Do’s & Don’ts for Instructors

The following are suggestions for improving the hunter education instructor’s performance in a teaching situation. They are based on my personal experiences as a hunter education instructor and public school educator. Use these as a basis to develop your own personal style of instruction.

25 Do’s for Hunter Education Instructors

- **DO** prepare the teaching material. Study the lesson well in advance of the class. Being well prepared is key to overcoming any nervousness in speaking to an audience.
- **DO** prepare the classroom. Be sure you have adequate comfortable seating. Check audiovisual equipment or PA system beforehand to be sure all is in good working order.
- **DO** coordinate with the facility operators to be sure the teaching facility is available on the dates planned.
- **DO** communicate, prior to the class, with assisting instructors, to assign or clarify their part of the instruction.
- **DO** greet the students as they arrive.
- **DO** present yourself as a clean, well-groomed, take-charge instructor.
- **DO** speak clearly with sufficient volume to be heard.
- **DO** have sufficient class materials available, i.e., student manuals, pencils, tests, etc.
- **DO** make eye contact with your students.
- **DO** introduce the staff and guests and make announcements regarding facilities, breaks, and schedule.
- **DO** begin and end the class sessions on time.
- **DO** acknowledge students who ask questions.
- **DO** respond positively to the students even if incorrect answers are given.
- **DO** teach the lesson exactly as designed by your state or province.
- **DO** recognize the reading and comprehension levels of the students. Your instruction may have to be somewhat flexible to accommodate slower students.
- **DO** wear something that identifies the instructor(s).
- **DO** use humor when or where appropriate.
- **DO** smile!
- **DO** give clear, simple instructions regarding testing.
- **DO** thank the students for their attention and participation.
- **DO** file class reports with proper agency administrators in a timely manner.
- **DO** thank the instructors who assisted with the class.
- **DO** thank facility operators or class sponsors.
- **DO** evaluate the student’s response to testing. What areas of instruction require more or less emphasis?
- **DO** evaluate yourself. Can you identify areas where you need to improve?

25 Don’ts for Hunter Education Instructors

- **DON’T** assume anything. Proper planning prevents poor performance.
- **DON’T** take the teaching of the hunter education course lightly. You have a very serious responsibility to the students.
- **DON’T** assume that every student wants to be there. You must involve and challenge every student and keep his or her attention.
- **DON’T** allow students to sleep, put their heads down, read unnecessary materials, or do anything that indicates they aren’t paying attention.
- **DON’T** answer your own questions!
- **DON’T** ever use profanity in a teaching situation!
- **DON’T** ever criticize a student.
- **DON’T** ever touch a student without their permission.
✘ DON'T pass around training aids to students while teaching. They won’t hear anything you say while they examine the object.

✘ DON'T use training aids too small to see from the back of the classroom.

✘ DON'T use language over the heads of the youngest students.

✘ DON'T teach if you have bad breath, body odor, or other personal habits that might divert students’ attention.

✘ DON'T always assume all your instructors will show up to teach. Be prepared to teach all material if they don’t.

✘ DON'T use visual aid items (videos, slides, etc.) if all students can’t see them clearly.

✘ DON'T allow other instructors to interrupt you without being recognized to speak.

✘ DON'T teach stuck behind a lectern. Move around, eyes will follow movement.

✘ DON'T speak in a monotone voice. You’ll put the students to sleep quickly.

✘ DON'T voluntarily contribute technical material that will likely be beyond the understanding of your students. Teach the curriculum.

✘ DON'T let one student monopolize all the questions or all the answers.

✘ DON'T let students waste valuable teaching time on “What if” questions or personal stories.

✘ DON'T waste the students’ time with long personal stories irrelevant to teaching topic.

✘ DON’T allow students to handle firearms in the classroom without direct instructor supervision.

✘ DON’T ridicule any student who fails to pass the course.

✘ DON’T allow an adult or other student to publicly berate a student who fails the course.

✘ DON'T feel sorry and pass a failing student anyway. Your safety, my safety, and the public's safety are at stake!