



BULLET POINTS

INSTRUCTING INSTRUCTORS

BY KLINT MACRO



■ Reputable instructors, such as those certified by the USCCA, offer the kind of instruction responsibly armed Americans require: competent, professional and legally defensible in court.

Training a trainer is a rewarding process that requires patience and imagination. Folks often ask me what I look for when training new USCCA-Certified Instructors, so here's a little inside baseball on my personal process and what I'm looking for.

SAFETY, SAFETY, ABOVE ALL SAFETY

When working with anyone who is going to use a firearm for defense, sport or recreation, we, as instructors, must first lead by example by reinforcing safe practices. When evaluating instructor candidates, I am looking for individuals who exhibit firearms safety in all acts, words, explanations and deeds. Muzzle discipline, muzzle awareness and trigger-finger discipline are paramount whenever handling a firearm. Instructor candidates must also be quick to identify when a student needs guidance with regard to safety.

FOLLOW THE CURRICULUM

A well-developed and well-vetted curriculum is just that ... well-developed and well-vetted. Lots of time, money and firearms and legal expertise went into the development of the USCCA curriculum. USCCA-Certified Instructors are handed a tremendous resource that is safe to teach as long as the instructor in question follows the curriculum. To paraphrase a quote from the 1986 comedy classic *Three Amigos!*: "Stray from the formula and pay the price."

I look for instructor candidates who will teach the USCCA course the USCCA way. Follow the curriculum and you will always look like an expert. This is the best way for us, as instructors, to maintain the highest standard of quality.

PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS ARE A MUST

In order to be an effective USCCA Instructor, a candidate must be an effective presenter. Speaking to an audience can be stressful for some instructor candidates, and not everyone is born with the "look at me!" gene. For those folks who would rather stand in front of an oncoming train than in front of an audience, I suggest keeping a

steady, measured pace when presenting material. Think about what you want to say, make eye contact with the audience, speak, think, make eye contact, speak ... rinse and repeat. It is better to pause and think about what to say next than fill the silence with um-

mms, ahhs and filler statements, such as, "And like that," or, "So, there you go." Instructor candidates often get "time dilation" while presenting lessons, and I tell them not to worry; your pauses are rarely as long as they seem when you are in front of a group.

Most folks will agree that knowing the subject matter makes presenting it far easier. My suggestion is, when you first receive your USCCA Instructor Toolbox prior to attending an Instructor Training Workshop, take time to familiarize yourself with it by thoroughly reading through the material.

TEACH CIVILIAN COURSES TO FELLOW LAW-ABIDING CIVILIANS

Instructor candidates need to keep in mind that we are teaching fellow law-abiding private citizens, not law enforcement or military personnel. Civilians do not have an "ROE," or "Rules of Engagement." Such military codes of conduct do *not* apply to Joe and Jane Civilian. Many firearms trainers come from LE or military backgrounds, where they might have had some sort of ROE. If a civilian chases down a bad guy, that civilian might wind up in jail for it. Instructor candidates who are administering classes to civilians must acknowledge that safe gun handling, situational awareness and conflict avoidance are of paramount importance. Aggressive gunfighter tactics might help send your student to prison.

All shooting skills taught must be in a defensive context, considering what the body does naturally under stress.

When seconds count and help is minutes away, we should all be prepared to do what is necessary to defend our families. However, if we, or our students,



■ The inaugural USCCA Instructor Certification Course was held in 2015.

can buy those minutes so that the police can do their jobs, well then so much the better.

Always keep in mind that when we press the trigger, our lives change, and this point *must* be stressed again and again and again.

Secondly, the aggressive "drill instructor" approach simply doesn't work in a one- or two-day class. Joe and Jane Civilian will either get very angry or break down if you bark at them in front of a classroom or range filled with students. Either way, you'll shut down the learning process and do a disservice to all involved. Instructor candidates should indeed be serious, but, at the same time, they should be positive, supportive and, when necessary, nurturing.

BE A PROFESSIONAL

Whether an instructor candidate wants to volunteer her time or charge top dollar, she must constantly strive for professionalism. One must try to outdo himself each time he dons his USCCA polo shirt or cap. Using proper nomenclature, articulating your points without littering your speech with profanity and slang, respecting your students and representing yourself as a subject matter expert will reinforce you as a professional instructor. Keep in mind that a professional instructor must administer a course efficiently and disseminate information accurately.

RUN A SAFE, QUALITY FIRING LINE

When working with students on the firing line, instructor candidates too often develop tunnel vision when administering a particular course of fire and forget to offer quality coaching. Maintaining a

safe and efficient firing line is key, and instructor candidates must continue scanning for any safety infractions and be physically close enough to the student to offer guidance or to step in and forcibly stop an accident in progress. It is your moral and professional duty to offer a safe environment for the shooters on your line.

Secondly, the whole reason we conduct live fire is to improve our shooters' skills. Instructor candidates must observe shooters and be able to accurately diagnose technical deficiencies and offer practical suggestions to correct poor performance. Being a good coach is not only important to helping our shooters improve their shooting skills, it also helps to gain their trust; without trust, education is unnecessarily difficult.

NEVER STOP LEARNING

Instructor candidates should maintain a teachable attitude and strive to be on the cutting edge of tactics, technique and technology. Take advantage of dry-fire, live-fire, SIRT pistols, LASR software or other creative and exciting training tools. When we become inflexible or stale, we will not give our students the best information possible.

One of the aspects of the USCCA curriculum that I find most beneficial is that it is constantly updated, with new stats and information added regularly. Instructor candidates must be open to new concepts and continued education. Read books, watch videos, attend courses and clinics, assist other instructors and crave knowledge. You owe it to yourself and you owe it to your students.

TREAT STUDENTS AS CLIENTS AND OFFER ONGOING CUSTOMER SERVICE

I make it crystal clear that I am part of my instructor candidates' training team. Too often instructors teach a course, give their students an "Atta-Boy" and a certificate and send them on their way.

Instructor candidates should look at their students not simply as students but also as clients. Treat students with the respect of valued customers and work to gain their trust. A student will initially sign up for a course because one instructor is 10 bucks cheaper or 3 miles closer than another or because an instructor's course worked within her schedule. After you've gained her trust, that same student will come back to train with you no matter the cost — and no matter the travel time. It might take her a while to save money to attend your next class, but she will come back. Instructor candidates need to market their classes as businesses, because that's what they are. Offer ongoing customer service to your clients and ensure that you become their go-to instructor.

BE AN AMBASSADOR

When instructor candidates become professional USCCA-Certified Instructors, they represent something bigger than themselves and, by default, be-

come ambassadors of safe and responsible firearms ownership and the 2nd Amendment. Instructor candidates should arm themselves with the facts and be willing to engage in civilized debate to help sway their fellow Americans away from dishonest anti-gun propaganda. Instructor candidates must promote a positive image and reinforce responsible "well-regulated" firearms usage (in the true sense of what "well-regulated" means). Remember, gun safes don't keep our guns safe from politicians. We should promote civic duty, voting and communicating with our elected officials about all issues important to us.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

A fantastic instructor is not made in a two-day course. As a USCCA Training Counselor, I have to be sure that instructor candidates meet the minimum requirements set by the USCCA but also consider the candidates' overall attitudes and potential to be excellent representatives of the US-

CCA Training Program. The real work begins after an instructor candidate puts himself out there, runs classes and develops his own personal style and technique. On-the-job training is where a serious, professional instructor hones his or her skills and craft.

JUST THE BEGINNING

If I do my job well, USCCA-Certified Instructors will leave my workshop with a solid understanding of the curriculum, examples of effective ways to present it, the experience of presenting portions of it in a positive and creative environment and the confidence that they can be successful USCCA-Certified Instructors. I'll always be there to answer questions and help them how I can, but the rest is up to them.



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PRODUCT DETAILS	F1pro	S1pro	A1pro
Total length (mm)	217	247	283
Blade length (mm)	100	130	160
Blade thickness (mm)	5	6	7
Blade profile	Convex Convex Convex		
Tang	Broad, protruding		
Weight (knife)	182g	250g	363g
Steel	Lam.CoS		
Hardness (HRC)	60		
Handle material	Thermorun		
Sheath	Zytel		

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