



PBIA

Instructor Manual

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1. Introduction

The **Professional Billiard Instructors Association (PBIA) mission** is to provide quality billiard instruction to individuals at all levels of proficiency, as well as offer training and certification programs for those wishing to become qualified billiard instructors.

The **PBIA Instructor Program** is dedicated to training and certifying individuals to become professional quality billiard instructors. The program also supports and assists PBIA instructors in their business of providing instruction services.

This **Instructor Manual** was developed to help PBIA Instructors be effective and successful. It provides advice on how to find students and how to develop lesson and course plans. It also provides many resources helpful in teaching. It also offers information and guidance concerning professional development and instructor training.

2. Becoming a PBIA Instructor

The PBIA recognizes four **Instructor levels**:

- *Recognized* (level 1) – has basic knowledge and training skills and works with novice and intermediate players.
- *Certified* (level 2) – seeks to enhance one’s knowledge, teaching methods, and curriculum, and can teach most level of amateur player.
- *Advanced* (level 3) – can teach players of any level and is serious about advancing one’s career as a professional billiard instructor, and may certify Recognized Instructors and upgrade Recognized Instructors to the Certified and Advanced levels.
- *Master* (level 4) – experienced and successful professional billiard instructor as a full-time occupation who may certify and upgrade all instructor levels.

Complete descriptions of each level, along with detailed requirements and expectations, and information for how to upgrade from one level to the next, can be found at [Becoming a PBIA Instructor](#). All application and upgrade forms are available at [PBIA Forms and Applications](#).

One upgrade requirement is a certain number of hours of instruction, so be sure to always report your teaching hours after instruction using the “PBIA Feedback Forms” under the “Learn Pool” tab at the [BCA website](#).

3. Finding Students

Obviously, to be a successful instructor, you must have students. You will need to do things to help find students and to help them find you. First of all, being a PBI A Instructor, students can search for and find you on the PBI A website via the [Find an Instructor](#) page. But you also need to market yourself and build your reputation. Here are some **marketing and outreach** things you can do to help with this:

- Put up and leave PBI A business cards or flyers at local pool halls. Make sure you talk to and get to know the owner and employees first so they will know to recommend your services.
- Develop relationships with local league operators and play in leagues so people will be aware of who you are and the services you offer. Also consider offering free clinics or discount lessons or courses through the league.
- Offer clinics and courses (or other instructional formats in Section 4) in the community through city parks and recreation departments, rec centers, schools, retirement villages, and youth support organizations.
- Maintain an e-mail list and use it to announce course offerings and to send out periodic instructional advice.
- Create a Facebook page and post promotional info, announcements, and instructional advice periodically.
- Create a website for your services. Tools like [Google](#), [Wix](#), and [WordPress](#) make it fairly easy and inexpensive (or free) to do so.
- Be especially courteous, professional, friendly, and helpful with early students, and follow up with them for input, advice, and referrals. Word of mouth “advertising” from past students is a powerful thing.

For more help with marketing yourself, see the [PBI A Marketing Guide](#).

It also helps to **build your reputation** over time. Here are some things you can do in support of that:

- Write articles for online or print billiard magazines, many of which are linked on the [Pool Magazines](#) resource page.
- Participate in online forums like [AZB](#) and in some of the many active pool-related Facebook groups.
- Become active in [Billiard Industry Organizations](#), and participate on service committees (e.g., the PBI A Instructor Committee).
- Create a YouTube Channel and post instructional videos periodically.
- Post content and actively participate in discussions on the [PBI A Facebook page](#).

4. Instructional Formats

The main instructional **formats for pool instruction** are:

- *Individual Private Lesson* – focused one-on-one instruction usually charged at an hourly rate.
- *Workshop or Clinic* – inexpensive (or free) scheduled instruction with a group of players, with students often appearing at different times on a drop-in basis. There could be focus on a featured topic, or just general coaching.
- *Course* – organized, structured, multi-day intensive group training program, often with multiple instructors and a group of dedicated students.
- *Physical Education Course* – an organized course at a high school, community college, or university with weekly meetings for classroom and playing-based instruction.
- *Offline Video Lesson* – remote lesson based on a student submitting pre-recorded videos of technique and playing for feedback via e-mail or telephone.
- *Online Video Session* – remote live video lesson or coaching via [Skype](#), [Zoom](#), or other video streaming software.

Note that sometimes the words “clinic,” “workshop,” and “course” are used interchangeably. When first starting out, individual private lessons is a good approach, offering sessions 1-2 hours in duration. This will help you develop and improve your teaching skills over time. Informal clinics at local pool halls and bars are good ways to help build your reputation locally, and participants may also decide to take private lessons from you. Courses can be the most lucrative, but you generally need to have an established reputation to get students to enroll, and the courses can require significant planning and preparation. Example course topics and outlines can be found in Section 6.

Concerning **what to charge**, the best answer is: whatever the students think is a fair and reasonable price. If you search online, you can see what others typically charge for lessons, clinics, and courses. Some instructor information and fees can be found via [Pool Schools and Instructors](#) and [PBIA Training Academies](#). As you become a better instructor and build a solid reputation, it is appropriate to charge more for your services.

5. Teaching Methods

Effective teaching requires more than mastery of subject matter. An instructor must also be able to diagnose and assess skills and flaws and be able to efficiently transfer information and advice to a student. The list below summarizes many of the things you should keep in mind when teaching:

1. Before beginning a lesson, have the student discuss their background, interests, and goals, and together define **learning objectives** for the lesson. Also state what you plan to do and cover during the lesson (e.g., video analysis, drills, practice plan, etc.).
2. Early in a lesson, **evaluate and assess** the student’s level of play. For example, have the student warm up by pocketing balls or by playing a rack or two of their favorite game. This also helps them relax a

little and get accustomed to the table conditions. In a longer lesson or course, you can do a complete evaluation with a set of drills like the [Progressive Practice Drills](#) or the [BU Playing Ability Exams](#).

3. Constantly **be aware of the student's mental and physical state**. If you sense frustration or tiredness, take a small break and change things up a little.
4. Always try to maintain a **positive attitude**, focusing on successes instead of failures. If you must criticize, do so constructively. For example, point out a positive item or noted improvement before pointing out a flaw, and then end on another positive note.
5. **Repeat and reinforce** important topics, and monitor and test student understanding throughout a lesson and when you next meet.
6. **Ask questions** often, keeping the student active and engaged. Continually make sure your instruction is being received and absorbed, and make sure the student is not losing interest. Resist the urge to "lecture." Always be open and inviting to questions.
7. **Check in** with students periodically during or between lessons to make sure they are happy with the experience and to ask if they want to do something different or not.
8. Be an active, interested, and **open-minded listener**. Not everyone expresses themselves perfectly, and your students may not phrase ideas the way you would. Always make sure you know what they are saying and asking, by restating what you think you heard and by asking follow-up questions when necessary.
9. **Be flexible** and willing to change your plans as things develop during a lesson. Do not stick to a plan that is not working very well with a student. Change it up.
10. **Resist the urge to demonstrate** too much. Ideally, the student will do all or most of the shooting during a lesson. A student will learn much more from doing than from watching or listening. Only demonstrate a shot or technique if the student requests it or if you think it would be particularly useful for the student to see.
11. When you do **demonstrate** something, make sure the demonstration is something you can do quickly and effectively (e.g., something you have set up and practiced before). Also make sure the demo is clear with memorable visuals for the student.
12. **Provide handouts** (outlines, shot diagrams, resource pages) to students as references for note taking. Section 7 provides many resources you can use.
13. **Encourage students to take notes** during a lesson, have them write down what they have learned after each lesson, and encourage them to write down questions they think of between lessons.
14. When introducing a new topic, do not spend too much time explaining, lecturing, or demonstrating. **Have the student actively participate as early as possible**. You can progressively add more information and ask questions as things develop.
15. Be aware that students have different **learning styles**, and different modes of interaction (reading, listening, watching, doing) will have different effectiveness. The best approach is to attempt to cater to a range of learning styles and customize your teaching as you get to know the person better.

16. **Motivate students** by working on what is important to them (e.g., a particular shot or skill they really want to improve or learn, even if it is not the most important thing they should be working on). And explain how working on important fundamentals, especially the ones you identify as real problems, might help change and improve their game.
17. Always **isolate and work on very specific skills**, techniques, or knowledge that need improvement, and use drills that will allow the student to succeed and show improvement in a relatively short amount of time. Do not use drills or shots that are too much beyond the student's skill level. This will only lead to disappointment and frustration.
18. Use **drills with clear objectives** (e.g., a clear CB target or ending position) so the student will have immediate feedback and a measure of success. And set clear goals on drills (e.g., a target score) so the student will have something to work toward.
19. **Evaluate and give feedback** on student progress throughout a lesson and from one lesson to the next. Convince the student that the work and instruction is of value and give them positive reinforcement. Having the student work on scored rating drills like [Progressive Practice drills](#), [BU Playing-Ability Exams](#), and ["Playing the Ghost" rating drills](#) (during a lesson or on their own) can help provide quantitative evaluation and feedback.
20. **Use a video camera or mirror** when the visual might help a student, and use your hands appropriately to give a student tactile feedback (e.g., use your fingers to lightly grasp the student's elbow to point out elbow drop, or place your hand gently on or above the student's head to point out head and body lift), but only after you ask permission to do so.
21. When teaching multiple students on **shared tables**, modify drills to allow two people to be shooting at once, and have students take turns setting up balls and recording/scoring vs. shooting, and encourage students to observe each other and make supportive suggestions where appropriate.
22. Schedule and **take periodic breaks** during long lessons or courses. This is good for both you and the students.
23. Always end a lesson summarizing what was learned, and send the student off with a clear **plan for how and what to practice** and what to look forward to in future lessons.

6. Lesson Plans and Topics

An important part of being an effective instructor is knowing **what to teach and when to teach it**. The topics chosen will depend on the student and instructional format, but below is a list of topics in the order that they should generally be taught. As described in the next section, there are many online resources available to help with learning about and teaching these topics.

A useful tool for assessing mechanics and fundamentals basics is **video analysis**. When analyzing video and observing a student interactively, it can be helpful to make a record of all the issues and flaws identified as possible opportunities for improvement. Here's a [helpful check list](#) you can use to make a record of everything

you identify with a student during video review. Here is [another example](#). And here is an example [video analysis procedure](#) that can be used to capture everything you need for a complete and thorough analysis. You can also use other set-up shots (e.g., an easy straight side pocket shot or a long straight diagonal shot, each with stop, follow and draw). Here's another [example procedure](#). Always mark the ball positions with donut stickies ("self-adhesive hole reinforcement labels") and film from different views. You will get best results if you use a tripod placed in consistent positions. With video analysis, it is helpful to do "before" and "after" evaluations. That way the student can clearly see improvement during the "after" video review.

Ordered List of Important Topics and Skills:

1. Equipment and Basics
 - a. Cue
 - i. Checking straightness
 - ii. Checking for a cracked or loose ferrule
 - iii. Tip care and curvature
 - iv. Cue weight and shaft diameter
 - v. Shaft cleaning
 - vi. CB deflection
 - b. Chalk
 - i. Why use chalk
 - ii. How to chalk properly and check your tip
 - iii. What to do after a miscue
2. Mechanics
 - a. Stance
 - i. Alignment, stability, clearance
 - ii. Head low in "vision center" position with eyes and face as level and square as possible
 - iii. Cue as level as possible
 - b. Grip
 - i. Relaxed and consistent
 - ii. Forearm vertical at CB address
 - c. Bridge
 - i. Open, closed, rail, elevated, mechanical
 - d. Stroke
 - i. Set position with alignment and tip position check
 - ii. Slow backswing, non-rushed transition
 - iii. Pendulum motion into the CB
 - iv. Smooth acceleration with follow through
 - v. Consistent eye pattern with OB focus during the shot
3. Aiming
 - a. Ghost-ball
 - b. Aiming while standing
 - c. Cut-induced throw (CIT)
 - d. Lingo: thin/thick/fat, more/less, cut angle, ball-hit fraction
4. Shot Routine

- a. Shot selection
 - b. Pre-Shot Routine
 - i. Visualize, aim, align, approach, fiddle/adjust, warm up, pause/verify, focus, stroke, stay down
 - c. Post-Shot Routine
 - i. Diagnose and learn
5. CB Control
- a. Basic straight stop/follow/draw
 - b. Speed Control
 - i. Vary stroke length for desired speed
 - ii. Do not decelerate
 - c. 90° rule tangent/stun line
 - d. 30° rule peace sign
 - e. Draw 3-times-the-angle system
 - f. CB trajectory speed effects
 - g. Hangers
6. Sidespin
- a. Lingo: left/right, natural/running/reverse, inside/outside, miscue limit, “tips” vs. percent
 - b. Why and when used
 - c. Squirt, swerve, throw, cling/skid/kick, drag
 - d. Gearing outside spin
 - e. Clock system
7. Pattern Play
- a. Leaving angles, planning 3 balls ahead
 - b. Coming into the line into the fat part of the shape zone
 - c. Ball groupings
 - d. Solving problems early
 - e. Using the rails
 - f. 45° rule for position to/through the table center
8. Strategy and Safety Play
- a. Offense vs. defense strategy
 - b. Common safeties
 - c. Ball-in-hand strategy and options
 - d. 8-ball strategy and safety play
 - e. 9-ball and 10-ball strategy and safety play
9. Break
- a. Triangle and template racking advice
 - b. Rules and strategy in 8-ball
 - c. Rules and strategy in 9-ball and 10-ball, including the push-out
 - d. Techniques for control and power
10. Combination, Kiss, and Carom Shots
- a. Aiming methods
 - b. Throw and spin-transfer
 - c. Frozen ball interference systems

11. Rail Cut Shots
 - a. Aiming
 - b. CB control
12. Kick and Bank Shots
 - a. Diamond and mirror systems
 - i. 2-to-1
 - ii. Equal distance
 - iii. Mirror systems
 - iv. Speed adjustments
 - v. Fast-speed bank systems
 - vi. Multiple-rail kicking systems
 - b. Cut, speed, spin, and distance effects
13. Massé Shot
 - a. Small swerve shot
 - b. Large curve massé technique
 - c. Coriolis aiming system
14. Jump Shot
 - a. Legal jump and illegal scoop
 - b. Overhand stroke
 - c. Dart stroke
15. Smart Practice
 - a. Useful drills
 - b. Mixing things up
 - c. Practice with a purpose
16. Mental Game
 - a. Focus, Enjoy, Reset, Visualize, Inhale, Diagnose (FERVID)
 - b. recommended books
17. Rules
 - a. WPA “official rules of pool”
 - b. Fouls
 - c. 8-ball and 9-ball rules
18. Rules, Strategy, and Techniques in Other Games
 - a. One Pocket
 - b. Straight Pool
 - c. Bank Pool
 - d. Other games and variations in the BCA Rule Book
19. Etiquette
 - a. Equipment
 - b. Behavior and Interaction
 - c. General

If you want to learn more about anything in the list above, or if you want to find **useful resources** to help you teach, see Section 7. There is a wealth of online resources to help you learn about and teach all important topics and techniques.

The ability to teach selected topics in the list above are explicit requirements for the different PBIA certification levels. For more information, see [Becoming a PBIA Instructor](#).

When teaching a course, it is very important to carefully **organize and schedule** the material and procedures that will be covered, choosing topics from the list above. Here are some [Example Course Outlines](#) from the [Original BCA Instructor Manual](#), an [Example Basics Course Outline](#) from the [San Francisco Billiard Academy](#), and example detailed course outline schedules ([Overview Course](#), [Advanced Course](#)) from the [Billiard University](#). Be sure to add notes to your copy of the schedule and handouts to help guide you when you are teaching. Also, be sure to take notes during the course concerning problems or issues that arise so you can improve your schedule, notes, and materials in the future.

7. Teaching Resources

There is a wealth of resources available online to help you with teaching materials. The [Instructor and Student Resource](#) page at billiards.colostate.edu is particularly useful. The site includes:

- A large collection of **summary sheet handouts** that provide convenient 1-page or 2-page summaries for many of the “Important Topics and Skills” listed in the previous section.
- A wide range of **drills and exercises** useful for diagnosis and teaching and for student practice.
- A large collection of **template and diagrams** useful for teaching and documenting.

The summary sheet handouts can be used individually for lessons during which you plan to cover the specific topics. They can also be assembled into a binder over time or into a booklet to be printed or copied for students taking your courses or clinics. [Adobe Acrobat](#) is a useful tool for electronically assembling PDF files like this (and for adding headers and footers to customize and consecutively number the pages of the assembled booklet).

Also, the resource pages available in the [FAQ section](#) at billiards.colostate.edu contain **videos, instructional articles, handouts, and other resources** to help one learn about and see examples of how to teach any important topic and technique. The [San Francisco Billiard Academy files page](#) also offers some useful instructional resources.

Many drills are demonstrated and documented on the [FAQ drill resource page](#). Here are some additional useful collections of drills:

- Bob Jewett’s [Progressive Practice Drills](#) and [5-minute drills](#).
- [Billiard University \(BU\) Playing-Ability-Exam drills](#).
- [collection of drills](#) from the [previous PBIA Instructor Guide](#).

Also, anytime you or a student comes across an unknown pool-related word or phrase, you can find a definition in the [Online Glossary of Pool/Billiards Terms and Phrases](#).

8. Professionalism, Service, and Continuing Education

As a PBI A Instructor, you are expected to **present yourself as a professional**. Part of that is following the [PBI A Code of Ethics](#). Here are the most important things to keep in mind:

- Always present yourself in a professional manner in how you dress, speak, and behave.
- Always be on time for lessons and courses. The best way to do this is to always show up early.
- Always be respectful to your students and always ask for permission before making any sort of physical contact to help with instruction.
- Never promote yourself or attempt to teach beyond your level of certification, knowledge, or ability.
- Never criticize or talk disparagingly about a fellow instructor in public or in front of students.
- Model and promote proper pool etiquette per the [PBI A Pool Etiquette](#) page (see also: [pool etiquette resource page](#)).
- Never gamble with a student.
- Arrive sober and remain sober when teaching.

Another aspect of being a professional is always seeking to **continually improve** and further develop yourself. Things you can do to help with this include:

- Be a student of the game by reading and watching instructional books and videos.
- Take lessons and courses from other instructors, and attend PBI A Instructor Training programs at the annual [BCA Expo](#).
- Always be curious to learn and analyze new things and always experiment with what you learn.
- Get feedback from your students and ask for their impressions and suggestions for improvements. If teaching a course, have students fill out anonymous course evaluations forms. Here's an [example course evaluation](#). And here's another: [original BCA Student Feedback Form](#).

Another expectation of being a professional is to **serve your profession**. Things you can do in this regard include:

- Support junior programs through the [PBI A Break and Run Junior Instruction Program](#) and the [Billiard Education Foundation \(BEF\)](#).
- Become active in [billiard industry organizations](#) and participate on service committees (e.g., the PBI A Instructor Committee).
- Author and publish instructional articles, books, videos, or websites.

- Help improve this document by sending feedback and input to the [PBI A](#).

9. Instructor Training

If you are an Advanced or Master Instructor, you can provide **certification training** for new and upgrading instructors. The requirements necessary to achieve certification or an upgrade are summarized in detail on the PBI A [Becoming a PBI A Instructor](#) page. And all required forms for submittal are available on the [PBI A Forms and Applications](#) page.

This document (PBI A Instructor Manual) is an **excellent resource** to use when training a new instructor. It is also important for a trainee to see how you teach as an experienced instructor. A trainer should also evaluate the teaching ability, demonstration ability, and knowledge of the trainee during the instructor training course. Additional resources that might be helpful include an example [Instructor Training Course Outline](#) and previous versions of this document that offer different perspectives: [original 1995 BCA Instructor Manual](#) and the [2014 Edition PBI A Instructor Lesson Plan Guidelines](#).

One of the requirements of instructor training is a **written test**. Here's a [good collection of example questions](#). Here are [answers to all the questions](#). And here's an [example of a shorter written quiz](#). Another good resource for a possible additional written exam is the [online Pool Rules Quiz](#) that tests a complete understanding of pool rules and how to apply them.

Another requirement is that a trainee have the **playing skill** necessary to demonstrate shots and techniques they are teaching. One possible tool for that is a scored playing-ability tests like [Billiard University Exam I](#), the [Progressive Practice drill set](#), [playing-the-ghost rating drills](#), or [Equal Offense](#).

If you plan to offer instructor training, it is a good idea to have a potential trainee take a playing skills test and a preliminary written test, and even submit a video example of them teaching a topic, to ensure they have the prerequisite knowledge and capabilities before committing time and money to formal training.