

Are your students getting enough time afloat?

Sometimes it's hard to figure out the best way to manage ashore vs. afloat sessions, it is easy to perceive that there's a lot of 'theory sessions' involved, so, how do we ensure that our students get enough time actually riding? **Candi Abbott**, PWT explains.

Whether you teach the proficiency course on a lake, the coast or from the back of a superyacht the same rule of thumb applies, a minimum of 70% of our day should be spent afloat, this makes training more valuable to our students, allowing them enough time to truly get to grips with riding a PWC to be safe in the future.

There are plenty of opportunities for learning by stealth. Embedding background knowledge and theory into practical sessions will help students recognize the relevance to PWC riding. Take a look at how you teach theory and consider why topics are part of the syllabus.

Types of PWC: If you are launching from an area where other people are using PWC's use this an opportunity to show your students some different types of



Briefing on how to set up a tow

PWC. Alternatively if you are based near a PWC dealer why not pop in over lunch and have a look round.

Slipway Launching &

Recovery: This is the perfect time to introduce a working knowledge of tides, depths / chart datum and encourage students to think about where to safely leave the car and trailer to avoid it being under water on your return.

Balance & trim: This subject becomes quickly relevant during slow speed familiarisation and can be enhanced through the planing



Use of visual aids make briefings clearer

speed exercises.

Tides & Weather are directly linked to sessions like coming alongside, stopping distances and MOB (not tides).

Knots: Why not get your students to practice their knot tying whilst waiting for their turn at a practical session? A great use of time and preparation for the towing session.

Buoyage: If you work in coastal waters then use the buoyage around you particularly during the 'follow a planned route' session rather than talking about it in a classroom, this will not only make it quicker to cover, but also more relevant. If there is no buoyage in your operating area, get creative and get students to use pictures or models on a hand-drawn chart, or match the picture to the symbol for that navigation aid on a chart.

IRPCS: if you run your course in a busy patch of water then you will 'see' various IRPCS activities whilst

transiting between locations whether that be ship movements or leisure craft heading out for the day. Take the opportunity to recall situations and discuss what happened. Using toy boats or PWCs will help to reinforce the all-important overtaking and crossing rules.

Capsize recovery/Versa Docks/Launching – if you have a smart phone or tablet (in a waterproof case) why not get your students to watch the video/s (within the RYA eBook) at lunch or whilst they are waiting for their 'turn' at a practical session.

There are certainly a couple of areas, such as charts, local bylaws, and avoiding pollution which are more suited to a dry teaching area, but why not take a look at your course plan ready for the new season and see if you can make better use of the teaching time to maximize the students' riding experience.

Lifejackets, crotch straps and the Inland Waterways

Life jackets must be worn during RYA Inland Waterways courses. It is important that life jackets are fitted according to the manufacturer's instructions so that should the life jacket inflate, it will not pass over the head, nor restrict the breathing of the wearer.

Consider carefully the use of crotch straps as they may not be appropriate to the type of vessel and waterways you are operating on. Unlike vessels operating on more exposed areas of water, the inland waterways helmsman is unlikely to be displaced from the

helm position by waves or rough water.

Should an individual fall overboard, they may be able to stand, and should not be far from an egress point. Crotch straps may cause an unnecessary risk on tiller steered narrowboats, when risk of entanglement may occur. Further risks associated with crotch straps are in the lock and surrounds, where the straps could be caught in or around machinery when operating ground- and gate- paddles and in moving around the lock area.



Rachel Andrews
Chief Instructor, Motor Cruising & Power
E-mail: rachel.andrews@rya.org.uk
Tel: 023 8060 4187



Teaching COLRegs

Photos: James Davies