

## 2How I Do It©

The night before we both will check with the FSS for the forecast that applies to our expected flight time. An hour before leaving home we will make another weather check with the FSS and perhaps even make a phone call to our expected destination if no weather is available. I help in arrival planning to know the runway in use and wind conditions. You will save far more than the cost of the phone call by being able to make an efficient arrival.

I like to begin every lesson by getting the student to ask me any questions. Some students are better at this than are others. The question and the way it is asked is revealing about the depth of student awareness. The final flight preparation should be a check with the student to see if there are any unanswered questions. Every instructor who enjoys flying will respond to the student who is inquisitive and makes the extra effort and time to learn more. A good student helps the instructor do a good job. Students, don't wait until you get into the airplane to ask the "What if...", questions.

I tend to be, too, intense in my instruction. I want my students to succeed, save money, and learn quickly. I love flying and teaching it and have difficulty accepting that others may have other conflicting interests like jobs, vacations, and family. I am constantly narrowing the student's perceptual field to flying or a single aspect of it. Students, on the other hand, fail to see that flying is not just the 'fun' of being in the air. Flying is the homework, preparation, and required knowledge to make the 'fun' safe. The best flight instruction takes place on the ground, it is on the ground that you are exposed to the habit of preparation that makes flying safe. Learn the habit of "What if..." before you ever get into the plane. Murphy's Law exists in flying as in everything else.

The teaching process requires that the performance objective proposed to the student be explained, diagrammed, and demonstrated. Demonstrate those objectives that are difficult to explain. I will create situations that are likely to be a part of the students later experience such as all the things that can go wrong during landings. In all maneuvers I will try to give the student the cues to use. Not all are visual. Sound is a very important first cue to changes in airspeed. The element of success in any flight lesson is the best motivation. Find some success to tie up the flight package. Don't relate problems of the lesson as a 'blame'. We learn as much from our mistakes as from our successes.

While there may be more than one way to teach a flight skill, some ways may be quicker, more efficient, better, cheaper, or safer. Behind the way I do or teach a given skill is what I have learned from resolving my mistakes with numerous students, pilots and instructors. Since the ultimate goal extends beyond a trainer, the student should be taught from the beginning, as though he was in a higher performance aircraft. The instructor who initially takes the easy way to teach is performing a disservice to the student and thus to aviation. I have detected in checkrides such instructional faults as allowing a tight grip on the yoke, not using trim, always making partial flap landings, not verbalizing clearing, and not permitting the student to do the radio communications. I try to concentrate on procedures that are safe to use in the worst of likely circumstances.

If, for some reason, a particular maneuver is not performed by a student to acceptable levels the instructor should choose the most efficient and economic method of correction. Instructional skill is demonstrated where the instructor is able to detect, analyze cause, and provide corrective feedback to the student immediately. Some correction of errors should wait until landing. Perhaps a demonstration by the instructor is required. (My past students have indicated that I may not demonstrate often enough.) Have the student repeat the exercise while the instructor talks through the procedure. Have the student talk through a dry run before doing it again. Every student and maneuver will require a slightly different instructional touch. Rules and requirements will not make you a knowledgeable, safe pilot--instruction will.

If the flying process is tending to overload the student it is best to remove the pressure. The instructor may assume radio and traffic watch or even talk the student through a procedure. Make sure that the student is reducing the work load by correct use of trim for airspeed. Have him talk through each maneuver as an aid to the anticipation required for smoothness. Be aware than much of 'getting behind' in flying has to do with airspeed control. Trim!!

An intensive flight instructional period should not exceed 45 minutes of new material. Any instruction of new material beyond this time will result in deteriorating performance and frustration. However, it is important that a student's endurance be extended. It is little clues that warn the instructor of student fatigue. Failure to clear, pull carburetor heat, or trim correctly are common signs. As an instructor, I point out to the student my detection of fatigue and continue the lesson only to review material while returning to base. Physical fatigue is not as significant as is fatigue brought on by emotional pressures inside the student.

During the post flight debriefing it is beneficial if the student is able to make a self analysis of how he performed. It is important that the student recognize good, fair, satisfactory, and poor performances. This means that the student must know what the tolerances of acceptability are. It is even more important that the causes be determined. If, for whatever reason, his solo performance is outside these limits he must so advise his instructor and plan for a corrective lesson. Every student flight should have its parameters designed to meet requirements for the flight examination. To fly otherwise is a waste of time and money.

A note about the relative importance of what you learn. There are certain basics that can never be replaced by technology. The stall warner, engine gauges, the feel, sounds, and sensations related to flying can never be replaced by computers and other devices. You can be fooled by false indicators stress reactions, and illusions. The basic skills, kept proficient, will not fail you when most needed, technology, can and will fail often at the most inopportune moment. The first priority is always aircraft control.