

Flying With an Instructor

A Brief Essay About Teaching Techniques

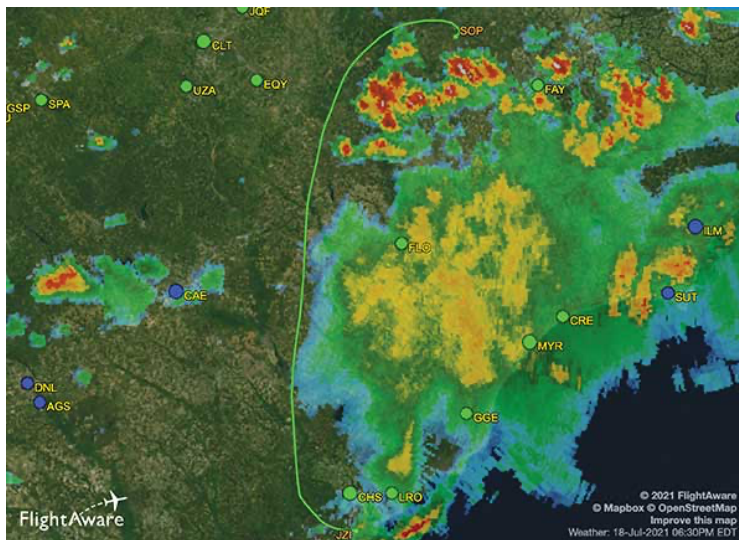


Flying With an Instructor: A Brief Essay About Teaching Techniques

By Mike Jones

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Instructors can be problematic; I've had great ones and I've had a couple I've had to fire. I've had instructors scream at me. I've had instructors literally hit my hand away from an instrument. I've had instructors who barely spoke and some who wouldn't shut up; both were poor learning environments.



This was a memorable flight and tested my personal minimums. Strong convection was drifting from west to the east across my route of flight. ATC advised me that other planes were transiting the storm without problems, but I felt this was too much risk. I parked in South Carolina, went to lunch with some charter pilots flying a Lear, and then flew around the back of the storm. I was home for dinner and scarcely got wet.

A good instructor should be aware of the student's skill level and be careful not to over-stress the student with too-challenging situations. For example, one should not push a novice into strong turbulence, crosswinds, or heavy precipitation. Those are better left for more sophisticated students. A little bit of wind? No problem.

Stratus ceilings at 1500 feet?

A good environment for pattern work. But I've been airborne when the

turbulence was so severe I literally could not read the gauges, much less change a radio frequency. That would not be a good learning situation.

Technically, with an instructor on-board the applicable personal minimums are those of the instructor, not the student. And, I will concede, some students need to be coaxed out of their safety zone to fly on more challenging days or more taxing maneuvers. If the student isn't sweating, they're not learning.

But a student also is a customer, with different skills and at different needs and fears. Many instructors will take students out in dubious conditions because they need the money or the hours. Their motivation may not be to deliver a quality training experience to the student but some benefit to themselves.

A student pilot should be aware when they're in the air it is they who are the customer and it is the student who should be m.

About the Author

Mike Jones is a 4,000 hour commercial-rated pilot who has more than 50 aircraft types in his logbook. His pride and joy is a Cessna T210, which has carried him to every corner of the U.S. and Canada for more than twenty years. He's always accessible at PilotMike2012@gmail.com.

