

'Coaching Matters' in Driver Education

The 21st Century Theory on 'Coaching in Driver
Training'

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The
**PRACTICAL APPLICATION of
TEACHING, COACHING, THINKING,
DRIVING.**

The 21st Century Treatise on Coaching, Counselling and
Mentoring in Driver Training

Book THREE

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The Use & Abuse of Teaching Skills in Driver Education – Book Three

INTRODUCTION

A Message to all ADI/Coaches:

‘Do YOU need To Take a Training Course to become an ADI / Coach?’

With all the current interest in so-called ‘coaching-techniques’ many ADIs have been confused by statements from some non-ADIs that every lesson in the car is quite capable of being given in a Coaching format. This can be true; but like many bold statements, what is said is not necessarily what is understood by the recipient.

Coaching techniques have developed from the generally good educational decision to allow learning to become ‘pupil-centred’ rather than relying on ‘teacher-led’ decisions. Unfortunately this principle has been mis-understood by many poorer teachers, and some would-be educationalists, into believing that this means you don’t need to structure your lessons around sound learning principles any more but you should let the little darlings choose to *‘learn through play’*; or not even learn at all if that is their desire. The results of this policy has been shown in schools and in education generally over the past forty years (it began with Lady Plowden in the 1960s and 70s) with teachers who cannot spell, or add up; with University undergraduates unable to write sensible essays; we are now moving onto a second and third generation of school children who have never learned the basic tenets of any formal educational system.

My wife recently expressed a desire to learn how to use a computer. My suggestion that she first of all learned the keyboard – as every typist does – was ignored *‘because I only want to call up the internet like you do, and perhaps send an email one day’*. So it is with driving: ask a brand new learner driver what he or she wants to learn and the answer is illuminating. The answers will vary between doing a ton on the motorway to getting a job as a driver. Very rarely will you get the answer ***‘I want to control a motor vehicle safely under full control – and then learn to control road and traffic situations safely and efficiently too’***.

So, as a ‘Driving Coach Trainer’ – and I firmly believe that all good professional ADIs need to call themselves that – should discover how to get their clients to understand the need for proper groundwork for learning to drive safely for life. The words *‘Foundations, underpinning, building, safety and competence’* should all be part of this basic introduction which you need to force your clients to know, understand and apply, before you ever let them tell you what they want to learn. So how do you bring this happy state about?

By all means make full use of questions and answers as an essential teaching technique. However, bear in the mind the old quote: ***‘To teach John Latin; you need to know a lot of Latin; but a lot more about John.’***

So it is with coaching, and especially with teaching driving. As a working Educational Psychologist – plus an M.A. and a Doctor in Driver Education – I have a unique understanding of the real needs, as opposed to the perceived needs, of those who gain their psychological learning in a moving motor vehicle travelling at 30 mph down Fulham High Street in heavy traffic and wet road conditions.

Psychology seems to have taken over from Philosophy in many aspects of education; but I firmly argue that many good professional driving instructors are capable of gaining a greater insight into the learning behaviour of their clients in a car on the road, than many chair-bound experts can by looking into their computer screens.

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As an ADI Coach your first questions to your next potential pupil have to be about what driving experience they already have. Quite often their responses are in contrast to their knowledge. **'Just a little'** can often mean they have got Mum's car out of the garage and parked outside the front door every day for a year or so. **'Oooh lots'**, might mean they have held the steering wheel whilst dad drove down the motorway on one otherwise boring trip. You need a few more searching questions to determine exactly what level learning your client needs.

Those very few potential pupils, who know nothing about driving and cars at all, are the simplest to guide. You issue them with your whole lesson package (The DSA's own – (new for 2011) Syllabus for drivers), and also at the same time some background learning requirements specifically dealing with health, eyesight, licensing, and an introduction to your own methods with the use of good, clear, comprehensive hand-outs.

The next time you see them, you will immediately know what type of learners they are by use of adroit questioning of the learning task you have given them. Those who have studied it well and can give you quick correct answers are ready to move onto the practical (controls lesson-?) stage. Those who already have stated they have good vehicle control skills can immediately be assessed.

'Thank you I would like you to read the number plate please and I will open the bonnet so you can identify a few basic under-bonnet parts for me; then we can begin your training.'

Those who obviously haven't studied their homework need a more subtle approach:

'Please get into the passenger seat whilst I drive you to a nicer place to start your lesson' After all, you don't want all the neighbourhood curtains twitching at any funny noises we might make, do we? On the way we can discuss how to begin.'

Subtle? Perhaps not! But hopefully sufficient of a guide to them to realise that any time you give them theory or home work to study, if they fail to do so it will encroach upon their time driving behind the wheel; and, inevitably, the cost to them.

I mentioned 'what types of learners they are' as if it is possible to base a driver profile, on the simple result of a simple response to a homework task. Nevertheless as an experienced ADI/Coach and by applying strict teaching principles you can recognise those clients who are known as left brain learners and those with a right brain approach.

Left-brain students prefer to learn in standard logical sequences. They need lots of practice and repetition; they want you to teach them common practices, to explain why and why not. And then they will gradually allow the learning to sneak up on them, until they can perform sequences by heart. (Entering; control checks; moving off safely; etc.)

Others, often called Right-brain students have a greater ability to look, listen and take in a situation and then achieve their learning heuristically; (the system that says this is a problem, I like to work out my own solution and make my own decision). They also tend to view problems as challenges, and challenges as opportunities.

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The ways in which you teach – or allow them to learn – the two different basic types of client are also different. You will know that Left-brainers like to be given whole series of simple tasks, each of which enables the next task to be built up on it; using a safe solid base on which to build both their understanding and abilities to perform the necessary skills which apply to them.

Right-brainers quite often like to take a challenge home with them so they can give it some thought; and will often allow a learning situation that appears in front them when driving which prompts a question, that needs an instant answer from you as the ADI /Coach to avoid distraction. You should set next week's lesson as homework.

However, as experienced ADI /Coaches, I am sure you will already have met and understood both styles of learners already and have your own unique way of dealing with them. Even so it is important that you listen, not only to the answers they give to your questions, but to any questions they put to you during the lesson. Some questions may seem a bit convoluted: they will see another driver doing a reverse from a side road into a main road, perhaps and instead of asking if that driver is breaking the law, may say something like: ***'Mmm that's a different way to do a reverse!'***

Good ADI /Coaches, those who are interested in their pupils and who also care about their pass/fail statistics, will turn every question into a teaching opportunity. They know that their throughput of future clients is dependent on the quality of their teaching skills.

They also know the advertising value of a good clear and efficient hand-out. Each one you give to a client is worth its weight in advertising space. Make sure the purpose of the hand-out is well explained and that your teaching-style, success-rate and contact details are displayed too: successful clients produce potentially successful prospective pupils. Each hand-out is an opportunity to spread the value of your teaching skills.

Finally to answer the question posed at the heading of this chapter:

'Do You need To Take a Training Course to become an ADI/Coach?'

It all depends. If the people running the course have a proven record of success as ADIs (not necessarily as business-people – but as skilled Trainers), then you can always learn from your 'masters'. However if you think the course may be a money-making exercise, then you're probably right as well. You need to check the back-ground of the tutors. I have a view that you will always learn more at Conferences and Courses during the coffee/ loo breaks than you ever will from the stage.

As a tail-piece to this book: in 1976 when I was invited to re-write all BSM's driver training at their training school, the then Managing Director David Haddon, said:

'I don't want you to train 2,500 new Peter Russells. I need you to teach my 25 Staff Instructors to be able to train raw recruits into people who can earn BSM enough money before they leave us to set up their own driving Schools.'

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Perhaps my answer to that comment, some 35 years later, is to say that this book, if used assiduously, could well enable many of the current crop of 45,000 ADIs to follow my way in the industry; and perhaps lead at least another ten more of you to become Doctors of Driver Education, to add to the five ADIs, who are currently on course to achieve their own doctoral success in the next two or three years and to the hundreds of ADIs currently on course to join the scores of current ADI Bachelor and Master Degree holders. It might just be **you!** Therefore I extend my best wishes to all readers; I have spent more than fifty years trying to turn this industry of ours into a 'Profession, run by Professionals and for Professional ADI / Coaches.'

I trust that the following material will assist each of you to present the most professional ADI /Coaching / Counselling / Mentoring, demonstrations your clients deserve.

Attitudes, Assessments and Behaviour Training

Attitudes tend to be fixed: however, **Behaviour** is trainable. The development of correct attitudes does not just apply to driving. Although it would be better if pupils can show proper attitudes to their driving instructors, it is their Road Behaviour which ADIs need to adjust for them. Use questions, discussions, examples and self-discipline about their courtesy and care for others, as starting points.

Make sure your clients better understand how their own attitudes towards their own behaviour can be confused unless you are able to discuss their own views with you. Explain how as busy drivers, they may often find themselves in a hurry; their attitudes will urge them to make best possible progress; their behaviour might encourage them to overtake rashly, even getting cross with those who hold them up. But they can be conditioned to realise that getting cross can cause them to kill themselves and others, who are often innocent bystanders. Having your phone number on display is a sure way for all driving instructors to be more fully aware of reasons not to annoy others.

You need to sell the message that ownership of a licence / car brings responsibility. Responsibility must be demonstrated in every lesson and during every drive they take.

Attitudes are mainly based on environment and how you have been brought up to perceive and react to other people and things. Obvious examples are that we pick up most of our own views from the way our parents and friends react to external pressures and circumstances. For example, your attitudes towards things like smoking or drinking alcohol are usually determined one way or another. You may wish to smoke because cigarettes are easily obtainable even before you reach your teens. On the other hand, you may hate the smell of tobacco smoke on your skin and clothes and your behaviour then becomes very much against smoking. If these feelings put you off, then it is your behaviour that has been affected. Incidentally former smokers often make the most vociferous non-smokers. This demonstrates a difference between attitude and behaviour. We inherit our attitudes environmentally; but our behaviour is developed and even adjusted by both external and personal pressures.

You will note any negative attitudes they have which will reflect badly on their driving behaviour. However, there are no secret forces at work; the role of the ADI /Coach

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is to discuss those attitudes which put their pupils and others at risk; and will also suggest ways to change your clients' behaviour.

Here are two different examples. As an ADI/Coach you will find many more:

'The pupil has an unnatural desire to drive too fast into crossroads and junctions!'

Here are two ways in which their behaviour on approach may be changed:

- 1) by use of logic to explain the need for controlled speed on approach;***
- 2) by use of fear to allow you to enter too fast followed by him using the dual controls to prove how dangerous you are.***

'Your pupil finds it difficult to start the car smoothly and join the traffic flow quickly enough'. (Remember the specific language challenge based on the difference between 'Quickly and Soon')

You may choose one or more of these ways:

- 1) Restrict their driving practice to very quiet traffic conditions until you have gained confidence;***
- 2) Explain the essential need to pick up speed quickly in order to remain safe whilst in traffic.***
- 3) Use the dual controlled clutch to help them get started on time and safely until they can see the benefits for themselves.***

Carrot; Stick or Guide-Dog?

The most suited method of weakness correction, is selected from 'explanation; shock; or aid' (as in guide dog?!); or selections from each: but the ADI / Coaches' choice mainly depends on how fixed their own attitudes really are; and which option will lead to the most positive and permanent changing effect on them.

ADI / Coaches require their pupils to create a list, of all the false or wrong attitudes they may have. The problem with this is that most people have strongly formed attitudes that do not appear to be wrong to them anyway. The sad fact is that certain aspects of their driving or personal behaviour can prove fatal if left unchanged. ***'Fatal'*** as in, you could both be killed if they insist on shooting amber traffic lights at the same time as the other idiot gambles on red and amber.

If pupils are to survive after their lessons, ADI may need to make drastic changes to their attitudes even before the pupils are allowed to drive on their own. If their attitudes so impinge upon their behaviour your pupils need to listen carefully to what you tell them and, better still, agree with your approach.

You should invite them to choose the most likely ways from those you suggest that may help them positively and safely, to respond to your suggestions?

Once they listen and take your views to heart, then structured, and life-long learning is more likely to take place. The task of the ADI /Coach is to assist pupils in their choice by agreeing to accept the best options offered by you, and through, discussion and eventual agreement.

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Being dead right is no help to anyone

PRO-ACTIVE DRIVER TRAINING

TUTORS' NOTES: for ADI / Coaches

The ADI's role in the total **LEARNING PARTNERSHIP** begins with
YOUR PUPIL'S PERSONAL LOG BOOK FOR L DRIVING

Each item need to be ticked in a four-box block for each stage.

After being Introduced; A: Under full instruction; B: Prompted; C: Seldom prompted; D: Correctly done Independently

This section allows your pupils to measure their progress; and to see where it fits in their own sequence of learning. You will have reached a stage of pure competence when both you and your Pupil are really certain that they have achieved and can readily demonstrate competence in each of the following and perform them safely.

Highway Code

**Turning Left
Emerging Left
Turning Right**

**Make Progress
town; country**

Vehicle checks

**Emerging Right
Crossroads
Roundabouts**

Emergency stop

Ancillary controls

Starting the engine

**Stationary Vehicles
Safety of Others
Reaction to Risks**

Turn in the road

Use of car controls

Reverse left

Reverse right

Reverse park

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<u>Moving off</u> on the level uphill downhill <u>issues*</u> at an angle <u>Crossings*</u>	<u>Meeting Traffic</u> <u>Crossing traffic</u> Overtaking <u>Suitable Speed</u> <u>Safe Distance</u> <u>Pedestrian Crossings</u> <u>Dual Carriageways</u>	<u>Use of Car Parks</u> <u>Motorways *</u> <u>Environmental</u> <u>Railway</u> <u>Adverse Weather*</u> <u>Night driving*</u> <i>* Theory only</i> <u>Signs / Markings</u>
<u>Position in the road</u> <u>Proper observations</u> blind spots forward observations	 <u>Changing Lanes</u>	
<u>After passing the L test</u> use of mirrors	Independent Driving	<u>Practical Motorways</u>

First of all Introduced: either as an independent item, or as part of a complex procedure.

A = Commenced: B = Capable: C = Competent: D = Confirmed by ADI

Space for your own NOTES

The rest of this book (Book 3) and the whole of Book 4 The Pupils Log book and Work book is available for ADI's to purchase.