

KIT MAG

E - MAGAZINE AUG 26



BLOGS FROM:

Lee Jowett, Mick Knowles, Diane Hall, Ray Seagrave, Alison Harper, Terry Cook, Josh Hollerhan, Terry Lefteri, Pennie Alexander, Nick Butters, Chris Greer, Kate Monk

#KNOWLEDGEABLEE GOOD CONFERENCE

ADINJC & INTELLIGENT INSTRUCTOR
NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2026

THE INDUSTRY E-MAG..

That **Keeps Inspiring** Today's Instructors

THE INDUSTRY'S BIGGEST **FREE** EVENT

ALSO THIS ISSUE...

Meet The Instructor
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KIT MAG - REPRESENTED



The speaker programme has now been released for the ADINJC & Intelligent Instructor National Conference & Expo 2026, taking place at Cranmore Park, Solihull on Sunday 27 September. With 40+ sessions across four zones, there's a lot going on.

And KIT MAG is represented everywhere.

Six of our regular bloggers are speaking during the day, across all three of the main learning areas shown in the programme. Considering KIT MAG exists to bring together different voices, ideas and perspectives from across driver training, it's brilliant to see so many of those same people sharing their knowledge on stage. And somehow, they've even let me have a microphone again.

The KIT MAG contingent

I'll be speaking at 10:15–10:45 in the Lou Walsh PDI Zone with:

The three competencies that create safer drivers

I'll be exploring something that sits right at the heart of much of our work at KIT: if we genuinely want to create safer drivers, what does an instructor actually need to be competent at? Creating safer drivers requires us to understand learning, the person and the behaviours that will exist long after we're no longer sitting beside them.

Then at 11:00–11:30 on the Live Stage, KIT MAG blogger Dr Julia Malkin MBE will be speaking on:

Supporting learners with ADHD

Julia has written regularly for us about neurodiversity and brings a huge amount of knowledge and lived experience to an area instructors increasingly want to understand better.

At 14:45–15:15 on the Live Stage, Ray Seagrave presents:
The art of lesson adaptation

Ray is another familiar KIT MAG voice and someone always willing to challenge thinking around instructor development rather than simply repeat what we've always done.

Over in the Training Zone at 9:30–10:00, Diane Hall kicks the day off with:

Managing driving anxiety and test nerves

Again, a subject Diane has spent years specialising in and regularly shares her expertise on through KIT MAG.

Then there's Kate Monk, appearing alongside Sharron Huddlestone on the Live Stage at 13:15–13:45:

Demanding action for young driver safety

Kate's contribution to KIT MAG often brings that wider road-safety perspective into what we do, so it's great to see her alongside Sharron and Caitlin's Campaign talking about something considerably bigger than simply getting somebody through a driving test.

And finally, Terry Cook will be in the PDI Zone at 15:30–16:00, alongside Chris Bensted, presenting:

Chris & Terry's big fat quiz

I have absolutely no idea whether there will be prizes for the winners? Either way, he'll be there.

Six regular KIT MAG contributors. Three different stages. Six very different subjects. For me, that's something worth celebrating. And there's plenty more...

KIT MAG - REPRESENTED



Obviously, we're slightly biased towards our own bloggers, but there's a genuinely interesting programme beyond them too. Stewart Lochrie is in the Training Zone at 14:45 with the wonderfully understated title "Coaching is dead." Knowing Stewart, I'm fairly certain there's a little more nuance coming after the title.

Kev and Tracey Field are there at 14:00, looking at the hidden impact of stress on driving, while Emma Cottoington opens the PDI Zone at 9:30 with "Coaching the person, not just the driver."

At 12:30 in the PDI Zone, Lynne Barrie tackles dealing with safety-critical incidents — an area that should create plenty of useful discussion around the instructor's role when learning and safety collide. There are sessions on body language, AI, road-safety coaching, anxiety, Part 3, lesson adaptation and more. It's a pretty broad snapshot of where the profession currently is and perhaps where some of it is heading.

And of course, no industry conference would be complete without the wonderful DVSA. Amanda Lane opens the Live Stage at 9:30 with an update on the Ready to Pass? campaign, before Marian Kitson gets the enviable 15:30–16:30 final slot for the DVSA industry update. An entire hour. I can't wait. The National Conference has become a huge day in the instructor calendar. Last year's equivalent event attracted more than 1,700 instructors, and this year's organisers are again promising 40+ seminars alongside more than 70 exhibitors. For KIT MAG, though, there's something particularly nice about looking at that programme and seeing so many familiar names.

KIT MAG was never intended to be one person's voice. The whole point was to create somewhere instructors could hear from people with different expertise, experiences and perspectives... aiming always at creating thinking. On 27 September, six of those voices will be doing exactly that from the stages at Cranmore Park. A great representation for us. Why not join us at the ADINJC & Intelligent Instructor National Conference & Expo 2026.



Training Zone

- 9:30 – 10:00: Diane Hall, L of a way 2 Pass: Managing driving anxiety and test nerves
- 10:15 – 10:45: Ravi Mann & Richard Wareham, Pass N Go: Navigating the Part 3 test: Understanding examiner feedback
- 11:00 – 11:30: Carl Thomas, AA Driving School: Smarter practice: Using AI to train driving instructors
- 11:45 – 12:15: Andy Lloyd, Lloyds Driver Training: Reading your learner's body language
- 12:30 – 13:00: Amanda Banks, Horizon Driving School: Why LGBTQ+ inclusion matters in driver training
- 13:15 – 13:45: Olly Tayler QPM, The Honest Truth: The vision for the future of road safety coaching
- 14:00 – 14:30: Kev & Tracey Field, Confident Drivers: The hidden impact of stress on driving
- 14:45 – 15:15: Stewart Lochrie, ADINJC: Coaching is dead

SPEAKERS

The Live Stage

- 9:30 – 10:00: Amanda Lane, DVSA: Ready to Pass? campaign update
- 10:15 – 10:45: Mike Fowler, DRIVE Driving School: The 5 things your examiner expects you'll get wrong
- 11:00 – 11:30: Dr Julia Malkin MBE, Excel Academy: Supporting learners with ADHD
- 11:45 – 12:15: Des O'Connor, AI For Driving Instructors: The top 8 AI strategies that help driving instructors attract more pupils and work less
- 12:30 – 13:00: Tommy Sandhu, Smart Learner: How to grow your driving school
- 13:15 – 13:45: Sharron Huddleston & Kate Monk, Caitlin's Campaign / My Learner Driver: Demanding action for young driver safety
- 14:00 – 14:30: Tom Stenson, ADINJC: Beyond the test: Building safe, thinking drivers
- 14:45 – 15:15: Ray Seagrave, Ray Seagrave Instructor Training: The art of lesson adaptation
- 15:30 – 16:30: Marian Kitson, DVSA: DVSA industry update

Lou Walsh PDI Zone in association with FBTC Accountancy Services

- 9:30 – 10:00: Emma Cottoington, UP Driving School: Coaching the person, not just the driver
- 10:15 – 10:45: Lee Jowett, Knowledgeable Instructor Training: The three competencies that create safer drivers
- 11:00 – 11:30: Laura Morris & Deucalion McGregor-Sims, Go Green Driving Instructor Training: Truly meeting your pupils' needs
- 11:45 – 12:15: Phillip Cowley & Diana Todd, Inspire Instructor Training: The power of scaling
- 12:30 – 13:00: Lynne Barrie, ADINJC: Dealing with safety-critical incidents
- 13:15 – 13:45: Dave Leverton, The PDI Coach: Turning potential into performance
- 14:00 – 14:30: Becky Seaton, Empathetic Instructor Training: Say what you mean: The power of clear instruction
- 14:45 – 15:15: Lee Spary, ADI Doctor: Lessons that stick: Turning mistakes into learning
- 15:30 – 16:00: Terry Cook & Chris Bensted, The Instructor Podcast / Theory Test Explained & The DITC: Chris & Terry's big fat quiz

National Conference & Expo '26Cranmore Park | Solihull | West Midlands
Sunday | 27 September 2026

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THE UK'S BIGGEST DRIVING INSTRUCTOR EVENT OF THE YEAR!

The **ADINJC & Intelligent Instructor National Conference & Expo '26** is back — bigger and better than ever. Join over **2,250 visitors**, explore **70+ exhibitor stands**, and choose from **40+ expert seminar sessions** to sharpen your skills and grow your business. It's a full day of inspiration, insight, and innovation you won't want to miss.

Whether you're a seasoned ADI, a PDI in training, or simply exploring a career in driver instruction, this **free-to-attend** event is designed with you in mind.

**LEARN. GROW.
GET INSPIRED.**

40+ expert-led seminars
across four dedicated zones:

- **The Live Stage:** Leading trainers, DVSA update with Chief Executive, plus Q&A
- **PDI Zone:** Practical support and guidance for those new to the industry
- **Innovation Zone:** Inspiring talks on AI, technology, road safety, and business growth
- **Training Zone:** Practical sessions to sharpen your instructing skills

**EXPLORE THE EXPO**

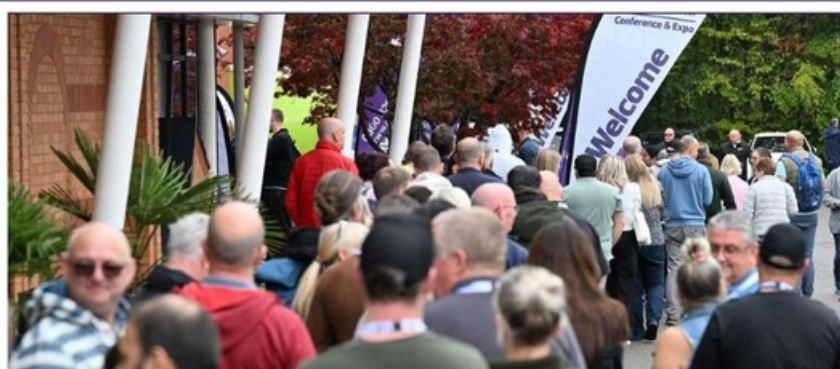
Discover the latest tech, tools, and services from **70+ exhibitor stands**

ENJOY THE EXTRAS

It's not all about seminars and stands—we've packed the day with activities and entertainment:

- Test-drive **over 30 electric instructor cars** and adapted vehicles
- Try your luck on the **Speed of Sight** charity tombola
- Explore the wellbeing area and see **live CPR and AED demonstrations**
- **Network** with hundreds of fellow instructors and industry experts

This isn't just another event — it's a celebration of your profession and a brilliant opportunity to learn, connect, and be inspired.

**INFORMATION**

- **WHEN?** Sunday, 27th September 2026
- **WHERE?** Cranmore Park Conference & Events Centre, Solihull (near Birmingham)
- **HOW MUCH?** Free! Just pre-register to secure your place

Greater Driving Education



**LEE
JOWETT
(FOUNDER)**

Lee Jowett is training manager at K.I.T and owner of i-Can Driving Solutions Ltd. In 2013 he completed the BTEC 4 in Coaching for Driver Development and has since gone on to deliver the BTEC 4 for Tri-Coaching. He is accredited by Cranfield University to deliver 'Driver Metrics' psychometric profiling behavioural change courses and has completed Cranfield's Driver Psychology course. In 2020 he authored the 'Meet The Standards' eBooks collection and has recently been inducted into The Institute of Master Tutors of Driving (IMTD)

What separates the great from the good? Within driver education there can be many answers to this question. Reliability, experience, knowledge, patience to name a few qualities that would certainly help towards delivering a great service.

However the goals for driver education should be clear. In 1980 Mikkonen and Keskinen proposed that drivers develop internal (inner) models that guide how they perceive, interpret and respond to the driving environment. These mental models integrate experience, expectations and self-awareness, shaping decisions beyond vehicle control. Safer driving develops by refining these internal models, enabling more accurate anticipation, judgement and behavioural adaptation. They named this theory the inner models of driving behaviour.

Esko Keskinen and Vesa Mikkonen are Finnish traffic psychologists and researchers whose work has significantly influenced driver education. Their research explores how drivers develop competence, with a particular focus on the cognitive and psychological processes underpinning safe driving behaviour.

They updated this work in 1996. Then in 1999 as part of a European wide road safety research project called GADGET (Guarding Automobile Drivers through Guidance Education and Technology) they formed the Goals for Driver Education Matrix (G.D.E.).

The GDE Matrix is widely considered to be the most comprehensive guide for driver education currently published, despite being 27 years in existence and 46 years in theory. What is it all about and how does it separate the great from the good?

Throughout my years teaching learner drivers I experienced many good days, none more so than days where my pupils passed their driving tests. The test itself is a good indicator of whether the candidate has sufficient skill and knowledge to drive independently. This is where its capability ends however.



Levels 1&2 of the goals for driver education matrix are where the driving test assessment sits. Level one develops vehicle control across three columns...Knowledge and Skills, Risk Increasing Aspects and the all important self-assessment. While level two develops driving in traffic across the same criteria.

The third column of the matrix is all important for post-test driving. It's really what defines client Centred learning and where the possibilities for safer drivers can be created. In traditional instructing, pre CCL, it was very much the case that the instructor held the role of evaluator with the pupil passively taking on board the information given to them. Those all important skills of identification and analysis, to provide remedies had to be developed by the pupil post-test. How many times have we all heard the line 'you only really learn to drive once you pass your test'? Annoyingly for instructors I fear there was more truth to that than we were previously aware as we explained to our pupils what they did and didn't do well.

Today's driving test still doesn't assess as far as the third column of the GDE matrix. The examiner provides the evaluation at the end of the drive. So of the 12 elements that combine to outline the requirements for driver education only 4 of them are assessed by examiners.

A good instructor might do an excellent job of developing car control and knowledge and understanding of how to navigate through traffic.

A Great Driving Educator will develop learners around all 12 elements. All four levels. All three columns of the matrix. As is necessary if we are to create safer drivers. Interestingly road traffic collision investigation reports dating back to 1979/1980 (Sabbey & Taylor), around the same time that the inner models theory was being developed, found that:-

The vehicle, the roadway and the environment are not the principal cause of collisions.

Greater Driving Education



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Therefore the driving test itself is not a predictor of safe post-test drivers. Since every element it assesses principally are not the cause of collisions. Collision contribution factors most often lie in the behaviour of the driver. Depending on the statistics you find it is commonly accepted that somewhere between 90-95% of collisions occur due to the behaviour of at least one driver in the lead up. This means that collision factors sit in levels 4&3 of the matrix and that driver education that sits primarily where the driving test sits (levels 1&2) cannot be considered to be great.

It may be adequate depending on the personality it trains.

If we dare to be great, then we dare to move beyond the minimum standards of DVSA. We dare to educate at all levels of the GDE Matrix and through all 12 elements. For this we need to understand the method and purpose.

'The goal of the matrix is to give tools to understand reality' - Esko Keskinen.

The reality that we know as educators is that collisions, particularly those most serious, are rarely the result of a lack of skill or understanding. The reality for young novice drivers particularly, but not restricted to, males is that their actions in the moment are organised and prioritised by who they see themselves as (level 4) in their current environment (level 3). Their reality is that the front lobe of their brain remains underdeveloped (Column 2) the part of the brain that performs functions such as emotional regulation, impulse control and awareness of risk. The part of the brain that at such ages facilitates our need to fit in to our groups and impress our peers. Put into simple terms the behaviour of young drivers (level 4) weakens under pressure (level 3).



Take a young male aged 17-24 and put him in a vehicle on a rural road. Here we are dealing with levels 1 & 2 in isolation just as the driving test and typical instruction/education. It falls short of the tools we need to educate new drivers to possess the minute you start to consider levels 4 & 3. Factor in that this young male is a confident, extrovert character (level 4) then things begin to change. It becomes even more interesting when you move to (level 3) context and factor in that this particular journey is taking place in the early hours of Saturday morning with 4 peers in the vehicle with the driver. That all have been having a good time prior and continue this along the route. It is commonly accepted that this scenario we are painting is a cocktail for the most serious collisions and loss of life.

The vehicle and the road are merely necessary factors but not contributors. A risk averse more introverted character would arguably have made different choices. The fascinating aspect is that when you change the context of the journey, then the same confident, extrovert male could make safer choices automatically and through their own current identity. Imagine the same driver on the same road, driving his Gran to Bingo in the same vehicle. The fatal collision becomes far less likely...because the behaviours and choices that lead to serious collisions become less desirable to the driver.

The most difficult aspect that instructors face, in my experience, is that our role in relation to the higher levels of the GDE is not to provide the fix, or the answers. It is to 'give tools to understand reality'. The third column of the GDE Matrix is about delivering education that raises self-awareness. This is where greater self-understanding can develop. The tool that can shorten the space between impulse and control. That can narrow the gap between intention and behaviour and that can help our novice young drivers to consider who they see themselves as as a driver...And build intention towards the driver they will be in future situations.

Levels 1&2 are good enough to pass a part 3 test. Good enough...but not great.

Every wrong turn has something to teach

Independent navigating has, thankfully, become a significant part of the practical driving test. Being able to find your way safely is what allows learners to put all those hours of training into practice once they're driving on their own.

But what happens when things don't go to plan?

It got me thinking... when was the last time you deliberately let a learner get lost?

Not accidentally, but intentionally. No sat nav, no rescue directions, just the challenge of figuring it out by themselves. Looking at the geography of the land, reading the road, following the signs and working out how to get back on track safely.

It's something I've always enjoyed doing with my own learners, and if I'm honest, I quite enjoy getting lost myself and have found myself on many adventure all over the world.

Exploring somewhere new, making a wrong turn and finding another way for me, is a fun challenge. Yet over the years, through conversations with parents, learners and fellow instructors, I've realised that I'm very much in the minority. For most people, getting lost creates anxiety rather than curiosity.

When I ask myself why getting lost never worries me, I always come back to the same answer. I trust in my ability to work it out and I've allowed enough time in my journey to make getting lost part of the adventure rather than a problem. Time really is one of the biggest influences on how we drive.



Time

If we have left plenty and we're calm, we tend to make better decisions. If we're under pressure, our decision-making changes. We accept smaller gaps, drive a little faster and become frustrated more quickly.

It's not because we've suddenly become bad drivers, it's because safe driving is a choice and time pressure quietly changes the way we assess risk with rules become somewhat more flexible.

It's a great lesson to bring to life with your learners but don't tell them about the challenge until afterwards.

Start by setting a destination using their preferred map app and ask them to look at the estimated journey time. Before setting off, have a conversation about what delays they are likely to come across. Then ask how much extra time they think they should allow if they wanted to arrive feeling relaxed rather than rushed.

Most learners complete the journey calmly, make sensible decisions and arrive with very little drama.



Next, change just one thing. This time, tell them they're running late for work.

Choose a route you know they'll encounter delays. Don't encourage or allow unsafe driving, but observe how quickly the pressure of being "late" begins to influence their thinking. You may notice them becoming increasingly frustrated by anything that slows their progress or they start to push limits and risks.

Pull over, ask them how they felt. What did they notice about their stress levels? What risks did they feel tempted to take they wouldn't normally consider?

It's a powerful reminder that time pressure affects every driver, regardless of experience.

Sometimes, despite our best planning, we're going to be late. That's life.

Helping learners accept that arriving a few minutes behind schedule is far better than rushing into unnecessary risks may be one of the most valuable lessons we ever teach.

Navigational skill

Every instructor will have their own approach to building navigation skills. For me, it's mastering navigation by road signs before sat navs. Using a wordsearch approach for the first letter of towns on signs, understanding the different colours for different places and looking further ahead to create the time to process the information and find junctions.

But we only have a limited number of hours with each learner, and there are so many skills competing for that time.

Navigation is one of those areas where I think families can make a huge difference, so I actively encourage them to keep practicing outside lessons.

Sometimes that means suggesting local orienteering events or walking trails where learners can develop their sense of direction and map reading away from the pressure of driving.

Other times, I challenge families to deliberately get lost both on foot and as a passenger, with the learner taking full responsibility for finding the way. Sometimes the only clues they're allowed are road signs, while other times they can use a sat nav to compare the different approaches.

The aim isn't to test them; it's to build confidence, resilience and the understanding that taking a wrong turn is never the end of the journey.

Even everyday trips become valuable opportunities. A run to the supermarket, an appointment at the doctor's surgery or an errand in the next town can all become navigation exercises, with the learner taking responsibility for planning the route, reading the signs, leaving enough time and making the decisions.

My Learner Driver offers extensive, detailed guidance for families to support navigation outside of lessons so that instructors can focus on bringing the skills for safe driving together.

Along with video guides, there are games and challenges for instructors and parents to use as homework between sessions.

**SHARE WITH YOUR
LEARNERS**



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Find out more: www.mylearnerdriver.co.uk



**PROTECT
YOUNG DRIVERS**

Time for change

**24% of fatal or serious
injury collisions in Britain
involve 17 to 24-year-olds**

**A new national resource bringing
together research, real stories and
evidence to strengthen action to
better protect young drivers.**

In Britain, one in five new drivers
crash in the first year after passing
their test. With the right support
and safeguards, we can prevent lives
being lost and families torn apart.

It's time to act.

Find out more at:
protectyoungdrivers.com



On the website, you'll find

- ✓ Facts and statistics on young driver risk, behaviour and brain development
- ✓ International success stories showing how stronger licensing is saving lives across the world
- ✓ Research and history tracing decades of concern and campaigning for change
- ✓ Real stories from bereaved families
- ✓ A growing network of partners from enforcement, policy, academia and road safety

Website partners include



TOPIC: WORKSHOPS

Knowledgeable CCL & SC / PT3 Workshops

Book To Attend



KNOWLEDGEABLE
INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

The workshops that
Keep Inspiring Todays instructors



L OF A WAY TO HELP YOUR PUPILS STANDARDS CHECK SUCCESS: BEING YOUR BEST

Diane Hall & Chris Allsopp are taking their Driving Test Nerves Specialist Workshop around the Country. See the ad in KITMAG for a date in your area....or treat yourself to a day out:-

For more information or to book. Follow the :[link](#)



**DIANE HALL
(NERVES SPECIALIST)**

When we run our Driving Test Nerves Specialist workshop, the subject of Part 3 and Standards Check nerves is foremost in the mind of many delegates... and when we mention the word 'triggers', there are always loud groans around the room! Whatever we think of them, they are a reality, and even if your tests never trigger a Standards Check, you have still got to face them many times throughout your career. So, how do you feel about it? Calm, relaxed, confident, and in control of your emotions? Or a bag of nerves, wanting to get it over with as soon as possible?

There are a great many resources available to help you to prepare for your Standards Check, but what about mental preparation? If nerves take over on the day, then all that training can go out of the window!

In a previous article, I talked about B.E.S.T. which are Behaviours, Emotions, 'Physical' Sensations and Thoughts, and how your learner drivers need to be in total control of these if they are to be successful on their driving test, and become safe, confident, and competent drivers. If a learner is sabotaged by any of these four things, then they won't be able to perform to the BEST of their ability. An example of this would be a learner whose BEHAVIOURS are perhaps hesitation or rushing at junctions, missing road signs, muddling up left/right, whose EMOTIONS are ones of fear, nerves, intimidation, or frustration, whose 'PHYSICAL SENSATIONS' are gripping the steering wheel, shaky legs, changes in their breathing, and whose THOUGHTS are along the lines of: 'I always mess this up' 'I get nervous at...' 'I'm useless at tests' etc.

Not surprisingly, it's the same for instructors taking part 3 or Standards Checks. If your brain is flooded with the stress hormones cortisol and adrenalin, then you are not going to be able to perform to the BEST of your ability. Shut down or Speed up? Cortisol is the 'shut down' hormone. It can cause brain fog and slow processing down.



You've no doubt encountered it many times with your learners, but if you experience it on your Standards Check it can cause you to lose focus, to know what you're meant to be saying, but you just don't have the capacity to get the words out. You may experience Auditory Exclusion; you're not really hearing what your learner is saying or processing it. What about lack of peripheral vision? Does any of this sound familiar? Adrenalin on the other hand, has the opposite effect. I've encountered many PDIs who have failed their part 3 as they have gone at it like a bull at a gate! Trying to get 40 hours of teaching into one sentence. Again, this may be familiar to you. If you've ever felt out of breath, rushing to get your words out, then this may be the effect of adrenalin.

Whether you suffer the effects of cortisol or adrenalin (or both!), the outcome isn't going to be great.

The BEST of the BEST of the BEST!

Let's look at two different scenarios, one where an instructor is in control of their B.E.S.T., and one where they aren't.

Scenario one:

Behaviours: not noticing that the learner is missing mirror checks, not picking up on the fact the learner is moving off in third gear

Emotions: fear, panic, intimidation, anxiety, dread, overwhelm

'Physical Sensations': Shortness of breath, hands sweating, heart racing, feeling sick, Thoughts: I hate this, I'm scared of failing, I go to pieces on tests.

Scenario two:

Behaviours: aware of everything that the learner is doing, good focus inside and outside of the car, mindful and in the moment, Emotions: confident, calm, relaxed, 'Physical' Sensations: calm breathing, normal heart rate, Thoughts: I know my stuff, this is no different to a normal lesson, I feel confident in my ability. Which scenario would you choose for your Standards Check?

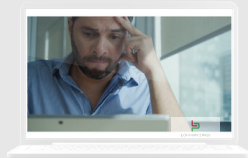
Well, it's obvious which is going to result in a good grade on your Standards Check.

PART 2/3 AND STANDARDS CHECK NERVES

DRIVING TEST NERVES

Driving Test Nerves Specialist workshops

Do you sometimes feel more like a counsellor or therapist than a driving instructor?
Learn amazing unique techniques to help your pupils with driving anxiety and test nerves, and for your own Part 2/3 or SC anxiety as well!

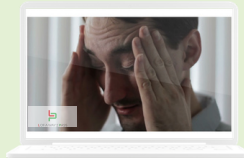


All delegates benefit from..

- FREE Zoom sessions
- How to beat Part 2/3/SC nerves and anxiety online course
- Two months FREE access to Driving Test Nerves Pro: giving you and your pupils access to the techniques covered in the workshop
- Workshop Manual
- Instructor Training Manual
- Two Minute Techniques Guide
- CPD Certificate
- Membership to private Driving Test Nerves Specialist Facebook group
- Featured on www.Lofaway2pass.com as Driving Test Nerves Specialists

Driving Test Nerves Pro

Provide your pupils with unlimited access to amazing techniques to combat Driving Anxiety & Test Day Nerves. In addition to happy pupils, it can also help to increase your pass rate and avoid those Standards Check Triggers!



Subscribers will gain..

- The Key to understanding how we 'create' emotions
- Strategies to control driving anxiety and test day nerves
- Techniques to eliminate nerves, fear, panic, intimidation, overwhelm & dread
- Increase confidence and self-esteem
- Ten second technique to stop muddling up left & right
- In-car demonstration of techniques with a learner driver
- Eliminating 'Auditory Exclusion', when what you say goes in one ear and out the other!

TEST NERVES SPECIALISTS



LOF A WAY 2 PASS



1-2-1 zoom sessions for Part 2/3/SC nerves

Do you 'freeze' and can't get your words out, or try to get 40 hours of training into one sentence? If nerves get the better of you on the day, or you lack confidence in your ability, this two-hour session will enable you to keep calm, focused, and confident.

You will benefit from..

- Understanding how you 'create' negative emotions
- Techniques to keep you calm
- Control your emotions rather than them controlling you
- Full access to the online course
- Strategies to bring your best performance when it matters
- Suitable for part 2,3 and Standard Check

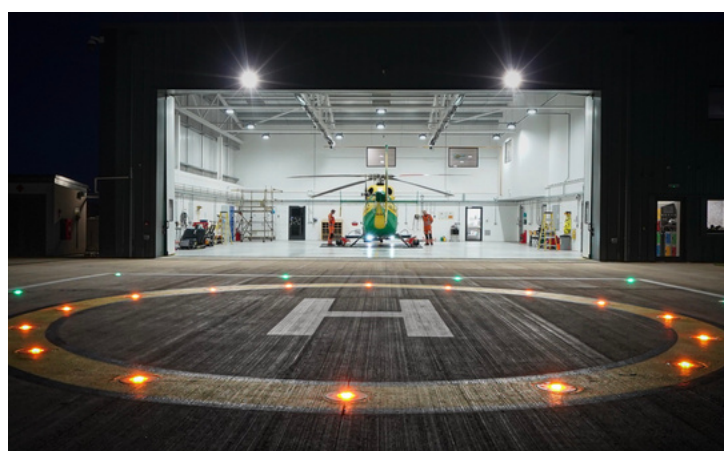
Keep Calm Quiz

This is a brand new FREE resource to help you to engage with your learners, enabling you to analyse their behaviours, emotions, physical sensations and thoughts that may hinder their progress when learning to driving and taking their test. Depending on the results, we have a range of resources to help you to help them.

Why not take the quiz yourself? If you answer mostly 'A' then you have good control of your emotions, and so long as you are trained to the required standard, you should be successful. If it's mostly 'B' then you may just need a nudge in the right direction. If it's 'C', then you may be controlled by your emotions, and this could prove challenging in passing your part 2/3 or SC, so why not get in touch to see how we can help?



[Take the quiz](#)



HELP Appeal: TRANSFORMING EMERGENCY CARE BEYOND HELIPADS

The HELP Appeal is best known for its funding of NHS hospital helipads across the country, helping to reduce the time it takes for critically ill and injured patients to reach lifesaving treatment at Emergency Departments after landing in air ambulances. However, our support also extends to funding air ambulance bases, ensuring crews have the facilities they need to respond quickly, efficiently and safely to medical emergencies.

Modern air ambulance operations demand high-quality infrastructure that can support a rapid 24/7 emergency response. Many existing bases were built years ago and no longer meet the needs of an increasingly busy service. Our funding helps transform these bases into purpose-built facilities designed for today's emergency care demands.



A recent example of this support can be seen at the Midlands Air Ambulance. The HELP Appeal provided significant funding to upgrade its air bases, creating state-of-the-art infrastructure that includes expanded hangars, modern crew accommodation and improved operational spaces. These improvements help ensure the charity's aircraft and crews can be ready to respond at a moment's notice. On our vital support, they said:



“This £2 million redevelopment, made possible thanks to the generous funding from the HELP Appeal, marks a transformative milestone ... The upgraded facilities will...strengthen our ability to respond swiftly to emergencies and deliver lifesaving care...”

Each base the HELP Appeal funds across the country represents more than bricks and mortar. It is a lifeline for patients, enabling crews to reach emergencies faster and deliver critical care at the roadside and in remote locations. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we will continue to help air ambulances across the country, which will ultimately help to save more lives.



To learn how you can support the HELP Appeal, which has funded 57 NHS hospital helipads with another 40 in the pipeline, as well as funding air ambulance bases, critical care cars, medical equipment and PPE for air ambulance charities and volunteer medics, please visit: www.helpappeal.org.uk.

MEET THE (INTELLIGENT) INSTRUCTOR : Amy Hartley



Name – Amy Hartley

Birthday (year optional 😊) – 1990

Occupation – Marketing Manager at Intelligent Instructor

Current Car – BMW 330e



Dream car – It's not technically a car, but converting a vehicle into a camper is my dream right now!

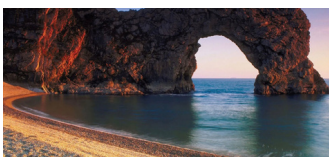


What annoys you – Rudeness.



What part of your job do you enjoy – The variety and creativity, but mostly the people I meet along the way.

Biggest influence on your career – My son... hands down.



Personal ambition – Move to the coast!



At the end of a working day, how do you wind down – Most evenings involve taking my son to either footy training session or match. Pre-season prep is intense right now but that time in the evening, away from a screen and out in the fresh air, is genuinely the only time I switch off. All I can do is be present, pitch-side, fully focused on him.

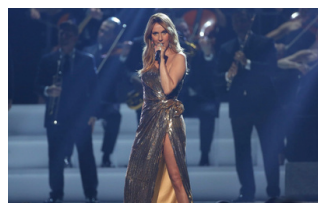


Hobbies and interests – Fitness and nutrition. In secondary school, my answer to "what do you want to be when you're older?" was always Personal Trainer. I love strength training and exploring food and nutrition.

Favourite food – Pizza or pasta – genuinely too close to call (ideally eaten in Rome).



Favourite film – I'm not a big film buff, but I recently watched Voicemails for Isabelle and loved it. If you haven't seen it, watch it.



What music do you like to listen to – Honestly, I can't even explain this one – my Spotify playlist has a bit of everything. It could be Celine Dion, it could be Clubland!



If you won the lottery...? – I'd open a boutique retreat built around a collection of individually styled cabins – think quiet luxury, Scandinavian/rustic aesthetic.

TOPIC: BUSINESS COACHING

BUSINESS - GET YOUR PRICES RIGHT

Mick Knowles is the Co-Founder and Business Development Manager of K.I.T., the host of The DID Podcast (now The KIT Podcast), and owner of Xpert Driver Training Ltd. In 2013 he completed the BTEC Level 3 in Coaching for Driver Development followed in 2014 by the BTEC Level 4 in Coaching for Driver Development and has since gone on to become a Tri-Coaching Trainer. He is accredited by Cranfield University to deliver 'Driver Metrics' psychometric profiling behavioural change courses. Mick's desire to develop not only himself but other ADI's has led to the formation of KIT. In 2021 due to his love of podcasts he launched The DID Podcast. In 2021 he was runner up in the Influencer of the Year Category at the GoRoadie Awards and Xpert Driver Training were runners up in the Regional Driving School of The Year Category at the Intelligent Instructor Awards.



**MICK
KNOWLES
(FOUNDER)**

Know Your Numbers Before You Set Your Price

Most instructors set their hourly rate by looking at what the school down the road charges and landing a pound either side of it. That is not pricing. That is copying, and it means your income is being decided by somebody who has no idea what your car costs to run.

Start with your cost per working hour. Write down everything the business pays for over twelve months. Car finance or lease, insurance, road tax, servicing, tyres, breakdown cover, dual controls, franchise or admin fees, phone, website and domain, accountancy, CPD and training, DVSA fees, and anything you put aside for a pension or for the weeks you cannot work. Fuel sits slightly apart because it moves with the hours you teach, so work that out per hour separately.

Now the hours. This is where the sums usually fall apart. There are 52 weeks in a year but you are not teaching in all of them. Take out holiday, bank holidays, illness, your standards check, and the odd week where the diary just does not fill. Forty four working weeks is realistic for most. If you teach 30 paid hours a week, that is 1,320 hours, and you should knock 10 per cent off that for late cancellations and no shows before you trust the figure.

Divide your annual costs by your realistic paid hours and you have the number that matters: what one hour costs you before you have earned a penny. Whatever sits between that figure and your hourly rate is your wage and your profit. When instructors do this properly for the first time, the common reaction is that the margin is far thinner than they assumed. Raising your rate is the part people avoid. The fear is losing pupils.



Run the numbers on that fear. If you charge 40 pounds an hour and teach 30 hours a week, a 2 pound rise is 60 pounds a week, or roughly 2,600 pounds a year on 44 weeks. If two pupils leave over it and you replace them within a fortnight, you are still comfortably ahead. In practice, most pupils do not leave over a fair, well explained increase, because they are buying you rather than the price.

Handle it cleanly. Give existing pupils four to six weeks of notice in writing, apply the new rate to every new enquiry from the day you decide, and do not apologise in the message. State the new rate, state the date it starts, thank them, and move on. Long explanations invite negotiation. A short, confident message rarely does.

Two more things worth building in. First, review your rate on the same date every year and put it in the diary now, because a rate that stays still for four years is a pay cut you gave yourself. Second, check your block booking discounts against your cost per hour. Plenty of instructors offer ten hours for the price of nine without realising the discount has quietly wiped out most of the profit on that block. Discount from a position of knowledge or do not discount at all. None of this is about being the most expensive instructor in town. It is about knowing exactly what you need to charge to run a car properly, take a proper holiday, and put money away for the years when you would rather work four days than six.

Instructors who know their numbers make calm decisions. Instructors who do not spend years working flat out and wondering where it all went.

Sit down this week with twelve months of bank statements and work out your cost per hour. It takes about an hour and it will change how you look at your diary.



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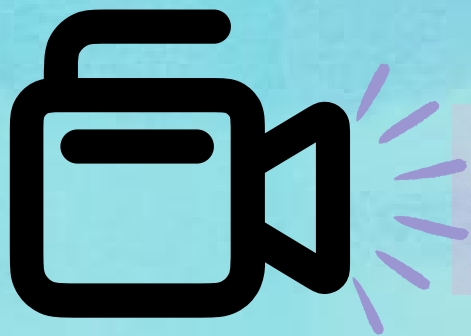
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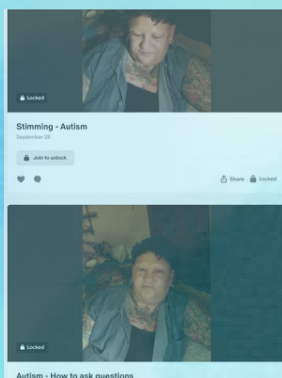
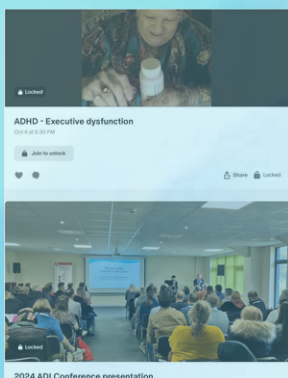
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Talking

SEND

With

Dr Julia Malkin MBE



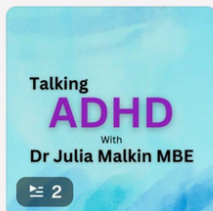
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Ray Seagrave

CLIENT CENTERED – FOCUS TO TEST OR TO DRIVE

Hi its Ray! I'm a highly respected trainer in the driver training industry, a DVSA grade 'A' ADI and grade 'A' (51/51) ORDIT registered trainer. I'm an accredited coach and mentor with the IAPC&M. I'm commitment to personal and professional development of ADI's and PDI's in the industry with the aim of being a motivational mentor. My courses and 1:2:1 coaching and mentoring training sessions are among the most popular in the industry. Furthermore, I am a notable speaker at key industry events, including Intelligent Instructor and delivering ADINJC masterclasses. My insights on latest trends and innovative techniques make me a trusted information source in this evolving industry. My dedication to uplift the standard of driver education remains unwavering. My diverse accomplishments and consistent drive to enhance driver training make me a true industry leader Ray Seagrave.



RAY
SEAGRAVE



Spend a few minutes scrolling through TikTok, Facebook Reels or YouTube Shorts and, if driving instruction is part of your algorithm, you'll probably see the same sort of videos I'm seeing.

"Spot the fail."

"Would this be a pass or fail?"

"Do this and you'll pass."

"Do this and you'll fail."

Some are clips of driving situations. Others show instructors working with learners. And it's those that concern me more, because I'm increasingly hearing test-focused language being used during actual lessons.

"You've just failed your driving test there."

"That would be a serious fault."

"You'd have passed if you'd done that."

I understand why this happens. Most learners come to us wanting to pass their driving test. That's the goal they can see in front of them. They've spent money learning, they want the freedom that comes with a licence and they're naturally interested in what will happen on test day.

From a social media point of view, instructors may also be tapping into what their target market wants to know. Pass or fail is simple. It's clickable. People want to know the answer. But if learners already arrive test-focused, and we then surround them with even more test-focused language, are we helping to change that mindset or simply adding to the problem? For me, this isn't just a personal preference about how lessons should be delivered.

DVSA's own standards point us towards something much broader than teaching somebody how to pass a test. The National Standard for Driver and Rider Training says our role is to help learners gain the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to drive safely and responsibly throughout their driving career. It specifically says this is "not just about teaching a learner to pass a test".

The standard also describes client-centred learning as a conversation between learner and instructor, rather than the instructor simply telling the learner what to do. That matters.

Our job isn't to manufacture the right actions for 40 minutes while an examiner watches. It's to develop someone who can make safe and responsible decisions when nobody is sitting next to them. And when DVSA assesses us as instructors, the same direction is clear. Part 3 and Standards Check assessments are built around a client-centred lesson, with goals, risk management, adaptation and learner reflection all forming part of what is being assessed.

So DVSA isn't looking for test-focused, instructor-led training from us. It's looking for something much closer to client-centred, goal-focused training that develops the learner's own understanding and responsibility.

Of course, DVSA also talks about tests.

It administers the driving test, so part of its job is making sure people only present for the test when they're ready. Its Ready to Pass campaign talks about the 27 driving skills and encourages learners to reach a point where they can drive consistently and independently.

DVSA also encourages instructors to use mock driving tests. Its current guidance explains how to make a mock test realistic and says it should be used when the learner can already drive consistently and safely without prompting. I don't have a problem with that.

What I think we need to separate is checking readiness from creating readiness. A mock test doesn't create a safe driver.

The learning before it does. For me, a mock test might be useful because a learner wants to know what the test feels like. Perhaps they're anxious about having somebody unfamiliar sitting next to them. Perhaps they want to experience receiving directions without the normal interaction they have with their instructor. That's useful. It's a bit like sitting in an exam hall before an important exam. You get a feel for the room, where you'll sit and what the environment is like. But sitting in the exam hall doesn't teach you the subject. In the same way, repeatedly running mock tests isn't the answer to somebody not being ready.

The answer is the training that develops the skills, judgement, understanding and behaviour needed to drive safely and independently. There's some history here too.



Ray Seagrave

CLIENT CENTERED - FOCUS TO TEST OR TO DRIVE

Hi its Ray! I'm a highly respected trainer in the driver training industry, a DVSA grade 'A' ADI and grade 'A' (51/51) ORDIT registered trainer. I'm an accredited coach and mentor with the IAPC&M. I'm commitment to personal and professional development of ADI's and PDI's in the industry with the aim of being a motivational mentor. My courses and 1:2:1 coaching and mentoring training sessions are among the most popular in the industry. Furthermore, I am a notable speaker at key industry events, including Intelligent Instructor and delivering ADINJC masterclasses. My insights on latest trends and innovative techniques make me a trusted information source in this evolving industry. My dedication to uplift the standard of driver education remains unwavering. My diverse accomplishments and consistent drive to enhance driver training make me a true industry leader
Ray Seagrave.



RAY
SEAGRAVE



When independent driving was introduced into the practical test in October 2010, the then Driving Standards Agency stopped publishing test routes. The aim was to make the driving test better reflect realistic driving conditions and help new drivers develop the skills and confidence needed to stay safe after passing.

The same principle appeared again with the theory test.

From January 2012, DSA stopped using pre-published live theory test questions because candidates could simply memorise answers. The aim was to encourage better understanding rather than learning questions by rote. There's a pattern there. Don't memorise the route. Don't memorise the answer. Understand what you're doing and be able to apply it.

Even DVSA's current mock-test guidance says it does not publish real test routes and advises instructors to avoid roads they know are used for real tests. So if the system has deliberately moved away from creating opportunities for learners to rehearse the test itself, why would we want to bring test-centred thinking back into every lesson through the language we use?

Let's say a learner approaches a roundabout and makes a poor decision.

A test-focused, instructor-led trainer might say:

"You've just failed your test there." The learner now knows an examiner wouldn't have liked it. But have they understood why it happened? Did they misjudge the speed of another vehicle? Were they worried about holding somebody up behind them? Were they trying to make progress because they thought hesitation was bad? Did they fail to notice something? What did they think was going to happen? And most importantly, what might they do differently next time?

That's the learning I'm interested in. If all the learner takes away from the situation is "don't do that because I'll fail", the learning has probably stopped too soon. And the instructor has also kept themselves in the position of judge. Pass. Fail. Serious fault. Driving fault. The learner waits for the verdict. That's instructor-led. A client-centred, goal-focused and behaviour-focused approach is different. The instructor still uses their knowledge and experience. They still step in if safety requires it. They may explain, demonstrate, prompt or tell when that's what the learner needs.

But they're also trying to develop the learner's ability to recognise risk, understand their own decisions and eventually make those judgements without them. That takes more skill. It's easy to answer, "Would I fail for that?" with yes or no. It's much harder, and requires more skill, to have a conversation that helps a learner question what they believe, what they were thinking, what they were feeling and what influenced the action they took. And some instructors may simply not have been trained to do that well. If those conversational and coaching skills weren't developed during the early stages of their instructor training, they may naturally fall back on what feels more familiar: explaining, telling, correcting and linking performance to the driving test. That doesn't mean they don't care about developing safe drivers. It may simply mean they haven't yet developed the skills needed to explore the thinking and behaviour underneath what they see.

And that may be one reason test-focused, instructor-led training can persist. It can also feel quicker. Tell a learner what to do, tell them what not to do, tell them what would fail, and if passing matters enough to them they may change what you see almost immediately. But compliance isn't necessarily understanding. A changed action isn't always a changed behaviour. A learner might stop rushing at junctions because they've been told it could cause them to fail. But if the real issue is pressure from traffic behind, fear of holding people up, overconfidence or a belief that good drivers should always keep moving, that thinking may still be there. Once the test has gone, and the instructor has gone, the old behaviour can return. There's another issue here too. Value for money. Instructors may believe good value means helping a learner progress quickly. Fewer lessons, faster movement through the subjects, quicker readiness for test. On the face of it, that sounds positive. But quicker isn't always better. If the apparent progress is being created by prompts, instructions and test-focused consequences, the learner may look more capable than they really are. They may perform well while the instructor is there, but still lack the judgement, understanding and self-awareness needed when that support disappears. And that can create more risk, not less. Good value isn't simply getting somebody through the training in the fewest possible lessons. Good value is helping them become safe enough to manage the road independently once those lessons have finished.

Because after the test, the instructor won't be there.

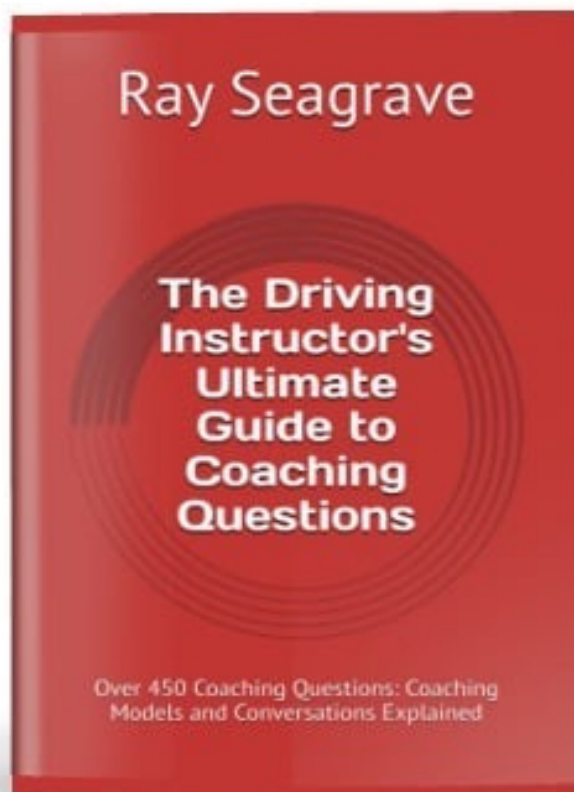


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ATTENTION!!

I'm Pennie Alexander, I qualified in 2014 after being a gymnastics coach for about 15 years. I still teach learners, I train PDIs, and I work full-time as a driving assessor ensuring people with medical conditions are safe to continue driving and help those with disabilities discover which adaptations they will require to get on the road.



**PENNIE
ALEXANDER**



Attention is our ability to focus mental activity for a specific purpose, it requires relevance, importance and specificity. In driving our attention is pulled by many varied sources: each of our senses and what is happening in our intra-personal and extra-personal space, inside and outside the car and can be influenced by our thoughts and feelings.

When learning to drive there is a vast amount of information to process, therefore a learner's attention may not be on what is required at a specific time. They may be focused on finding a gap at a roundabout, so as they go to emerge they stall, this is not a control error, it is an attention deficit, they are not tending to what their feet are doing, as they are concentrating on finding a good-sized gap and most likely thinking about moving quickly in order to not hold anyone up!

It is our job as instructors to ensure that our learners are able to deal with all the necessary information on the road, without their attention being torn in different directions when performing the task of driving.

When a new learner first gets in the car, we take them to a quiet area so they can concentrate on what they are doing without too many distractions. We do this so they can focus their attention on specific things and learn how to first move the car safely.

When we start moving them on to more complex situations, their attention may be on the new skill and therefore, they may start missing mirrors. This is not always due to a lack of knowledge around what they should be doing, but because they are so focused on doing what is new that their attention is diverted. In such a situation, suggest you take control of the mirrors, and that you will inform them if there is anything they need to be aware of, so they can focus on the new skill. Once they have developed that skill, then allow them to take responsibility for the mirrors.

If you take your learner too far out of their comfort zone, the likelihood is, they won't be able to keep their attention on what is required, they will then go into panic, and no learning will take place. This happens if you move the learner on before they are ready. For example, they've been working on their clutch control at quiet junctions, they manage it successfully, so you immediately take them to a busier junction where there is more to think about and everything goes wrong, they keep stalling and then start panicking and thinking they are useless as they can't do it.

This happens because they're still needing to think carefully about how to move off, what their feet are doing, where they need to look, how they need to steer, then all of a sudden as well as needing to think about all of this, they've now got to deal with traffic coming at them from all angles. They simply cannot process all the required information and go into panic mode.

Allow your learners to find their own pace, work with them and listen to their needs.

Quite often I hear instructors saying their learners never see the speed signs. Where is their attention at these times? A great example of this in my area is when the speed changes by a mini roundabout. Their focus is on the traffic, and whether or not to use a signal, so they completely miss the change of speed.

At times like these the learner needs to learn what to tend to first. In this case, it's important that they notice the speed sign, as approaching the mini roundabout, so early prompting on road signs and the importance of looking far enough ahead to know what's happening before arriving at the situation is paramount.

ATTENTION!!

I'm Pennie Alexander, I qualified in 2014 after being a gymnastics coach for about 15 years. I still teach learners, I train PDIs, and I work full-time as a driving assessor ensuring people with medical conditions are safe to continue driving and help those with disabilities discover which adaptations they will require to get on the road.



**PENNIE
ALEXANDER**



This interlinks with our perception and what we see, as mentioned in one of my previous articles we all see things differently, so helping a learner work out what they need to attend to is part of our role. It's the same with roundabouts....

My learner is struggling with taking the 3rd exit at a standard roundabout, they don't seem to understand where the exit is... This could happen for several reasons, attention to the task is a probable cause, too concerned about what others are doing, too scared they're going to do something wrong and cause a collision, in total panic so unable to think about the task.

How do we as instructors deal with these situations? Talk to your learner, ask them what they are thinking about, what is concerning them, what do they feel they need to do, to overcome these issues seen. Ensure there are no gaps in their knowledge, or their skills to perform the task, take them away from the area and work with them, so you understand what they need to complete it.

We think we multi-task, do various things simultaneously; in fact, our brains switch tasks at such a fast pace we think we multi-task. Have you ever tried having a conversation with someone and thinking about something different?

How many times when you're watching TV and someone talks to you, do you hear what the person says or do you miss what is happening on the TV? When you're driving and listening to a podcast do you hear everything that is said, or do you miss sections as you're concentrating on something on the road?

This happens due to our attention being drawn to the most important thing to us at the time, what will keep us safe. So, when driving, our hearing will shut off, so our full attention is on the situation ahead of us.

If we think of this and our learners, who are desperately trying to think about what they need to do and then you go and ask them a question or start talking nonsense to them, they are not going to be able to tend to the task required and things will inevitably go wrong. It's not their fault, it's yours for interrupting their thought process. Allow your learners time to think, time to practice so they can pay attention to what they are doing without intervention or distraction, see how they get on.

Yes, they might get things wrong, then you can have a conversation with them whilst at the side of the road, so they can concentrate on their thoughts around the discussion. Once they understand what happened, they can attempt the task again. This way learning will take place (if you allow it!).



When I originally started writing this book, I did so, as there were no books that I could find that really introduced me to driving instruction, as it was back then! That was back in 2016 and that version I lost due to a computer not liking me! I restarted writing in 2018. I was never happy with it, as I kept learning new information and wanted this to represent me as an individual. As the years went by, the Pandemic happened and books started to appear as people had time on their hands. I continued to develop my skills and improve my book. I have finally decided I need to bite the bullet and get it published. So here it is, over 8 years of development, that will not only help those considering being a driving instructor, but those more seasoned in the role. One driving instructor with almost 40 years of experience states "It'd a brilliant and eye opening". Why not buy a copy and see if they're correct!

Follow the link



THE BEST SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGE SIZES FOR 2026: FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM & TIKTOK

Alison Harper has worked in social media marketing for over ten years, marketing several UK-based organisations, such as volunteer centres, community cafés, car-parts suppliers, artists, authors, insurance brokers, mental health organisations, word artists, beauticians, driving schools and more. She provides specialist marketing services on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.



**ALISON
HARPER**

Are you using the correct image sizes for Facebook, Instagram and TikTok? If you've ever uploaded an image to social media only to find it's been cropped awkwardly or looks blurry, it may be because you're not using the correct size. Every platform displays images differently, and using the correct dimensions can make a huge difference to how professional your content appears. Here are the recommended image sizes for Facebook, Instagram and TikTok to help your posts look their best.

Facebook:

Facebook still offers a variety of post formats, but portrait images continue to dominate the news feed because they take up more screen space on mobile devices. If you're creating a multi-image post, you need to take image sizes into consideration. I recommend using the story size as the main image, then square for the others.

Feed Posts

- Recommended size: 1080 × 1350 pixels
- Aspect ratio: 4:5

This is currently the best-performing image size for most Facebook posts. It fills more of the screen without being cropped, making it ideal for promotions, announcements and educational content.

Square

- Size: 1080 × 1080 pixels
- Aspect ratio: 1:1

Reels and Stories

- Size: 1080 × 1920 pixels
- Aspect ratio: 9:16

Stories are designed for full-screen viewing on mobile, so vertical images and videos always provide the best experience.

Instagram - Feed Posts

- Recommended size: 1080 × 1440 pixels
- Aspect ratio: 4:5

This format allows your content to stand out while remaining perfectly optimised for the Instagram feed.



Stories and Reels

- Size: 1080 × 1920 pixels
- Aspect ratio: 9:16

Whether you're posting Stories or Reels, full-screen vertical content is essential. Keep important text and logos away from the very top and bottom of the screen to avoid them being covered by Instagram's interface.

TikTok

TikTok is built around vertical, mobile-first content. Although videos are the platform's main focus, images and photo carousels are becoming increasingly popular.

Videos and Photo Posts

- Recommended size: 1080 × 1920 pixels
- Aspect ratio: 9:16

When creating graphics for TikTok, avoid placing text too close to the edges, as captions and interface buttons can overlap your content.

Why Image Size Matters

Using the correct dimensions isn't just about appearance. Properly sized images can:

- Improve image quality.
- Reduce unwanted cropping.
- Create a more professional brand image.
- Increase engagement by taking up more space in users' feeds.
- Save time by avoiding the need to re-edit content after uploading.

One Design, Multiple Platforms

If you're looking for the simplest workflow, designing your graphics at 1080 × 1350 pixels works well for both Facebook and Instagram feed posts. For Stories, Reels and TikTok, create a separate version at 1080 × 1920 pixels. Reels filmed on a mobile phone will already be the required size. Great content deserves great presentation.

By using the correct image sizes, your posts will look sharper, more polished and more likely to catch the attention of your audience as they scroll.

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Wed 14th Oct
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Are We Teaching – or Creating the Conditions to Learn?

Nick Butters is an ADI with 19 years' experience and an ongoing interest in how people learn and develop. After years of working systematically, he has lived through a period of personal and professional reflection that reshaped how he understands learning and change. Through that experience, Nick has come to recognise what unboxing potential looks like at a personal level and believes that meaningful learning often requires going deep in order to extract what is simple, useful, and lasting.



NICK BUTTERS

Reflection is often associated with the conversation at the end of a lesson.

A summary of what was covered. What went well. What might be worked on next time. Those conversations have real value. They help consolidate learning, create continuity and provide direction for future lessons. But perhaps they represent just one opportunity to reflect. What if reflection plays a much wider role within everyday lessons?

LOOKING AT REFLECTION FROM THE OUTSIDE

The previous articles in this series explored Teaching & Learning Strategies, Lesson Planning and Risk Management. At first glance, reflection appears to be a fourth competency sitting alongside them. Perhaps it isn't.

Throughout every lesson we continually make professional judgements. As the learner's understanding develops, we adapt our teaching strategies, move away from our original lesson plan or rebalance the level of challenge. None of these decisions happen in isolation. They evolve as the lesson unfolds.

Perhaps reflection is one of the processes that allows those decisions to happen. Rather than being something reserved for the final few minutes of a lesson, reflection may be present from the moment instructor and learner begin working together. It may continue throughout every conversation, every decision and every adjustment, quietly influencing the direction the lesson takes.

REFLECTION THROUGHOUT THE LESSON

Reflection is sometimes viewed as something the learner should do. Perhaps it is more helpful to think of reflection as a shared process. As learners, we reflect on what we are noticing, understanding and finding challenging. As instructors, we reflect on what we are observing, whether learning is taking place and whether our current approach continues to meet the learner's needs.



The greatest value may not simply lie in both people reflecting. It may lie in both being prepared to share that thinking. As thinking becomes visible it can be questioned, clarified and developed. Learning becomes less about transferring knowledge and more about developing understanding together.

SUPPORTING REFLECTION WITHOUT PRESCRIBING IT

Lesson summaries, reflective questions and reflective logs can all make valuable contributions to learning. Rather than viewing these as reflection itself, perhaps they are better seen as opportunities to encourage reflection. Different learners are likely to reflect in different ways. Some will enjoy discussion. Others may prefer to write. Some may simply continue thinking between lessons before returning with a different understanding the following week. Perhaps our role is not to prescribe a particular method of reflection, but to create an environment in which meaningful reflection is more likely to occur.

REFLECTION RUNNING THROUGH THE PREVIOUS THREE COMPETENCIES

Viewed in this way, reflection doesn't simply sit alongside Teaching & Learning Strategies, Lesson Planning and Risk Management. It runs through them. Reflection allows us to evaluate whether our teaching strategy continues to support learning. It encourages lesson plans to remain responsive to the learner rather than the plan itself. It helps us continually balance challenge and safety as circumstances change. Rather than representing a fourth isolated competency, reflection may be one of the processes that connects the previous three.

A THOUGHT WORTH TAKING AWAY

Perhaps reflection makes its greatest contribution to everyday lessons not as a separate activity carried out at the end of a session, but as a continuous process that quietly supports every important teaching and learning decision we make. If the previous three articles have explored what we do as instructors, perhaps reflection encourages us to continually consider why we are doing it, whether it is working and what might help learning develop even further.

This article reflects my current understanding rather than settled conclusions.

WHY RETURNING DRIVERS NEED MORE THAN "YOU'LL REMEMBER"



BY CHRIS GREER
FOUNDER, GREER'S GEARS
AND SIMULATAYR

In the first two articles in this series, I focused on the pre-17 cohort and why attitudes need shaping before the first lesson. This one looks at the other end of the driving population: people who already have a licence, and who stopped driving for reasons entirely outside their control. Illness. Injury. A stroke, a breakdown, a bereavement, a long hospital stay, a period of mental health difficulty that made getting behind the wheel unthinkable. Sometimes it's simpler than that. Someone moved to a city, gave up the car, and ten years later needs it again. Whatever the cause, the result is the same. A licensed, once-competent driver who now has to get back in a car and isn't sure they still can.

We tell these people "it'll come back to you." Often it does. But that phrase does a disservice to how much has actually changed, both in the driver and in / upon the roads they're returning to.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS DURING A BREAK

Driving is a skill set built on layers; a little bit like creating a pizza – the base, sauce and then all the other ingredient layers that get added on. For the driver there's the mechanical layer, changing gear, checking mirrors, judging a gap and others. Then there's the automatic layer, the thousands of small decisions a driver stops consciously thinking about after enough practice. That second layer is what makes an experienced driver look relaxed behind the wheel, though we concede not all drivers 'feel' relaxed. Time away from driving doesn't erase the mechanical layer completely. Most returning drivers can still operate a car. What erodes is the automatic layer, the instinctive stuff, and confidence erodes even faster than skill does. A driver who hasn't been on a motorway in three years may not be short on knowledge. They're short on trust in their own reactions, trust in other road users, trust in the skill set still being there because 'it's been a while, but I'll give it a go, yikes!'.

For drivers returning after a medical event specifically, there's often a third factor. A stroke or a serious injury can genuinely change reaction time, visual processing, or physical capability. Those in themselves may also create a deeper, more personal confidence problem. That needs proper assessment, and in some cases input from an occupational therapist or medical professional before a road lesson is even appropriate.



We're always honest about that distinction with our clients. Simulation is a brilliant tool for confidence and skill transfer. It isn't a substitute for medical clearance and we will always advocate that medical clearance to drive is always sought before resuming under the guidance of a qualified ADI.

WHY THE ROAD LESSON IS THE WRONG STARTING POINT

Here's the problem with sending a returning driver straight back into a real car for their first session. The stakes are real from minute one. Real traffic, real consequences, an instructor watching, and a driver who is already anxious about what they might have forgotten. Anxiety narrows attention and slows reaction time. So, the environment most likely to expose a returning driver's weak points is also the environment least forgiving of them.

This is where a controlled simulator environment does something a road lesson structurally cannot. It lets someone rebuild the automatic layer before it's tested for real. Roundabouts, motorway merging, dual carriageways, night driving, all of it can be practised and repeated in a setting with zero real-world consequence for a stall, a missed mirror check, or a hesitant lane change.

Repetition without risk is the whole point. A returning driver can attempt a busy roundabout, get it wrong, and simply try it again thirty seconds later. In a real car, that same mistake might mean a horn blast from the car behind and a rattled driver for the rest of the lesson. Reinforcing the loss of confidence, anxiety increase, fear of driving etc.

THE SAME PRINCIPLE, A DIFFERENT AUDIENCE

Readers of the first two articles in this series will recognise the underlying idea. Simulation works because it separates the learning from the consequence. With pre-17 learners, that separation lets us challenge attitudes before real risk exists. With returning drivers, it lets us rebuild competence and confidence before real traffic is involved.

WHY RETURNING DRIVERS NEED MORE THAN "YOU'LL REMEMBER"



BY CHRIS GREER
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The debrief matters just as much here as it does with a 15 year old doing a beer goggles exercise. A returning driver who's just handled a motorway merge cleanly needs someone to name that out loud. Confidence doesn't rebuild itself from a good session. It rebuilds when a session is followed by a conversation that helps someone recognise what they just did well, and what still needs work.

We've also used the simulator for something slightly different but related: drivers switching from manual to automatic transmission with no prior automatic experience. The mechanical adjustment is smaller than most people expect, but the instinctive layer, reaching for a clutch that isn't there, is exactly the kind of thing that's better ironed out in a simulator than in Ayr rush hour traffic.

"Confidence doesn't rebuild itself from a good session. It rebuilds when a session is followed by a conversation that helps someone recognise what they just did well."

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR INDUSTRY

Returning drivers are an underserved group in the driving instruction world. There's no test to prepare for, no clear syllabus, and often a fair amount of embarrassment involved in admitting you need help with something you already have a licence for. Many instructors are excellent at handling this sensitively in the car. What's harder to offer in a traditional lesson is a genuinely safe space to fail repeatedly without an audience, a horn, or a fare meter running.

That's the gap simulation fills. Not instead of the road lesson, but before it, so that the first real road session is a driver demonstrating recovered competence rather than testing whether it's still there at all.

Chris Greer is the founder of Greer's Gears Driving School and SimulatAyr, based in Ayr, Scotland. SimulatAyr delivers simulation based driver education programmes for pre-17 learners, qualified drivers and driving professionals.

NEXT IN THE SERIES · Part four looks at what a structured debrief actually involves, and why the conversation after the session matters as much as the session itself.



TOPIC: PDI HELP

Ask Mia

More Information & Advice

Mia Strothers 14, died after being hit by a BMW as she walked to school on Lighthowne Road, Moston, on October 5 2020. She was killed by a driver who tested positive for cocaine and cannabis travelling at 57mph in a 30mph zone, in a BMW which he knew had faulty brakes. Mia was taken too soon, but her legacy lives on through her 'much loved' campaign raising money for The Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, and through her helpful nature in life...She was a very kind and very loving person.



Hi Mia:

"Should I choose a pupil who makes lots of mistakes for my standards check so I have plenty to talk about?"

MIA:

Choose a pupil whose learning needs allow you to demonstrate your normal professional practice. A lesson isn't stronger simply because more things go wrong. In fact, deliberately choosing situations likely to produce faults can distract from what really matters: identifying needs, agreeing meaningful outcomes and supporting development. The examiner needs to see you facilitate learning, not collect problems. Sometimes preventing a fault through good planning and appropriate support demonstrates far more than correcting one afterwards.

Hi Mia:

"I keep hearing different advice about what examiners want on a standards check. Who should I listen to?"

MIA:

Start with the published standard and official guidance rather than somebody else's interpretation of what an examiner supposedly likes. Advice can quickly become rules: ask this many questions, stay silent here, use this type of road, intervene at this point. Good teaching isn't that mechanical. Understand what the competencies are trying to assess, then demonstrate them through genuine work with your pupil. You're being assessed as a professional instructor – not on your ability to follow someone else's script.

Hi Mia:

"My standards check is coming up and I'm worried I need to change the way I normally teach."

MIA:

Try not to create a special 'standards check lesson'. The purpose is to demonstrate how effectively you work with the pupil in front of you, not how well you can perform a rehearsed version of a lesson. Plan appropriately, but then respond to what actually happens. If the pupil needs more support, give it. If they're ready for greater independence, allow it. Good teaching is adaptive. The strongest preparation is developing your everyday practice, not changing it for one hour.

Hi Mia:

"I'm worried my pupil won't make enough mistakes on my standards check. How will I show that I can teach?"

MIA:

Learning doesn't require something to go wrong. A pupil can develop understanding, judgement and independence without producing a collection of faults for you to fix. Look for evidence of development rather than evidence of failure. What are they noticing? What decisions are they making? What are they beginning to understand that they didn't before? Your job isn't to manufacture teaching opportunities. It's to recognise and respond to the learning opportunities that naturally emerge.



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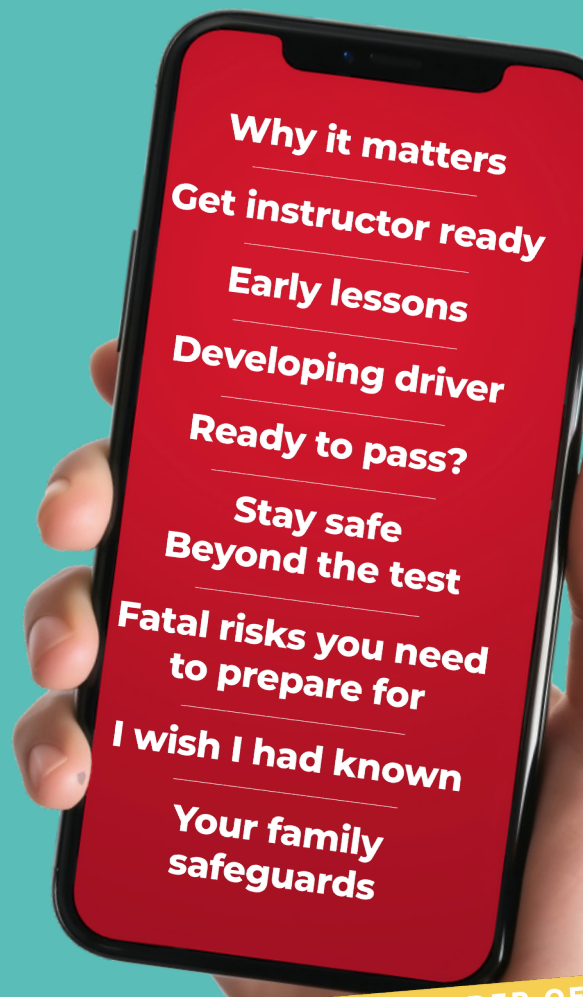
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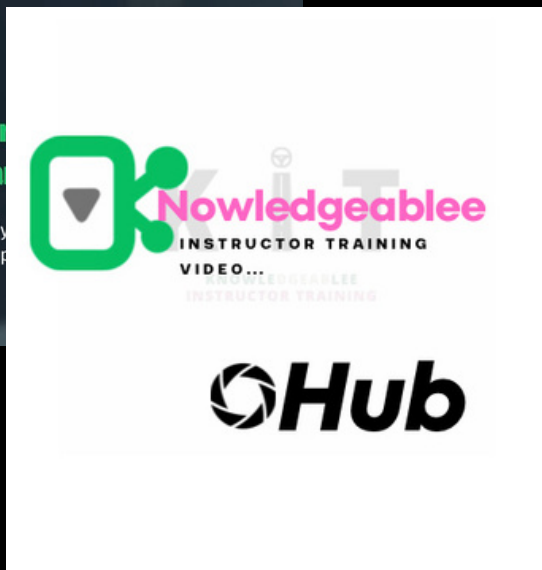
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We're Back in October...