

Coaching debate: it's an option, but it's not the only option

I PURCHASED A COPY of *Can Drivers Really Teach Themselves?* by Ian Edwards. Besides being an ADI since 1988, Ian has a long list of accomplishments.

He was the only UK ADI on the Hermes project; one of the founders of the controversial A2om driving school and e-learning system; and, of course, besides many other notable achievements, is a well-respected exponent of coaching within the driver training industry.

So having read his book, has it changed my attitude towards coaching in the driver training industry? NO, it definitely hasn't. In fact, having had a conversation with Ian about coaching and his book, he confirmed a great deal of the points I have made in previous articles.

I have, however, learned a great deal that even without taking a coaching course, I can, and already have put into practice. It's too soon to assess the benefits in a truly demonstrative way but I certainly believe (and feel) that there is a positive difference.

The most important point is that, besides what many coaches in the industry espouse, or at least appear to, coaching is a very useful and important tool in the driving instructor's tool box, but it isn't the ONLY tool. All the (positive) methods of communication that we can use, including instruction, are very important and necessary teaching qualities.

As mentioned in a recent article, the forums that I have been reading have many people discussing deep and profound questions in even deeper and more profound language. Ian Edwards doesn't appear to be involved in these discussions and furthermore sympathised with my opinion that they appear to be nothing more than a way to ensnare the unwary into feeling the need to buy and take a coaching course.

Thrusting coaching down the throat of every ADI (which is the feeling I got when at the brunt end of a 'fire and brimstone' type sermon from Sir John Whitmore at the University of East London 18 months or so

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A new ADI bible – or over-hyped? Can Drivers Really Teach Themselves?

ago) is akin to shouting at a learner driver that hasn't yet mastered a particular aspect of driving!

It is, in fact, the complete antithesis of coaching. This is where my cynicism is, with these 'great' exponents of coaching. They appear to be telling us what to do when instead they should be using methods of coaching to persuade us. Rather than acting as a benevolent force of persuasion, they're quite possibly trying to squeeze money out of instructors that may not actually benefit from it and almost certainly, in this current climate, can ill afford it.

Having vented my feelings, if you want to get a very good insight and introduction into coaching methods, you could do a lot worse than read Ian Edwards' book. I think it's very informative, interesting and more precisely, it does exactly what it says on the tin. The 'sub text' is that, if we get into the idea that learners in effect, can teach themselves a lot more than they realise, then surely instructors also have the potential to improve their own performance as well?

Besides this, the book is a lot more affordable than a coaching course (although it may not be a substitute for a good one!).

One last note: no, I'm not getting any

royalties or payments from Ian Edwards. I just sincerely believe that it would be of great use to any one that chooses to read it.

In the meantime ...

Check test

Thank you to Karl Satloka and John Lepine for good advice given to me before my role-play fleet check test.

It was the first time that I'd taken a role-play check test and the first time that I'd taken a fleet check test and to be honest, I found the task quite daunting.

The examiner's portrayal of a high mileage company car driver with attitude was very realistic and certainly didn't make it easy for me, as should be the case. I received a very good grade at the end of it. Interestingly we had a very good discussion about coaching afterwards, as apparently, he had received a coaching course through DSA. I'm definitely going to have to 'bite the bullet' and go for a (coaching) course, but which one though? Any suggestions (printable) would be most appreciated.

Fleet awards

I noticed that the 'road safety' charity Brake has its fleet awards ceremony coming up. There are a couple of companies included in the awards that regrettably I and, I imagine, many other road users in London have had great experience of.

I will not mention any names, however, I can tell you that having seen the way the majority of their drivers drive, I'd hate to be on the same road as any of the runners up if the winners' standards are anything to go by.

For me, it's just another box-ticking, shout-out-loud, self-congratulatory load of old toot.



Contact

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Please ensure emails contain the subject

Trainees' Licence Scheme

Further to my previous article on the expected demise of the above scheme, writes Tony Phillips, I received the following email from a member named Ronnie.

Hi Tony,

I have just read your article regarding PDIs in this month's MSA magazine.

I was a trainee licence user and found it invaluable in assisting me through my Part 3 exam. During my trainee period I was never asked if I was qualified but I let my pupils know that I was a trainee and if they were not satisfied with my teaching I would put them on to a qualified instructor – none opted for

before retiring tutored me as well.

I was always under the impression that if you were a PDI then you would be teaching pupils everything you were learning (this being the up-to-date teachings) but it appears that it is not always the case.

I find this annoying as we, as instructors, should be working hard to give pupils value for money as it is the pupils that are doing us the favour (not the other way round) by asking us to teach them.

I do think, as you do, that the trainee system was worthwhile and I would like to see it introduced in some other form as it helps the PDI learn the ropes with real

