircraft and operational environments. There will be challenges moving on to these next steps, but there will also be opportunities as a new CFI that other pilots do not get.

Being an active CFI at an airport puts you in contact with other pilots who may want someone to help fill the right seat in their aircraft at times, customers who train with you then purchase or step up to bigger or more complex aircraft, or even other job opportunities outside of the flight instruction profession. A savvy new instructor will watch for these opportunities and take them as they continue to develop their skills and knowledge base.

***Jason Blair** is an active single and multiengine instructor and FAA designated pilot examiner with 4,900 hours total time and 2,850 hours instruction given. As examiner, he has issued more than 800 pilot certificates. He writes for multiple aviation publications, actively works within the general aviation industry, and is the Air Safety Institute's CFI renewal program project manager.*