

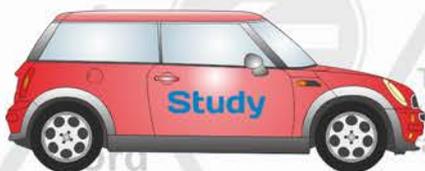


DRIVER ACTIVE[®]

your shortcut to **L** test success



PUPIL RECORDS INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES





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Introduction

These notes cover the following topics...

Do you remember...?

This is a short story about using visual aids. (So why is it in the record keeping section? Read on to find out!)

Pupil records to keep your business...

Instructors with adequate teaching skills sometimes lose business because their learners feel that they are not making progress. Here you will find out how accurate pupil progress records will help you keep your customers.

Designing a record system...

This simple overview of the progress record design process will help you to understand and best utilise the DriverActive Records.

Periodic review...

Keeping your learners in touch with their longer term progress will help to keep them in touch with you!

DVSA Standards Check relevance

The main areas that will be affected by keeping (or failing to keep) accurate records are:

Recap at the start (lesson intro)

In order to accurately recap (or review) the previous lesson you need a ‘memory jogger’ for both yourself and your learner. By allowing your pupil to have input into your record system you will help him to take some of the responsibility for his own learning – this accelerates the learning process and boosts motivation.

Planning – Goal setting

The starting point for all plans is an assessment of needs (or desires). While your syllabus forms the foundation for all ‘global’ lesson planning (that is, the plan for the whole lesson and course), the record system keeps track of how the plan is progressing at any given time and provides the information needed to make your syllabus flexible enough to cope with a range of differing learner abilities and learning styles and personal goals.

Recap at the end (lesson conclusion)

In order to maximise learning and motivation, your lesson summary (or review) needs to show specific areas in which progress has been made. The only tangible ‘evidence’ is a comparison between ‘before and after’ and a measurement against the goals that were discussed at the outset of a lesson.

This information needs to be written down if it is to have the desired impact at the end of the lesson.





Do you remember?

I've always strived to adopt a customer-centred approach to training and deliver the best customer care possible. As part of this 'customer centred approach' I have continued to look for things that can help to improve the services I offer...

This is a short story about the time that I discovered visual aids.

Now, before you read this story, you must bear in mind that I trained to be an instructor in the 1970's and at that time no one told me how useful visual material can be – in fact there were no proprietary visual aids available. After reading a teacher training manual (that was written for primary school teachers) I decided that it would be a good idea to have a set of 'stock' diagrams to help with my in-car presentation – rather than the scribble pad I had been using up to that point.

To cut a long story short, I was teaching the turn-in-the-road to a young man whose grasp of English wasn't very good.

“I know what to do” (I thought) “use a visual aid to get the message across, that will help my learner to learn quicker and easier” (customer care).

I took out my newly drawn teaching aids, selected the appropriate diagram and explained the manoeuvre step-by-step. I was amazed at how much better he understood the concept on this occasion compared to when we had covered other new topics in the past. Visual aids were certainly a customer care hit!

I then went on to talk him through the manoeuvre and just before the final leg of the turn I explained what to do next...

“Oh” he said, “Just like when we did it on the last lesson”.

At this point I wanted the ground to open up and swallow me!

From that point on I discovered a new 'customer care' essential – *a pupil record system*.

Strangely enough my learner didn't seem to mind the fact that I had just wasted ten minutes of his lesson time explaining a manoeuvre that we had covered before (maybe he thought that we would always have a full briefing for the turn?).

My experience teaching the same subject for the first time – twice – might not be that usual, however, problems that arise because of poor record keeping are a lot more common than you might imagine.

For example, have you ever found yourself in a situation when, with only with five minutes of the lesson left, your learner asks “Aren’t we going to do the reversing (or whatever) this week; I thought that you said we would?”

This learner has been looking forward to something, possibly studying at home, and you let him down simply because you forgot. How’s that for customer care? Incidentally, I’ve asked over two-hundred and fifty instructors if this has ever happened to them – they all replied with a rather sheepish “Yes”.



Pupil records to keep your business

Your record system is one of the main foundations of good customer care. It's essential to keep track your learners' progress and keep other relevant information to hand so that it's readily available when you need it. It is also essential that, having developed, or bought a system, that you always use it!

Many 'good' instructors have lost pupils over the years because of poor training course management.

All learners hit a 'learning plateau' at some point in their training. That is, their progress seems to slow to a halt. The length of this 'consolidation' period varies from learner to learner – if your training management is not up-to-scratch you risk losing pupils during the 'plateau' period(s).

Ready for test?

A driving instructor has a learner who needs about thirty hours to reach test standard.

After about fifteen hours, having mastered the basics and perhaps visiting the test area, this learner starts to ask the instructor about the driving test. The instructor's response will often be "You're not ready just yet, ask me next week".

Now, after two or three weeks of this, the learner starts to think that the instructor is simply stringing out the training and he will often find an excuse to stop taking lessons (holidays, sickness, run out of money, etc.).

By using a record system to demonstrate that progress has been made and to show the remaining areas to be covered before test standard is reached problems like this can be avoided.

When a learner is aware of the 'big picture' (that is, where he is in relationship to the goal of passing his driving test), and when he agrees with the instructor about the progress made, he is less likely to seek training elsewhere. A simple effective record keeping system will keep all of your learners in touch with this information – and will help to keep them motivated.

Designing a record system

Like learning to drive, the design of a record keeping system is easy when you follow a step-by-step process. So where do you start designing an easy-to-use system? In terms of training progress, the starting point is a structured training programme such as the DriverActive programme or similar.

When you have sorted out a structured syllabus you need to decide what other information you need to keep about your learners and then design a form (or forms) to store that information (the form can be handwritten and photocopied – the important thing is that it must be functional).

More adventurous instructors will now be using iPads or other tablets, however, a ring-binder with photocopied sheets is ideal; or perhaps a box of index cards. The storage system that you choose must be quick and easy to use in the car and easily ‘accessible’ for both you and your learners.

Whatever method you use to keep records, you must ensure that the information recorded is an agreed account of progress, arrived at in discussion with learner, and not just your own ‘expert’ opinion of the learner’s progress.

Course records

Your record system will have a master record sheet that allows a quick overview of progress to date to enable learners to see at a glance where they are in relationship to the driving test (their ultimate goal). This can simply be a list of the main topics that make up your syllabus.

Next, you need to decide how to measure progress at each step.

I have seen all sorts of examples of progress record systems and they all seem to fall down at this point. Remember, your system must be functional. If it's over complex, you won't bother to use it, or even worse, you'll stop using it part-way through the training.

There are three basic levels of competence that your learners can achieve. The level needs to be recorded.

Three levels of progress

- The subject has been introduced
- The learner can accomplish a given task with occasional prompts or questions from the instructor on the move.
- The learner can accomplish a given task unaided.

Simple tick boxes will allow easy recording of the level your learner has reached (try gold stars instead of ticks, you'll be amazed at how grown men and women are motivated by simple gold star achievements).

The second level 'The learner can accomplish a given task with occasional prompts or questions from the instructor on the move.' Will often be the starting point if you use a coaching approach to your training.

The final level 'The learner can accomplish a given task unaided' does not mean that your learner is 'perfect' – it means that there are no serious errors and that mistakes are of a minor nature and caused by generic reasons such as a brief lapse of concentration rather than a lack of understanding or skill with the specific topic.

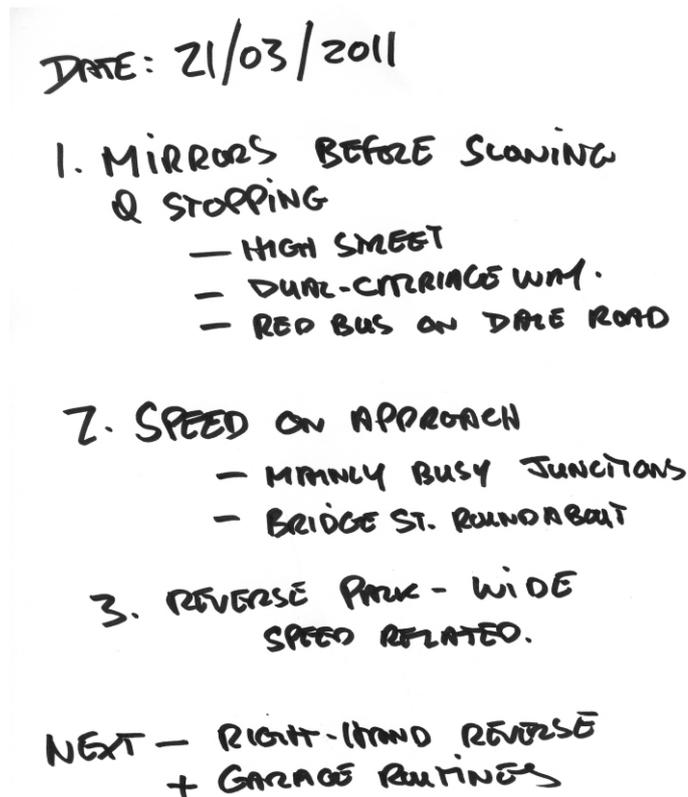
Weekly records

In addition to the general overview offered by the course record, you need to have provision for specific lesson-to-lesson detail. This can simply be a blank sheet for 'lesson notes', clipped to the master sheet.

Your lesson notes should include no more than three or four items for improvement after each lesson (this will keep your training focused). You can also record new subjects to be covered next lesson on this sheet. This is a record of specific achievements and targets from lesson to lesson and is absolutely essential. You can start keeping 'week-to-week' records now. All you need is a pen and blank sheet of paper!

The best time to fill in the record sheets is probably during the discussion phase at the end of the lesson or after a specific task has been accomplished.

Week to week records do not necessarily need to be tidy – it is the functionality that is important.



Periodic review

I have already discussed the benefit of keeping your learners informed about their progress. To a degree, the recap at the end of each lesson provides information about progress; however, it can be useful to build a more formal appraisal/review process into your training courses.

At the outset of a course of lessons, explain that you will have a formal review of progress at set intervals, perhaps after every six hours of training. During this review you can look at progress to date against targets, strengths and weaknesses, ways to increase the speed of learning and so on. Allow between five and ten minutes extra during the lesson for these reviews.

By reviewing progress across a range of lessons you can direct attention more to the course as a whole, rather than a series of fragmented lessons.

This has both commercial and training benefits. Remember, learners who can see the ‘big picture’ are less likely to seek training elsewhere – they are also more likely to understand the need for a sufficient amount of training. As test requirements become stiffer this will become even more important.

Summary

Keeping accurate customer records will make your work easier and more enjoyable.

Records show your customers that you care about them.

Records keep both you and your customer in touch with the 'big picture' and this provides an essential aid for motivation.

Accurate records increase the probability that your pupils will learn quicker through better motivation.

Your master record sheet should follow a structured programme – but allow flexibility for individual learners.

Information about progress is best made at three levels on the master record sheet.

A sheet for week-to-week notes should contain about three areas for improvement after each lesson.

Periodic review helps to keep learners in touch with the big picture – and important motivational aid.

