Dear Colleagues

**Teaching shooters and education students**

**The Problem:**every rifle shooter needs to master many techniques if he/she is to group within 1 MOA V-bull (TR) or the 0.5 MOA X-ring (F Class). As an illustration, all shooters (TR and F Class) could easily master the technique to avoid a tremor, which causes a minute movement of the muzzle at the moment a projectile is released. Yet few shooters have been taught this technique. This is apparent when 90 percent of TR shooters produce a group the size of the bullseye (2 MOA). Similarly, the vast majority of F Class shooters produce a 1-2 MOA group, larger than the 6-ring and smaller than the bullseye. The characteristic effect when a tremor occurs at the moment of release, is a wide group surrounding a small number of shots in the centre. The small group in the centre results from shots not being released at the same time as a tremor.

A coach in rifle shooting should be able to advise on all techniques. Another common technique difficulty is avoiding change of the natural point of aim. TR shooters experience this as a result of the movement of muscle groups anywhere in the body. Whereas, F Class shooters experience it as a result of the way the hand and fingers apply tensions to the pistol grip. Of course, this also affects TR shooters. However, they mostly cause a group change to occur when they adjust the comfort of their pelvic girdle or move a foot by as little as 1 cm.

Similarly, most have never learned to support the rifle dead still while releasing the trigger or to follow-through upon releasing a live round.

For decades rifle shooters have thought they could teach themselves all the techniques. Many start out trying to remember difficulties and how they solved them. However, rifle shooters who set out to reinvent the wheel, do not live long enough. Coaches who know all the techniques and strategies, together with the exact procedures to be used, are able to teach this much more effectively. It is the same for students who study subjects such as physics and mathematics.

This article shows that a shooting coach and a teacher of mathematics/science subjects are both able to assist learners to become leaders in their fields and to study further. But why do shooters persist in trying to learn without a coach? Students at school have their lifelong careers ruined for a very different reason. This results from very few teachers really being able to teach physics and mathematics. As a result, their students conclude they do not have the ability to learn and so, they forego a university education in engineering, science and medicine, simply because they have been led to believe they do not have a mathematical brain. Yet, there are super-teachers who can get nearly every student to pass their university-entrance examinations in these subjects. Shooters on the other hand rarely seek out a coach.

**Discussion:**perhaps the most important aspect of learning to shoot under a successful coach is that learners are taught to rely upon practical experience in shooting techniques (equivalent to problem-solving calculations by the student in physics and mathematics). Obtaining practical experience, while learning about shooting techniques, is the most effective way for a learner to grow and extend connections within the brain. Super-teachers have taught this way for generations, taking learners to the limit of their brain potential and further.

Possibly the greatest handicap is the person who undertakes to coach or teach. Teachers of rifle shooting or science have in many instances never attained the heights to which a learner aims to achieve. As a result a coach may not be able to see whether a technique has been mastered correctly. Since most shooters have never been taught at all, they are unaware how to intentionally produce a V-bull or X-ring group. In schools, inappropriate teachers advise about 90 percent of students that they do not have the potential to undertake a university degree and commence a career in science, medicine, engineering, computer science, statistics or law.

For the past century this has been the greatest shame of western countries. Inappropriate teachers fail to teach mathematics or science subjects properly, then stupidly tell learners they do not have the ability to undertake a university course leading to a professional career. As a result the vast majority of highly capable young people are forced to seek any kind of employment, other than the one their teachers were unable to assist them to enter. If taught by an appropriately experienced super-teacher, then students may realise their ambitions.

Shooters will in various ways learn to release shots without tremors (TR and F Class), without change of the natural point of aim (TR and F Class), to hold the rifle dead still (TR) and to release shots with the mind focussed right to the moment of release (TR and F Class). Those who do not learn these simple techniques will not become leading shooters.

**Practical:**  whether coaching or teaching, the learner:

* soon finds that rifle shooting is only taught on the firing point (i.e. no classes or lectures), whereas the education student learns in a classroom, in a laboratory and at home
* is helped to understand that an amount of work is required from him/her matched by that of the coach or teacher. The learner is helped to rise to the required level of achievement, such as the skill of a leading shooter or acceptance by a university to study for a degree
* the rifle shooter receives a detailed list of every technique and strategy to be mastered, while the student is advised to obtain a reference text containing problems and solutions
* each type of learner is advised that the management cycle will be used, where the learner receives detailed information about the topic or technique, from which results are monitored, followed by monthly formative tests, which lead to a list to be immediately retaught and relearned
* each type of learning is completed at the end of the year with a Queen’s Prize meeting of an Australian State rifle association or a summative examination, conducted by an Australian university
* whether in the context of a rifle club or a class of students, the learner is further assisted to buildself-esteemandinternal locus of control, through the management ofacceptance and belongingand as well,self-efficacy.

**Conclusion:**confirmation of the results of having been taught is obtained when shooters compete at a Queen’s Prize meeting, whether in A or B/C grades.

The very similar method of coaching and learning is equivalent in rifle shooting and education. However the question arises: how far can a learner’s brain be extended through effective teaching? Teachers have for generations set out to educate a person to the limit of their potential. Poorly-taught learners do not even reach their potential claimed by a teacher.

At the present time, rifle shooters are not taught by club coaches because they all compete with each other for the club championship. What a hollow win: experienced versus beginners.

In education, a super-teacher is able to assist 60 to 80 percent of students to achieve an ATAR score of 90 or more (Australian Tertiary Acceptance Rating). In contrast, most secondary schools that prepare students to enter universities, work with an ATAR of 70 as the goal, which is achieved by 40 percent of their students. This is a huge difference from that of super- or competent teachers, who are able to assist 90 percent of young people to attain their longed-for careers.

Best regards

Geoff