



Top Tips To Help You Make The Most of Your Assessment

For most people, myself included, assessments can be a daunting experience, so I thought I'd pass on some tips from my experiences of being assessed and assessing others so that you can get the best possible result. In preparing this article, I have taken information from the many coaches and instructors that have been instrumental in my own development. They know who they are and I'd like to say thank you to them all for making me the coach / instructor / provider / assessor that I am today.

Tip One - Choose Your Provider

Most providers want you to pass so it's worthwhile doing a bit of research and choosing a provider that has a good reputation and that is respected in the industry. Ask your friends and colleagues who they have used and what they thought about their experience.

Tip Two - Prior Preparation

Make sure you understand the syllabus and what you will need to demonstrate during the assessment. If there are any stipulations to the number of days/hours/experience required before taking the assessment, consider this as the minimum required. The more time you spend practicing will increase your fluency at assessment. A good friend once told me *'If You Fail To Prepare Then You Prepare To Fail'* and unfortunately, I have seen this on a number of occasions. Thinking back to my own assessments, where things didn't go as well as I had hoped, I can see now that in some cases, I just hadn't done enough preparation! I always think that a good rule of thumb is to aim to do 50% more than the minimum requirement.

Tip Three - Enjoy It

We all love what we do, that's why we do it and want to introduce others to the sport. Relax and forget about your assessor and let your knowledge and enthusiasm for the sport shine through.

Tip Four - Do What You Do

You have done the preparation so just do what you normally do as it will generally be slicker and look more natural than trying to second guess what you think the assessor wants to see. If the assessor really wants to see you use a particular technique they will normally ask.

Tip Five - Keep an Open Mind

There is more than one way to do most things so don't compare what you have done or will do with another candidate's method of solving a problem. Both methods can be equally valid so just do what you normally do. Take note of what others do because you can pick up some great ideas for your own personal development. However, don't try something new on assessment because the chances are that something won't go quite as you expect.

Tip Six - If in Doubt / It's OK Not to Know All the Answers

If you are unsure of what's been asked for then ask questions to clarify. Assessors want you to pass and will be quite happy to clarify things for you. If you don't know the answer be honest and say so. We can't have all the answers all the time and honesty is often the best approach and shows a human side.

Tip Seven - We all Make Mistakes

Sometimes, things don't always go to plan. If things go a little awry then don't beat yourself up about it, we all make mistakes. The ability to recover the situation is far more important and shows the assessor that you are on top of the game. I like to call these moments learning points.

Tip Eight - Let the Assessor Know What You're Thinking

Believe it or not, assessors are not mind readers and may ask questions to understand your thought process. It can help if you verbalise what you are doing so the assessor knows why you have chosen a particular way to solve the problem. This is also helpful if you realise you could have dealt with a situation more effectively. It shows the assessor that you are prepared to critique and develop your own way of doing things, rather than sticking to a set formula.

Pointing out something you've seen to your assessor can often spark quite an interesting debate in the group. This can often be as simple as a wild flower or the complex issue of

Tip 9 - Enhance the Experience

When assessing for leadership awards - the question I ask myself is, 'Would I trust this person to provide an interesting, safe and informative activity session?' Take a balanced view when assessing risk and adventure. Overdoing safety can really remove the fun from the activity, whereas, not assessing risks properly, for your clients, leads to misadventure.

Tip 10 - Remember It's Just Another Day Out

We are observed every time we take part in an activity so relax and forget about your assessor and do what you normally do. This time though expect to get some quality feedback and constructive comments on what you have done. Remember the assessor can only comment on what they have or haven't seen on the day.

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