

**PADDLE CANADA**

# **BECOMING AN INSTRUCTOR**

Information taken from the Paddle Canada Canoe Program Resource Manual



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## Becoming an Instructor

### Leadership

The role of a canoeing instructor encompasses many facets of outdoor recreation leadership. Before becoming an instructor, one must develop and understand the qualities associated with good leadership. In developing or refining leadership skills and attributes, the following descriptions are provided as an outline by which an instructor can evaluate himself or herself to provide safe and effective instruction in the area of canoeing.

### Leadership Styles

Leadership styles are unique to each leader and are situational. A leader may use one style for a particular situation, but employ another for a different situation. The following leadership styles are ones commonly used in any leadership situation. A leader may choose one style or use a combination of styles to be an effective leader for the situation.

**DEMOCRATIC:** A leader who is informed, stimulating, friendly, group-minded, and capable of two-way communication. This type of leadership is typically used when quality is of concern, the climate is informal, group morale is important and teamwork is required.

**LAISSEZ-FAIRE:** A cautious leader who uses good judgement and is able to let the group determine their own action. This is applied when neither quality nor quantity of group work is important and group action without leader intervention is a main goal.

**AUTOCRATIC:** One who is able to make quick, sound decisions, not concerned with whether followers like the leader, is competent, has legitimate authority, and is capable of effective one-way communication. A leader uses this style when the quantity of work is of concern, the climate is formal, group morale is of lesser importance, or the situation is hazardous or dangerous.

**TASK-ORIENTED:** A leader, who is highly respected, trusted or liked, has strong legitimate authority or has very weak legitimate power. This would be used when the activity or task is structured and clearly defined or extremely vague and unclear.

**RELATIONSHIP-ORIENTED:** A leader, who is moderately respected, trusted or liked, and has moderate legitimate authority. Typically used when tasks only moderately structured and defined.

## Leadership Skills

In order to lead an activity like canoeing, an instructor needs to have certain leadership skills to ensure the course is conducted in a safe, fun and effective manner. If these skills are weak or absent, then the participants may be put into a situation that can be potentially dangerous. Some skills a canoeing instructor should have include:

**TECHNICAL ACTIVITY SKILLS:** The 'hard' skills which define the activity being undertaken by the leader and group—the leader needs to be proficient in the activity at or above the level of the participants

**SAFETY SKILLS:** Necessary skills that permit the experience to be safe and secure

**ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS:** Those skills needed to coordinate necessary tasks or responsibilities so that the experience operates efficiently and effectively for the leader and the group

**ENVIRONMENTAL SKILLS:** The knowledge skills necessary to prevent damage or to minimise impact on the natural resources

**INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS:** The skills that allow the leader to effectively communicate and demonstrate safety and ethical practises and knowledge, attitude, and skills to the participants.

**GROUP MANAGEMENT SKILLS:** The ability to maintain a positive group dynamic while striving towards the group's goals and to 'read' the group in order to evaluate its progress in achieving their goals

**THE NECESSARY SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE TO FACILITATE SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS.**

## Leadership Attributes

It is said that a leader is born, not made, a leader can still improve upon certain attributes that may be weak. Some attributes that a leader should have are:

**MOTIVATIONAL PHILOSOPHY & INTENT:** The personal motivation that caused a leader to become involved in a particular field

**PHYSICAL FITNESS:** Those physical characteristics, which allow the leader to perform his or her functions effectively and is related to the demands of an activity placed on an individual's physical level

**HEALTHY SELF-CONCEPT & EGO:** Identified as the proper level of self-esteem to which a person holds and how this is personified to the participants

**AWARENESS & EMPATHY FOR OTHERS:** The necessary understanding of the experience of the participants and an understanding of what the participant is experiencing in order to help them have a rewarding experience

**PERSONABLE TRAITS AND BEHAVIOUR:** The ability to establish a rapport with the participants using socially acceptable behaviours. Also addresses the role of the leader as a model by virtue of their position.

**FLEXIBLE LEADERSHIP STYLE:** The knowledge and ability to switch between various leadership styles in response to the situation and the group's needs

**JUDGEMENT BASED ON EXPERIENCE:** The backbone of leadership; encompasses all the above mentioned attributes and is the sum total of all that a leader has learned and can apply from past experiences.

## Teaching & Learning

### Introduction

Teaching is the main focus of the PADDLE CANADA instructor. Your teaching may take place during PADDLE CANADA certification courses or it may take place during a wide range of public education activities. Sometimes you will be teaching adults, sometimes you will be teaching children and often you will be teaching groups composed of individuals of all ages. But no matter what the circumstances, to teach effectively you must understand how people learn.

Learning is part of living. The learning process begins at birth and continues throughout life. Most learning occurs without a teacher; however, a teacher can provide conditions that help people to learn more rapidly. As a PADDLE CANADA instructor, your challenge is to develop ways of helping people to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent canoeing accidents.

To rise to this challenge, you must consider the people involved, the different ways individuals learn, teaching methods and the information to be learned. Most important of all are the people involved, in particular the learners. An instructor must understand the learning process from the learner's point of view. This understanding will provide the basis for developing and using a wide range of teaching strategies to meet the learning needs of the individual students.

### People

Each person is a unique individual. Each instructor is different. An effective teaching-learning experience requires good communication among individuals.

**THE INSTRUCTOR** There is no one definition of an effective instructor. There is no one type of personality most effective for teaching. To be effective, you must learn to make the best use of your abilities to present knowledge and skills to the participants in such a way that the individuals involved understand. The way this is best achieved will depend on your personal style of instructing and the style to which the group best responds and learns. A good instructor is generally an instructor who considers all the factors involved and who matches his or her style of instructing to the situation.

An instructor needs to be knowledgeable and skilled in:

- Conveying ideas to others
- Observing and understanding how the group responds.
- Motivating the group
- Managing behaviour and directing the activities being taught
- Organising and presenting the content of a particular course
- Using a variety of methods to present ideas
- Working with people with a variety of needs

Being a PADDLE CANADA instructor also means being professional. This means assuming responsibilities in a serious and organized fashion.

As an instructor, you have a responsibility to:

- The PADDLE CANADA for promoting the aims of the program
- The PADDLE CANADA for maintaining appropriate standards in the courses you teach
- The participants/ participants for helping them develop the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to prevent accidents
- The participants/ participants for providing a safe and enjoyable learning experience
- Include and promote persons who are challenged into all levels of canoeing programming and participation

**THE LEARNER / PARTICIPANT** Everyone learns at a different rate. Some factors are predetermined and not readily changed such as age, background, natural ability and personality. However, these factors can be taken into account when planning effective instruction for a group of individuals.

### Age Characteristics

Individuals at various ages tend to have certain traits. Being aware of these traits can help you develop appropriate instructional strategies. The following section outlines characteristics by age group, starting at ages six to nine and ending with adults over fifty. Remember, this is a list of general trends. Not everyone fits into an age group category. Keep this in mind when planning activities and lessons.

**AGES 6 TO 9 (CHILDHOOD):** This group is highly imaginative and activity is important. They enjoy working, learning and accomplishing. They follow the instructors as leaders and react well to praise. They need rules but require reasons and examples. Classes should be active, with the emphasis on basic skills. Practise sessions should be short with plenty of feedback. Safety education can be handled effectively with basic arbitrary rules, skits and games, or drawings and posters.

**AGES 8 TO 13 (LATE CHILDHOOD):** With a longer attention span, these children can discuss canoeing concepts and follow more complex instructions. Longer practise sessions are possible and children this age can also benefit from demonstrations by others. The rapid growth that normally takes place with this age range often causes a period of physical awkwardness. The instructor should consider this when teaching and correcting. Games, particularly with a partner or in teams or groups, provide excellent means of practising skills.

AGES 12 TO 16 (ADOLESCENCE): Potential for learning and endurance increase although a rapid growth spurt may temporarily interfere with coordination and endurance. The peer group is influential in increasing a learner's self-consciousness. Normally there is a desire to excel at a skill and become involved in a responsible leadership role. Adolescents have a tendency to question or challenge authority, which could result in a discipline problem.

AGES 15 TO 25 (EARLY ADULTHOOD): Classes for adults in this age range can place a heavy emphasis on high levels of skill development. Practise sessions can be longer, with few interruptions. Since adults are usually well motivated, they can practise independently of the instructor and each other. Once a practise session has started, the instructor can concentrate on giving feedback on a one-to-one basis.

AGES 21 TO 60 (ADULT): At this age, adults are sometimes reluctant and uncomfortable about joining a group. They may be hesitant to try new skills or strokes, and may prefer to receive feedback privately, rather than in front of the group. They prefer individual practise and challenge.

AGES 50 AND UP (OLDER ADULT): Older adults often need a lot of reassurance, support and encouragement in order to overcome their self-consciousness and anxiety. An explanation of physical principles related to the activity helps the adult to understand how a skill is performed. This often helps to reduce anxiety.

PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: Some people have special needs requiring further adjustment. Individuals who are physically challenged may require additional assistance and adaptation of certain skills. Such customizing of skills can be a cooperative, creative and rewarding process for both the learner and the instructor.

## Essentials of the Teaching-Learning Process

### Communication

The teaching-learning process requires good communication. We communicate both verbally and non-verbally. Verbal communication includes words, the tone in which they are said, laughter, chuckles, etc. Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, gestures and body language.

We often communicate in several ways at the same time. If our verbal and non-verbal messages are in agreement, the communication is more accurate. If the messages disagree or contradict each other, the learner will be confused.

When teaching canoeing safety, practising what you preach, an important part of non-verbal communication, is essential. An instructor who tells participants to wear a Personal Floatation Device (PFD) while canoeing, but never wears one him or herself, is making it clear he or she doesn't really think wearing a PFD is necessary. An instructor who mishandles equipment or disregards weather and water conditions is not only suggesting that these factors are unimportant, but is setting a poor example for participants to follow.

Always remember that communication is a two-way process. The message must not only be sent, it must be received. Observing and listening are an important link in the process. The instructor who says, "Well done Jean," is ineffective if Jean does not hear the comment.

To minimize errors in understanding, communication should be kept simple. Select your words carefully. For example, in describing a canoeing stroke or part of the stroke, select the best word or words to describe the action. Sometimes examples and demonstrations communicate more accurately than words.

An instructor should regularly check that the message has been received accurately. This is known as a 'perception check.' The simplest method is to ask a question to see if the participants understand your instructions. For example, "What formation are you supposed to take?" The learners' answers will indicate whether your message has been received accurately. Observing how they handle equipment is also a good way to check if they understand your instructions regarding equipment use.

### Learning Styles: How People Learn

An instructor should consider two aspects of learning styles when selecting a method or methods of instruction (refer to Teaching Methods). The first is how participants receive information from the outside world—modes of perception. The second is how they make sense out of that information—ways of processing information. The following is a brief overview of the ways in which people learn best.

#### Modes of Perception

Recent research on brain function and studies of individual learning styles have led to the discovery that individual participants favour different means of receiving input from the outside world. Both the child and the adult learner favour different modes of perceiving.

**VISUAL:** Visual learners seem to learn best by experiencing visual images. The presence of colour, graphic visual presentations, and written summaries are necessary to help visual participants receive information. Information given to a visual learner by other means (lecture especially) must usually be reinforced with some form of visual representation.

**AUDITORY:** Auditory learners receive information best through sound. They can happily sit and listen to a person lecture for an extended period of time and readily receive new information. A learning situation containing a richness of sound, music or spoken language is one in which the auditory learner thrives.

**TACTILE:** Tactile learners learn by touch and manipulation. Things tend to register with tactile learners when they have the opportunity for hands-on experience. People who favour this modality have great difficulty learning solely through listening or observing.

**KINESTHETIC:** Kinaesthetic learners take in information best by becoming involved in learning in a physically active manner. Sitting down passively listening, observing or in a way restricting physical involvement simply are not ways in which the active learner can effectively receive information. If the full body is not involved, learning is restricted.

These learning modes or channels of perception are general statements about how some individuals take in information most effectively. Seldom does a person learn through only one of the channels. However, as an instructor you should be aware that people receive information through different senses so you can maximize the power of instruction by appealing to the full range of senses.

### Ways of Processing Information

This refers to the way learners make sense of the information they have received. Learners tend to be one of four types.

- Learners who first experience something, then think about it, discuss it, and make sense of it.
- Learners, who first study the ideas or theories, then apply the ideas to the experience through practise.
- Learners, who first learn the theory and ideas, then think more about it (experience is not as important to this learning type).
- Learners, who first experience something, then learn through continued practise and experience.

Once again, most people tend to use a combination of these four ways of processing information, but one particular way is usually dominant. A good instructor should be aware of the different ways people receive and process information, and provide a variety of listening, watching and doing in each lesson.

Plan to ensure that all learning styles are accommodated.

### Types of Learning

To help understand the learning process, educators often identify three different types of learning: knowledge, skills and attitude. Although it may be useful to think of the three types separately, they usually occur at the same time.

**KNOWLEDGE:** Knowledge or cognitive learning is the type traditionally occurring in secondary school. This type of learning relies on words. The learner reads or is told facts about a topic. The intent is to have the student know about the topic. This kind of learning can be easily tested by the answers learners give to questions. For example, “The capital of Canada is Ottawa” or “Always wear a lifejacket in a canoe.”

**SKILLS:** Skill learning is the type where the student learns to do something, i.e. perform a bow stroke, writing, speaking, and making decisions. In learning skills, the actions are important. The learner must be able to perform the skill, not merely know about it. The learner has to be able to demonstrate a pivot turn, perform a reaching assist or do a dock landing.



**ATTITUDES:** Attitude or affective learning involves the values and beliefs of the learners. Since this kind of learning occurs gradually, it is difficult to know exactly when attitudes are being learned.

Attitudes and values are important because they usually control what a person does with his or her knowledge and skills. Attitudes are better described as being 'caught' rather than taught. They are part of the teaching-learning process whenever it occurs. Attitudes and values are often learned from examples set by the Instructor more than from his or her words. Attitudes are the most difficult to evaluate. We can tell about the values of a person from his or her actions more often than from words said. Whether an individual takes risks, how he or she handles equipment, and how he or she reacts to weather and water conditions these are clear indicators of an individual's true attitude to safety.

### Factors that Affect Learning

As stated earlier, many factors affecting learning cannot be changed (age, natural ability, personality). However, other factors affecting whether and how well learning takes place can be changed or influenced and are factors on which instructors should concentrate. These include the climate or environment for learning, the learner's readiness to learn, practise sessions and feedback.

**POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** The learning climate or environment includes the physical surroundings, the organisation of your class or public education activity, and social situation. You can have beautiful facilities and equipment, but if your class never starts or ends on time and is poorly organised, participants may lose interest. If the setting or information chosen is appropriate for the activities being performed, participants may become frustrated because they can't see or practise skills properly. If the participants and the instructor do not relax and feel comfortable working together, this too will interfere with the learning process.

To establish a positive environment for learning, an instructor must ensure that:

- Participants understand the objectives of the course and what they can hope to achieve
- Participants know what is expected of them and the skills or activities on which they will be evaluated
- The facilities or waterfront area is appropriate and safe for the planned activities
- Participants become acquainted and relaxed with each other
- Sufficient equipment, in excellent repair, is available to allow all members of the class or group to participate. It is also important that the instructor understand the expectations of the participants—why they are taking the course and what they hope to achieve. For example, if a participant says he intends to take a trip whitewater canoeing immediately following completion of a Lake Intro course, the instructor should make it clear the course does not teach the skill levels necessary to safely participate in whitewater canoeing, and it should be attempted only after training in that area
- Proper and adequate room and board if this is a multiple-day course

A positive learning environment should be established in the first class or during the first few minutes of a demonstration or presentation. Outline what to do if help is required or in the event of an emergency. Establish a system of hand and whistle signals to indicate when participants should return to the dock or beach, when all activity should stop, etc. As early as possible, provide opportunities for group interaction and sharing of ideas and resources. Using icebreakers or 'let's get acquainted' activities helps an instructor to set a relaxed, friendly and fun environment for the participants.

**READINESS TO LEARN** Before any learning takes place, the individual must have a desire or readiness to learn. A positive climate or environment is a key factor in spurring this desire, but an instructor can also encourage it in other ways.

For learners to be motivated to learn, it is important they understand the value or usefulness of the information and skills being taught. They also must believe they have a realistic chance of success. An instructor can also encourage readiness to learn by emphasising the connection between safety knowledge and skills and having a positive canoeing experience, and by selecting skills and planning progression that allow learners to succeed at each step. Instructors can also stimulate learners to want to try new skills and activities through the use of personal boating experiences, teaching aids, demonstrations, etc.

At times an individual's desire to learn may be inhibited by fear or anxiety. The important point here is to identify these fears or concerns early and deal with them so the participants can enjoy the course.

The following examples illustrate practical approaches to dealing with fears.

- Concern Fear of deep water
- Approach Have the first session at a pool. Explain that PFDs will be worn at all times during the class. Show how well they keep the wearer afloat.
- Concern Fear of tipping over
- Approach Practise wearing PFDs in deep water, practise tipping
- Concern Fear of failure
- Approach Use a progression with easily attainable steps
- Concern Uncomfortable learning environment such as cold water, bad weather
- Approach Consider in planning phase, discuss with class, have alternative plans

The following approaches will help avoid or reduce anxiety and increase participants' desire to learn.

- Be friendly, pleasant, positive, happy, supportive, encouraging, understanding and sensitive.
- Stress enjoyment and cooperation rather than completion.
- Let the learner decide when he or she is ready to try a new skill.
- Suggest or encourage, but never force a learner to do something he or she is afraid to try.
- Encourage learners to compare what they are doing to their previous performance rather than comparing themselves to others.

**PRACTICE** People learn by doing. An instructor can speed up the learning process by maximizing the time learners spend practising skills, applying knowledge and solving problems.

In canoeing courses or activities, that means learners must not only practise skills, such as reading weather signs, performing a canoe-over-canoe rescue, but they must practise applying their knowledge and making the decisions necessary to avoid accidents. An instructor must provide opportunities for learners to actively work out solutions to potential problems and situations. These opportunities can include case studies, relays, and simulated disasters and accidents, all of which can provide participants with the chance to put their knowledge and skills to the test.

**FEEDBACK** Feedback is information received by the participant about his or her progress. It is the important factor in learning because it encourages, motivates, and also helps learners correct mistakes and improve their skills. Feedback comes from the learners themselves, from the instructor and from the learner's peers.

Positive feedback communicates that the learner is improving. It should be a part of every learning situation. Knowing what is correct allows the learner to concentrate on aspects of a skill that needs improvement. Positive feedback also motivates and encourages; success breeds success. Negative or corrective feedback concerning errors or poor performance is also important. A learner who makes mistakes should be told. However, corrective feedback must not communicate a judgement of the learner's ability or intelligence. It must be specific and include suggestions for improvement.

Feedback has three specific roles:

- To direct the learner's present efforts by providing information about what is being done correctly and why; providing information about errors and how to correct them; and recognising improvements
- To reward the learner's past efforts
- To motivate the learner's future efforts through praise and encouragement and outside motivation

**Guidelines for Providing Feedback**

**FEEDBACK SHOULD BE SPECIFIC, NOT GENERAL:** Specific feedback contains precise information about what the learner is doing well and what he or she should try to do to solve or correct any problems.

**FEEDBACK SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE, NOT DESTRUCTIVE:** Constructive feedback recognises the positive aspect of the learner's behaviour and suggests positive steps for his or her improvement.

**FEEDBACK SHOULD BE DIRECTED AT CHANGEABLE BEHAVIOUR:** Try to focus on an immediate, achievable goal. Success motivates.

**FEEDBACK SHOULD BE GIVEN SOONER NOT LATER:** Effective feedback is given sooner rather than later. It is given as soon as possible after a student performs a particular skill or action. The sooner the feedback occurs, the clearer the memory or 'feeling' of the action the learner will have, making it easier to learn the feedback.

**FEEDBACK SHOULD BE CHECKED FOR CLARITY:** To make sure feedback is understood, check with the learner. For example, ask learners to tell you what they think you said or what they think you want them to do.

**FEEDBACK SHOULD BE POSITIVE AND INFORMATIVE:** Feedback should confirm to the learner what he or she is doing right or what must be done to correct a problem. Short, snappy negative feedback provides little information. Your nonverbal messages in giving feedback will also help the learner understand your message. Instructors should remember to be concise and careful with what they say.

## Teaching Methodology

As stated earlier, learners favour different means of taking in information and different ways of processing or making sense out of the information. In order to accommodate different learning styles and maximize the learning potential of all participants, your teaching should include an array of approaches reflecting various learning styles.

The teaching method or methods you choose for any class will also depend on the topic, the learners' situation, the knowledge level of the learners, and your teaching style.

## Teaching the Three Types of Learning

In an earlier section, learning was divided into three areas; the learning of knowledge, the learning of skills, and the learning of attitudes. In general, knowledge (concepts and facts that can be stated) is taught through the use of words; that is talking and reading. Skills are taught through demonstration and the actual performing of the skill. Teaching attitudes and decision-making skills is not as straightforward because attitudes tend to be 'caught' more than they are actually taught.

## Discovery Method

In the discovery method, the instructor challenges the learners or participants to experiment and discover certain skills, knowledge or attitudes. Although the learners are given helpful hints, they are not shown the solutions.

This method is particularly useful in canoeing courses because it helps canoe users become aware of circumstances and their meanings, and make responsible decisions as a result of their observations.

Because the learners are discovering, they may arrive at a variety of unique solutions. It is possible that no learner will discover the solution anticipated by the instructor. The instructor must keep an open mind towards these unique solutions and avoid rejecting them. Rejecting solutions can discourage learners from trying to discover other solutions in the future. It is better for the instructor to recognise the solutions discovered and then to suggest other solutions and additional challenges.

The discovery method has several advantages and therefore is probably one of the most effective methods. People tend to learn best when they can experiment, make decisions, and solve problems. People learn most efficiently when they are excited, but not fearful, and can work at their own pace. The discovery method provides these conditions.

### Direct Teaching Method

Where there are specific facts or skills to be taught, the direct method is often the most efficient way of teaching. The direct method is the traditional practise of demonstration, explanation and practise.

Demonstration is an important part to teaching physical skills so that participants can visualize and analyse the skill or technique. Demonstrations may be presented in a normal or in a slower manner so that the skill is illustrated in parts. Demonstrations may also be performed from different viewpoints; front, side or back.

Explanation often occurs along with the demonstration. This allows for a greater understanding of the skill demonstrated. The explanation should focus on the important components of the skill and kept simple so not to be too long or confusing.

These two approaches can be done with one instructor and are also effective in a team-teaching situation where one instructor explains the demonstration being performed by the other instructor or instructors.

Practise is necessary for participants to build their skills as it encourages coordinated movement. Practise enables the participant to develop a sensitivity to the paddle and canoe in respect to handling, understanding what the canoe response will be and reinforces proper body positioning. Practise allows the participants to refine their skills, and provides an opportunity for immediate feedback on their progress. The purpose of practise is to have the participants perform the skill without thinking about it.

Three approaches to practise widely used in instructional programs are:

- The whole approach: The participant performs the whole skill at one time. This approach works best for simple skills or strokes such as a sweep rather than a complex one like the running pry.
- The progressive-part approach: Participants practise the easiest part of the skill first, before they learn and practise the next step. Parts of the skills are introduced in a progressive manner to allow the participant to learn each step individually before putting it all together. Once one step is mastered then the participant can move onto the next step.
- The part-whole approach: This approach focuses on separate parts of the skill and then practises all parts together. This works best for people who can only learn one step at a time, but it may hold back other participants who can grasp the whole skill easily.

When teaching knowledge by the direct method, an instructor should follow three steps:

- State why the information is important
- Give the information and examples
- Ask questions or require the learners to demonstrate the skill or perform an activity utilising the information

When directly teaching physical skills, the instructor should follow five steps:

- Tell the learners what they are going to learn & its importance or value.
- As simply as possible, explain the action. An accurate demonstration is usually helpful to the learners' understanding of what they are to do.
- Provide an opportunity for the learners to practise the activity. Normally this first practise should be rather short, allowing the instructor to verify whether the explanation has been understood.
- If errors are being made, identify the problem or problems & direct the correction. The first errors to be corrected are usually those that the learners in the class have in common or those that most greatly affect the skill. In making corrections, it is essential to identify the specific action the learner is doing incorrectly and how it should be corrected.
- Repeat steps 3 & 4, providing further positive and corrective feedback to the learners.

## Recreational Activities and Games

Numerous recreation activities and games, such as relays and races, can be used to help participants practise skills and become accustomed to safety procedures and their importance. Besides providing the opportunity for practise, recreational activities and games make classes more enjoyable and help participants get to know each other better.

The number and type of recreational activities or games you choose in a canoeing class or the time and space available, the equipment, and the ages, skills and interests of the participants will limit event. The game or activity should serve a purpose— i.e. reinforce that day's lesson, act as a reward—and the emphasis should be on participation. But games and activities can also be included just for fun at the end of a class or during a break and remember that games aren't just for children. Older teens and adults enjoy 'kidding' around as much as children!

For a description of some canoeing games and activities refer to the 'Games' section in the Waterfront Canoe Program.

## Teaching Assignments and Role-Playing

Teaching assignments and role-playing can serve three purposes:

- The learners take responsibility for their learning
- The instructor can use the assignments and role-playing as a means of evaluating the participants' performance or understanding of the material presented
- A fun and creative way to learn

**TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS** There are many types of assignments an instructor can use to enhance learning or use if there is insufficient time in the course to cover a specific topic; the assignments can be pre-assigned. Assignments used in canoeing courses are at the disposal of the instructor's imagination and creativity.

Some examples of teaching assignments that can be done individually, in pairs or in a group are:

- Crossword puzzles
- Questionnaires
- Fill-in-the-blanks
- Development of posters, news stories or articles, etc. to present a canoeing related message
- Task oriented activities

**ROLE-PLAYING** Role-playing provides an opportunity for the participant to step into another person's shoes and experience something from a different viewpoint. A participant can also play the role of an object, an animal or plant, a historical person or group, or anything the instructor desires. Role-playing is a creative way for people to learn as they may do, say or think something that they may not have otherwise done, said or thought.

## Instructional Aids

Instructional aids can be an important part of an instructor's presentation. Used properly, an instructional aid can help you open a discussion, set the atmosphere, or present facts. It can help to direct the learners' thinking, to show relationships, and to compare ideas and drive home a point.

The effectiveness of an aid in assisting the learning process is directly related to its proper use.

To be effective, the aid must be:

- Related to the topic and assist in fulfilling one of the session's objectives
- Clear and be able to be seen clearly by everyone
- Easily accessible during the presentation and easy to handle

## TYPES OF AIDS

- Film or slide projector
- VCR / CD / DVD
- Overhead projector
- Video camera
- Blackboard
- Clip chart
- Large posters
- Photographs
- Charts
- Diagrams
- Printed material (pamphlets, handouts, etc.)
- Displays, i.e. Canadian Coast Guard required safety equipment, different types of canoes or paddles

Instructors are also encouraged to make their own teaching aids. For example, you might want to make a large poster of a compass with moving parts for display at the front of a class while you are explaining how to use a compass. Or you could put together a knot board with samples of various knots labelled and glued to the board. These kinds of homemade aids require time to make, however, if you take the steps to preserve them for reuse, the time is well spent.

## Evaluation

Evaluation is an essential part of the teaching-learning process. There are two major types of evaluation: instructor self-evaluation and student assessment.

**INSTRUCTOR SELF-EVALUATION** Self-evaluation involves your assessment of your performance as an instructor during a canoeing class or public education activity. Regular self-evaluation will help improve your teaching skills and become a better instructor, and it should be done after each lesson and at the end of the lesson set. Among other things, you should examine what you did, how you did it, how it was received and whether you accomplished your goals and covered the required content. After examining these, ask yourself “What could I improve on?”

**STUDENT ASSESSMENT** Evaluating the participant’s performance is useful for two reasons: it indicates areas of weakness in your teaching and it provides feedback to the participant (post-testing). To start this evaluation process, you must determine each participant’s level of knowledge or skill early in the lesson set (pre-testing). This can be done through observation of individual responses during group discussions, question and answer sessions, and observation of skill levels during introductory recreation activities. This pre-testing or assessment will provide the basis for all future assessments.

You should structure practise periods in order that participants can evaluate their own performance from the feedback they receive. Approximately halfway through any course, each participant should receive a verbal or written progress report. At the end of each course, each participant should receive a detailed evaluation.



Many instructors find it difficult to relate their effectiveness to the performance of the learners in their classes. One method for doing this is the use of a class profile chart. A class profile chart shows the number of participants who have completed each item.

There are different evaluation techniques that can be used to test the participant's performance or understanding of a skill or manoeuvre. Slalom courses, follow-the-leader type activities, or obstacle courses can be used to evaluate more than one skill at one time. This saves time when evaluating and enables the participants to bring the skills that have been taught together so they have a better understanding of how they can use the skills to manoeuvre the canoe.

Another way in which students can be assessed is by use of continuous evaluation. This is a process of monitoring individual progress on a lesson-to-lesson basis, and noting when progress in any area of the course meets minimum standards. This is most applicable to the progress of participants in a canoeing program. When a participant has not achieved minimum standards, continuous evaluation allows the instructor to spend additional time to bring the individual's skills in that area up to minimum requirements.

The essence of continuous evaluation lies in the ability of the instructor to:

- Teach the individual as well as the group
- Know the specific individual standards for all skills
- Recognise successful performance of skills on more than one occasion
- Take the necessary time to maintain a continuous record of each participant in the class
- Structure the participants' practise time so that 'unfinished' items receive more attention
- Begin teaching items at the next level, when the participants in the class complete all items at a given level

The instructor's attitude is important in making continuous evaluation successful. The instructor who gets to know each learner in the class is in a better position to be aware of each person's current level of ability. The focus is on the individual rather than on the class as a whole. Once a participant has completed the minimum standards of an item, work can begin on new, more challenging skills.

## Class Management

As an instructor, you are responsible for the instruction, control and safety of a group of learners. The challenge is to ensure that each learner has equal opportunity to learn and has a safe and enjoyable experience. There are several factors you should consider when setting up your classes or activities.

These include:

- Routines
- Formations
- Safety supervision
- Facilities
- Discipline

**ROUTINES** Establishing routines can be especially useful when you are teaching a group of learners through a series of classes. Routines save time because participants know what to expect and what to do next, and you don't have to repeat instructions every time. You can establish routines for taking attendance; for skill practises, partners or teams; for distributing, collecting and putting away equipment; and for recreational activities.

**FORMATIONS** Because an instructor is usually responsible for more than one learner at a time, the learners must be organised to make the best use of the time and space available. An instructor must organise learners to ensure that each one can see, hear and practise. Formations make classes safer because they make it easier for the instructor to control and watch the learners.

In selecting a formation, the instructor should consider:

- The purpose of the formation
- The number of participants
- The safety of the activity

**SAFETY SUPERVISION** Safety is a primary concern of the instructor. Instructors are responsible for preventing dangerous situations from occurring. For example, participants should be wearing Personal Flotation Devices while on and around the water, and should be taught as early as possible the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent accidents and to recover from emergency situations should they occur. The class environment must also be made as safe as possible. Check equipment and supplies daily to ensure all is in order. Be aware of the limitations of the location including such factors as:

- Water quality (temperature, clarity, purity)
- Water depth
- Underwater hazards
- Drop-offs
- Winds, weather conditions
- Bottom conditions

Establish safety routines at the start of each lesson or workshop. A pre-arranged set of signals should be used, and participants' required response thoroughly understood. Do not make the safety procedures complicated. Two or at most three courses of action should be decided upon as set procedures. Especially when you are working outdoors, the courses of action should be signalled by both sound (mainly to attract attention), and by visual signal. The 'buddy' system, particularly with children, is also a useful approach to ensure safety.

The following are suggested signals for instructors to use:

- One blast – stop where you are and maintain a safe position – attention
- Two blasts of a whistle – come to the instructor
- Three or more blasts – emergency return immediately to launching area or otherwise directed

Emergencies can also be prevented by recognising or eliminating these problems: overcrowded courses or class space, inadequate or non-specific instructions, poor usage of formations, cold water and water conditions, unplanned lessons and insufficient time resulting in rushing.

The instructor must constantly be in a position to observe everyone in his or her canoe and to react immediately to help anyone in trouble. Attendance makes the instructor aware of the number of learners present for a particular course. The instructor must know where each of the participants is at all times. If the instructor cannot locate a participant, that constitutes an emergency and emergency procedures should immediately go into effect.

Instructors must be familiar with emergency procedures, for example, clearing the area, supervising participants, rescue and back up, and contacting emergency services, if necessary. They should also be aware of provincial regulations governing the supervision of aquatic activities.

It is the instructor's responsibility to ensure he or she is physically and mentally prepared to deal with emergencies as they arise. Fitness training and emergency procedures should be a regular part of the in-service training for instructors, whether working for an organization or independently. Instructors should update and maintain First aid certification and CPR, as well as keep up with swimming skills.

**FACILITIES** Before going afloat, give a final briefing at the dock or shoreline, detailing positions of instructors, hazards, practise areas, markers and lesson outline. In tidal waters, the water level for return should be taken into account. Canoes returning to the dock or shore should be under the direction of the instructor to ensure correct procedures and prevention of damage or accidents. The return of equipment should include cleaning and maintenance, preferably by participants.

Participants must understand the limits of the practise area. Distances over water are misleading. It is easy for participants to stray. Use the natural features of your teaching area for orientation. Headlands, bays or coves, hills, rocks and reefs can all be used as well as human-made features such as docks, a wharf, mooring and navigation buoys. If local resources are inadequate, use your own permanent or movable marker buoys to indicate dangers or out-of-bounds areas.

**DISCIPLINE** Creating a positive, encouraging environment and allowing the learners to be involved in choosing activities will go a long way in preventing behaviour problems during your course. A common cause of misbehaviour, especially among children, is boredom. Planning and teaching exciting, active and interesting lessons can overcome this problem. Children who are actively involved seldom misbehave. Delays in the lesson can provide opportunities for trouble to begin. Good planning reduces the possibility of delay.

However, no matter how organized and enthusiastic an instructor is, there will always be situations where some individuals will respond in an undesirable way.

Psychologist Rudolf Dreiker says that individuals misbehave for four reasons:

- They want attention,
- They want power,
- They are looking for revenge, or
- They have given up and display their inadequacy.

His theory is based on the need for all members of a group to belong and to be accepted, and he concludes that individuals' behaviour reflects their attempts to reach these goals.

To deal with misbehaviour, instructors need to look at each situation from the individual's point of view. Understanding the reason for misbehaviour will help you respond rationally and confidently, and ultimately redirect the individual's behaviour into more positive channels.

#### Instructor / Student Ratio Guidelines

When teaching canoeing, particularly while on water, requires a certain level of safety precautions to ensure the safety of the participants and the instructor(s). See each program discipline for the ratios.

#### Planning: Putting It All Together

As an instructor, you have a set of expectations for your program. Learners probably expect that the experience will be enjoyable and will help them acquire new skills or knowledge. The instructor expects the participants in the class to learn certain information, skills and attitudes. Planning helps to meet these expectations.

In general, you must plan for four types of activities:

- New learning,
- Practise sessions,
- Review, and
- Recreation.

Two types of planning are long range planning and lesson planning.

#### Long Range Planning

A long-range plan or course outline is an overall plan of the whole course. It provides the instructor with an overall strategy and the progression for a set of lessons. The emphasis is on the content or items you expect your class to learn during each lesson.

A long-range plan or course outline is important because it provides quality, direction and structure to the learning experience. It ensures that the content will be distributed over the time you have the class and provides the first opportunity to arrange activities into logical progression and plan lead-up activities necessary to develop certain skills and attitudes. It helps to coordinate use of facilities and waterfront areas, as well as instructional aids and equipment.

An instructor must consider several factors when making up a long-range plan. These include:

- The items to be taught and evaluated
- The organisation of the items to be taught, moving from simple to more difficult and keeping related items together
- The amount of time per class and the length of the courses
- Time for review
- A variety of learning experiences
- Activities appropriate to the needs, age levels and developmental level of the learners
- Activities promoting the greatest amount of participation from the greatest number of students

The skills requiring a longer time to develop should be taught earlier in the set of lessons, allowing more time to practise and review.

An instructor's first rough plan may require considerable adjustment after he or she meets and screens the participants. The long-range plan must also be adjusted as the instructor evaluates progress from lesson to lesson. If learners progress faster than expected, the instructor must increase his or her expectations. If the class progresses more slowly than expected, the instructor must emphasize more review and practise.

## Lesson Planning

A lesson plan is usually written for each lesson or activity. It is in effect, a 'script' or set of cue cards for the instructor in presenting a lesson and can be rehearsed in the same manner. It consists of a point form summary of the steps to be followed from the beginning to the end of the lesson. Essential teaching and management points are noted.

A lesson plan is important because it helps the instructor:

- Determine specific objectives
- Develop and maintain continuity
- Organize and deliver daily lessons
- Ensure all material is covered
- Encourage appropriate learning activities and progression
- Provide a mechanism for the instructor to evaluate the lesson

A lesson plan should be prepared prior to the lesson. It should be brief, using key words and phrases in a logical order, and including materials and equipment required. The plan should be adaptable, allowing for individual needs, and the instructor should identify alternate activities for use if necessary.

When developing a lesson plan you should match the learning situation to the goals and teaching strategies employed. Some important considerations about the learning situation include what is to be taught and some basic information about the learner. The lesson plan then describes the specific objectives, instructional activities, and ways of evaluating the results.

For example, the following may be taken into consideration when developing a lesson plan:

**TEACHING STYLE-SKILLS:** The level of confidence and experience both of which determine the variety of methods to be considered.

**LESSON:** Stated in terms of what the participants will know and be able to do as a result of the lesson, i.e. "Participants will be able to select and list..."

**MATERIALS:** A list of the teaching equipment and learning materials required for the lesson.

**TEACHING PLAN:** This should include the following: course objectives; sessions to be taught and method; evaluation criteria i.e. outline of test items or stations.

**EVALUATION:** The specific means of determining how well the participants meet each of the learning objectives.

### Providing a Safe Environment

Prevention of accidents is the key to promoting safety when teaching. As outlined by the American Canoe Association in their Canoeing and Kayaking Instruction Manual (1987), an instructor should consider following variables in safe learning environments:

#### Personal Assumption of Risk

Participants should understand the inherent hazards in the activity and realise that instructors cannot guarantee their safety. Participants should assume responsibility for their own actions and realise that their actions affect the outcome of situations, which may develop in the activities. They are ultimately responsible for their decision to participate in any paddling activity and their own safety.

#### An Orientation of Basic Safety Guidelines in Canoeing

Students should understand the underlying tenets of safety in the sport of canoeing. Appropriate clothing, equipment, group organisation, and river running practices are a necessary part of a paddler's education.

#### An Orientation to Self-Rescue Procedures

These are the foundation of every rescue in canoeing. Participants must have an understanding of their individual responsibilities in the event of capsizing. They must take direct action to ensure their safety. Self-rescue procedures should be practised from the outset, and individuals should understand that the ability of other rescuers to help them is affected by their ability to initiate a self-rescue.

#### A Thoughtful Progression of Activities

Instructors must develop a progression of activities that leads to well-grounded skills. The activities should be designed to suit the abilities of the least experienced or least able paddler in the group. The progression can begin with a comfortable introduction on lake water and moving water, where paddlers obtain a foundation in basic skills. With that experience, they will gain skills that help them to adjust to a higher skill level or more challenging water.

### A Suitable Physical Environment

Weather and the choice of terrain is a key safety factor. Air and water temperatures, wind and precipitation affect paddlers' abilities to function efficiently on water. Classroom sites should also suit the participant's abilities.

### Contingency Plans for Rescues and Emergencies

Instructors should be able to execute emergency procedures to rescue or evacuate injured or ill paddlers. The group should be prepared to deal with the possibility of emergencies with appropriate safety equipment and a reasonable knowledge of rescue techniques.

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## Risk Management

When teaching any activity on water, safety is of primary concern. As an instructor, it is your responsibility to ensure measures are taken in order to prevent accidents or be prepared if an emergency situation occurs. This is where risk management comes into play. It is a process of examining the activity and its supporting factors before, during and after the activity.

During the planning stage of a clinic or trip, the instructor should perform an activity plan, which examines factors related to the activity such as: people, resources, the environment and administration.

**PEOPLE:** These include instructors, participants, administration and others who may have a direct or indirect impact or involvement with the course.

**RESOURCES:** Prior to the course the instructor needs to examine resources that are available or needed for the course. These include equipment, facilities, and supplies (see the equipment checklist later in this chapter).

**ENVIRONMENT:** This factor includes weather, terrain, season, water conditions, animals, and plants.

**ADMINISTRATION:** This section includes medical aid, transportation, policies, liability protection and safety reviews. This step makes the instructor examine possible emergency situations as identified in the previous stages and presents actions to be taken in the event of an accident.

After the preplanning factors are identified and examined the instructor is ready to implement the activities and programs. At the end of course, the instructor should evaluate the course. This evaluation will form the basis for decisions to modify, continue or eliminate the course or certain sections of it.

The chart at right outlines a generalized model of risk management planning. This should be used prior to any delivery of programs so that the instructor feels confident in conducting a particular course and are prepared for emergency situations that could arise.

