

TEACHING SKILLS

Objectives

How to Train the Trainer

Learn the TEAM Method of Teaching Skills

Make Learning Skills Fun

Understand Leadership Training

When you teach a skill, whether it is to boys or to other adults, know the skill cold. When you begin your explanation, the student will be paying careful attention. So if you start out with, “First turn the knob to the right,” and then correct yourself, “No, sorry, I meant to the left,” the jumble of conflicting images will interfere with learning.



There are two ways people demonstrate a skill; like a pianist or a typist. Both use a keyboard. But all that matters to the typist's mind is striking the right keys in the right order. The pianist gives more thought to how the keys are struck. Try hunting and pecking your way through a Beethoven sonata! Successfully teaching a skill is a live performance, so be a pianist rather than a typist. Give thought to how you demonstrate the skill. Call the students by name. Show genuine enthusiasm about the topic and a genuine desire to help.



Training the Trainer

Having a skill and teaching a skill are two different things. The necessary elements to make a good teacher out of a good tradesman are:

- **Communication Skills** – The ability to express certain concepts verbally or manually that the student needs to succeed.
- **Avoid Distractions** – This includes avoiding unnecessary digressions and distracting behavior such as annoying body language or a noisy/inappropriate environment.
- **Have Patience** – What seems easy to you may seem impossible to them. If you try to pressure them to pay attention or try harder when those are not the real problems, you may very well make the skill impossible for them to learn.
- **Relationship Skills** – You are the teacher and he is the pupil, but both of you want the same thing to happen ... learning. You are full partners in achieving this goal.
- **Build on Previous Skills** – If skills are taught

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properly, advanced skills are combinations of—or variations of—simpler skills learned earlier.

The “Team” Method

Every skill learned goes through three stages:

when you can’t get it right, when you can get it right, and when you can’t get it wrong. You were born at stage one. To get yourself and your students to stage two where you can get it right, use TEAM-work:

You are not doing a boy a favor to pass him on a test simply because he tried hard.

- TELL the student about the skill
- EXHIBIT the skill
- ASSIST them in doing it themselves
- MEASURE success by testing them unaided

To get students to stage three where they can’t get it wrong, use the “Three P’s”:

Practice, Practice, and more PRACTICE.

You will notice that the fourth P was intentionally left out: PROMOTION. You are not doing a boy a favor to pass him on a test simply because he tried



hard. When he moves out into the world of men, his boss, his wife, and his clients will not give him points just for trying hard. Don’t raise false expectations about what quests Trailmen can win armed with the sword of good intentions.

- **Tell** – Avoid jargon, though you may need to teach Trailmen new terms so they can communicate clearly. One thing you want to tell the student is why it is important. Before you teach someone to tie a bowline, mention that it forms a non-slip loop for rescue.
- **Exhibit** – When you exhibit a skill, don’t just do it quickly. Make sure the individual parts that make up the entire skill are clearly shown. As you tie the bowline, you might recite a mnemonic (memory aid) such as, “The rabbit comes out of the hole, goes around the tree, and back into the hole.”
- **Assist** – You may stand behind the Trailman to show him how to tie a bowline on himself rather than tie one around yourself while facing him. By not having to reverse the knot, the Trailman learns the skill more easily. When it appears they can do it on their own, go to the next step...
- **Measure** – You want your student to succeed, but success means they can perform the skill when you are not around to prompt them with hand gestures, little hints spoken to them, or any other body language. When they can pass the test cleanly, they truly have reason to be proud.

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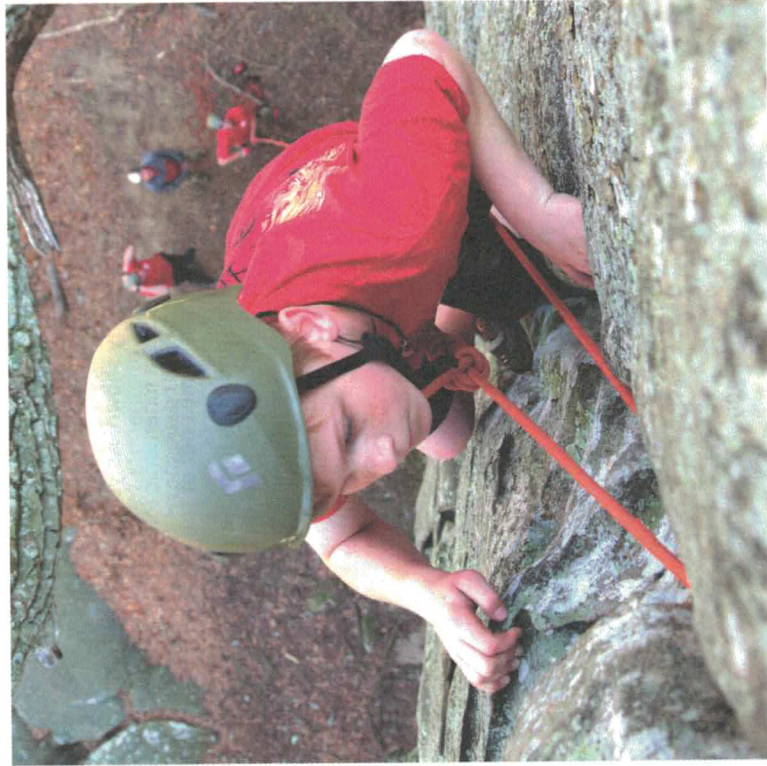
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Learning Can Be Fun

Learning is naturally fun, but all the fun can be drained out of it when it becomes more discipline than discovery. The best way to teach skills is for each skill to stimulate curiosity about the more advanced skill that builds upon it. This turns learning a series of related skills into a voyage of discovery. One of the best ways to do this is to forget the chalkboard and slide projector entirely. Bring ropes, spars, canvas, and cookware instead. Roll up your



sleeves and get involved.

Show that the skills being taught will enable the Trailman to do something enjoyable later. That's what makes putting on a wetsuit more exciting than putting on an overcoat.

Reduce the time spent talking between hands-on experiences by breaking long lectures into a series of steps. These should fit neatly within the attention span of the Trailmen. Remember, you can lecture older boys a bit longer than you can the younger ones.

Where possible, start with steps that have immediate application. Think about your first lesson with a musical instrument where you were taught to play the simple tune "Hot Cross Buns" or "Mary Had a Little Lamb" so you could leave with a feeling of accomplishment from day one.


Leadership Skills

There are two broad goals of Troop leadership: action and growth. Leadership for Action will help you have successful activities. Leadership for Growth will help you have successful meetings.

The Three Leadership for Action Skills are:

- **Determine Potential** – Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the group. Ask yourself what the group could do with the right training and experience.
- **Make a Plan** – Draw up a desirable goal that is within the group's potential. See what skills and experiences are needed to reach it.

Leadership for Action will help you have successful activities.

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- **Meet Your Potential** – Through teaching and practice, prepare to achieve the goal. Pay special attention to the individual needs of members, as no two are alike.

The Four Leadership for Growth Skills are:

Leadership for Growth will help you have successful meetings.

- **Effective Communication** – Ensure a good two-way flow of information by using good listening and speaking skills. When people know what they should be doing and how they should be doing it, they will function much better. As a leader, you will benefit from feedback, and you should listen as carefully to constructive criticism as you do to praise.
- **Leadership by Example** – People are more apt to do what you do rather than what you say. Your actions should show that you are still very much a part of the group.
- **Sharing Leadership** – Delegating authority frees you up to focus on the overall direction, but it is also an important part of continuing the growth of the people you lead.
- **Building Trust** – The most important dynamic of a group is specialization, the ability of each member to bring his full attention to one task and do it well, relying on others to carry out the other needed chores. This system only works well where there is trust in the willingness and ability of others to do their jobs.

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