



# Instructor Issues

USPA Safety Day 2021

Skydive Pink Klatovy

Björn Korth, Uschi Iragorri, Mike Hribernik

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# Björn Korth



- In Sport since 1990
- Instructor since 1997
- Chief Instructor since 2000
- Trained more than 1000 student
- Ratings: AFF-I, SL-I, TM-IE, Night-I, PRO (74) (US, GER, AUT, CZE)
- Involved in Instructor Training and Examination
- Multiple Training Methods

Chief Instructor / Rigger  
Skydive Pink Klatovy





# Overview



- Instructor Attitude
- What is the best (way) for the student?
- Briefing / Debriefing
- Decision Making
- Responsibility
- Examples & Questions (Discussion)



# Attitude

1-1

COACH AND  
INSTRUCTOR  
QUALITIES

To succeed as a USPA instructional rating holder, each candidate needs to possess a generous measure of seven qualities: good attitude, experience, proficiency, knowledge, judgment, responsibility, and professionalism.

## ATTITUDE

Your attitude must display the highest degree of professionalism and dedication. You must be prepared to put all of your effort into getting the job done properly. This often means setting your personal feelings and desires aside. A good attitude means dealing with adversity in a positive and cheerful manner. It also means maintaining high standards of personal appearance and hygiene.

- Is an elementary instructor element
- Hard to maintain over time
- Instructor:  
Job or Calling
- Why I became / stay an instructor?



# Attitude



Key question:

What is the best (way) for the student?

- Does my training brings the student further?
- Has the student capacity or already on limit?
- Did the student understood my training?



# Briefing / Debriefing



Briefing / Debriefing are the most important tool for an instructor.

Considerable aspects are:

- Physical / mental distribution of training
  - Simulation, muscle memory
  - Problem avoiding / solution
- (and of course many more)



# Physical / mental



What is the (average) procental distribution between physical and mental aspects of a briefing / debriefing?

1. 100% physical / 0 % mental
2. 85% physical / 15 % mental
3. 50% physical / 50 % mental
4. 15% physical / 85 % mental
5. 0% physical / 100 % mental
6. 100% physical / 200 % mental



# Physical / mental



Answer depends on what you consider mental

- ❑ 15% physical / 85 % mental
- Skydiving in physical easy: Arch & Relax  
The problem is to relax, when jumping out of an airplane.
- Solving the „relax“ is a long term mental project.
- The student capacity is mainly drawn to the mental issue
- The limited physical capacity has to overcome by physical training (muscle memory, automation, repetition)





# Simulation muscle memory



## How to address mental issues:

- Collect „mental“ feedback from student and look for it
- Ask questions and listen the answers (not just hear them)
- Work around the „head“ for physical training.
- Let the student physical feel postions, movements, ...
- Use repetition! The more the better. Until perfect on the ground! (keep basic training principles in mind)
- In the end the training contains physical training to address mental issues
- 15% „raw physical“ / 70% „mental physical“ / 15% „raw“ mental



# Problem avoiding / solution



## How to address student problems (1-find):

- Sometimes physical issues (hard to solve, creativity)
- Most probably caused by mental issues
- Find the cause, not the symptom!
- Let the student talk and listen for small details
- Ask questions: Why? What did you feel? ...
- Ask the student to show rather than tell.



# Problem avoiding / solution



## How to address student problems (2-correct):

- Explain / Teach additional parts (knowledge type student)
- Use different explanation method / different instructor
- Adapt to students speed / capacity
- Find training method and practice (as long as required)

## Statement:

„If a student need a rejump, the instructor should pay for it“



# Problem avoiding / solution



## Serious Problems:

- There are unsolvable problems!
- Stop jumping is an option (on persistent safety issues)
- Involve the student in solution strategies and give options: Go/NoGo criteria, expected time and costs, perspective, ...
- Consult other / more experienced instructors.
- Changing instructors is an option and may not be your fault!



# Examples



## Perfect Level 1:

- At pull time student gets nervous. Eye contact to instructors
- Repeats pull sign and need extensive assist to pull.

## Perfect Level 3:

- Close to 2000m/6000ft student starts aggressive action to pull and dearch to flips over side

## Rejump 4:

- Student can not recover from back due lack of dearch (age 67)

## Level 4/5:

- Student keeps (slow) turning with no stopping attempts (Looking down)



# Decision Making



Decision making is the most important task of an instructor.

- What need to be considered?
- Consulting / Support / Information?
- Weighing options?
- Changing decisions?



# What need to be considered?



In short: EVERYTHING!

- Collect as many factors as possible
- Not knowing is no excuse
- You never have every information you like to have (what is your minimum level?)
- Experience is very helpful (get experience)



# Example



## Jumping Go/NoGo Decision for First-Jumpers

- Wind strong, but constant (coastal area)
- First jump course completed and ready to jump
- 2 instructors and 2 instructor trainees present
- Wind tendency constant

Question: Jumping or NOT jumping





# Consulting / Support / Information



Get all information you can get!

- Weather information:  
Actual weather, forecasts, radar, observation,  
pilots, jumpers, ...
- Handbooks, Checklists, ...
- Ask the student (condition, stress-level, ...)
- Consult other instructors (gain opinions)



# Weighing options



- Skydiving is not just one option sport.
- There is rarely only one way.
  
- How many options are available?
- What is the aim / target / result?
- Advantages / Disadvantages?
- Individual Factors (like: the student)?



# Weighing options



## Examples:

- What Emergency Procedure do you train a student (one-hand or two-hand)?
- Windshare situation:  
What direction the jump run should be?
- For an AFF level:  
Rejump or „homework“



# Changing decisions?



Should an instructor changes his/her decision?

YES!

- If the base of a decision changes, the decision has to be reconsidered?
- Communicate the reasons for changing.
- For information available on short term only (like weather), prepare YES/NO criteria.  
And stick to them!

but

- Change based on facts and not external pressure!



# Responsibility



Student Training is the Responsibility of the Instructor

- What does that mean?
- The instructor (YOU) make decisions for the student.
- The instructor has the obligation to consider all known factors in his/her decision.
- If something goes wrong, the instructor has to act and „repair“ (off-DZ LND)
- Answer questions to Authorities



# Principles



Principles to realize:

- As „responsible“ Instructor your ARE responsible for everything happening.
- A „stupid“ student behaviour is no excuse (you have to consider that).
- If multiple instructors are involved, in doubt ALL are responsible.
- If delegating something, the instructor remains responsible.



# Protection 1



How to protect yourself from prosecution:

- Preparation:
  - Think ahead and consider worse case
  - Have a plan ready (accident, off-DZ Landing,...)
  - Time management (avoid time pressure)
  - Plan (and rehearse) worse case actions



# Protection 2



How to protect yourself from prosecution:

- Documentation:
  - Weather briefing
  - Student training and progression
  - Legal paperwork (waivers, requirements, ...)
  - Parachute / Aircraft maintenance





# Protection 3



How to protect yourself from prosecution:

- Legal Papers ready:
  - Instructor rating current / valid?
  - Know ALL rules (law, permits, training plan,...)
  - Have all Papers accessible (for inspection)
  - Insurance (if possible), but don't rely on that!
  
- Do your Job!



# Examples & Questions



- Do you have any examples, you like to share?
- Any questions?
- Discussion?



# Summary



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- Responsibility
- Examples & Questions (Discussion)



Thank you for your time

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