**25 Hours-1©**

Inadvertently, I caused another student to quit flying recently. I should have found another way to show that the present program was not doing the job. I wonder how many other students who in the process of changing or comparing instructors just give up learning to fly. What is the proper professional approach when a student is being gouged.

I feel it important to tell the group what I found. Not so much as criticism of the other instructor as for letting those of the group know of the little things you should be looking for in your own instruction. There are many different ways to do the basics of flying. Just because what you do works does not mean you are doing what is best for the airplane or for your proficiency as a pilot.

The story is in two parts. The first day ...

Student was dissatisfied with progress being made. Total time 25 hours in C-172. Phoned and ask to go flying. We went flying for 1.1 hobbes hours.

On our first flight, by agreement, I was not to make corrections or comments but, rather, was to keep track of performance as it applied to the four basics of climb, level, descent and turns. I assigned 90 degree turns, slow flight with and without flaps, and power on and off stalls along with flight to an uncontrolled airport to which the student had been eight times.

The preflight was a thing to behold. The student had a pre-printed checklist on which one out of every three items did not apply to the particular aircraft or to the planned flight. In the cockpit every required and reference paper was checked. Once out of the cockpit the checklist was placed on the ground. The student carried a screwdriver and ‘tightened’ any number of screws during the preflight. Every control rod, counter-weight, antenna, and inspection plate was physically touched for security. The tires were inspected through the air-valve door of the wheel farings. This could well have been a pre-purchase inspection. Forty-five minutes later we entered the cockpit.

The aircraft key was on a ring along with at least twenty-five other keys. It had been left in the magneto switch during the preflight. I intervened prior to start to show that the key could be on a magneto and be still be removed (it shouldn’t) and that the bunch of keys could turn off the engine in turbulence. The engine start went well except for the over-priming on a warm day. The student taxied only with the brakes. Plane is a Cessna 172. Even so, student had never made a pivot turn using brakes and power.

The student obtained a clearance to taxi but was assigned an unfamiliar runway. With assistance we arrived in the middle runup area with no room for another aircraft where four normally fit. We do not face the wind and actually encroach on the taxiway. Student asks me to point out the runway. I had previously indicated that we would depart to the East. Student needed help to construct the departure call-up and request. Left the runup area without clearing the final approach path. Takeoff was more of a hop-off than a lift off with no correction for the crosswind. Student flies with a full but twisted grip on the yoke and, when holding the throttle, uses a full grip around the throttle knob.

The turn to the East was made after several head turns and bobs in all directions including peering around the window posts. The resulting self induced vertigo must have influenced the variations in bank angle and airspeed. There were scattered clouds at 1300 feet. Student was confused as to the FAR cloud clearances required and that we had control over what happened. Student complained about the control pressures in climb. I had pointed out during preflight that the previous pilot had left the trim tab far off neutral. This had not been corrected prior to takeoff. Climb speed was maintained once the trim was adjusted.

The student was given a leveling off altitude. Student leveled off and reduced the power to 2100 rpm. No trim was used. C-172 was proceeding at low cruise. During level off about 200 feet had been gained. Altitude was lost by reducing power. I asked for a series of left and right turns. Every turn was preceded by no fewer that three or four head turns and bobs followed by erratic bank angles and altitudes. Student made the turns but had difficulty timing the leveling off so that the desired heading coincided with wings level.

Going to slow flight took a relatively long time with more than a couple of hundred feet change in altitude. The process consisted of slightly reducing the power and waiting for the airplane to slow down. Use of trim required instructor’s suggestion. Student was able to reduce power and lower flaps but required coaching for power application and trim. On recovery, student was unfamiliar with milking up the flaps.

We simulated two landings at altitude where the student would pull carburetor heat at mid-field, do the pre-landing, reduce power to 1500, flip the trim once or twice, slow to 70 knots, add 10 and then 20 degrees of flap and then slow to 65 knots on final. All student’s landings had been made with 20 degrees of flap. The go-arounds were done with full power followed by dramatic pitch up and concurrent loss of airspeed. Student had to be reminded to bring up flaps.

Because of the time involved in the preflight it was necessary to return the club plane. We flew back over a route that the logbook showed had been flown no fewer than eight times. The student got the ATIS after listening four or five times but was unable to give a reference point on the ground for call-up. I assisted in the call-up by having it written down to read. The base entry required referencing a two mile base reporting point. The point involved can be used by all three of the main runway directions. Student had heard of it but did not know where it was.

Instructor coached student into the base entry, the two mile report, the addition of flaps, and even the turn to final. The landing was anti-climatic because I had the student leave 1200 rpm on in the flare.

Return to our parking space consisted of a wide sweep with the left wing as close to an adjacent aircraft as could be judged before turning for alignment with the space. This procedure is, in my experience, probably the major cause of minor aircraft damage. Reason: Students copying the bad example of other pilots.

The prior instructor had nurtured an emotional attachment. They were both divorced with kids. Couldn’t match that. My wife won’t let me have a girl friend and a divorce means I have to take the kids. Who wants to be a single parent with 40 year-old kids.