

What Every Candidate Needs to Know

Kevin Davenport

Now that I've been a PADI Course director for a year, I have had time to re-evaluate my views of IDCs. You may notice a change but my core beliefs still hold true.

The IDC process is great. It has two goals: First, The IDC provides the candidates the tools and knowledge needed to teach the Monday following the IE. Second, it gets the candidate prepared for the IE. They go hand in hand. Ideally, the candidate should come with a deep knowledge of everything they learned in the DM course...Dive theory: Physics, Physiology, Equipment, etc. The purpose of the IDC is not to refine this knowledge, it is to evaluate it. Knowing the 20 skill is also essential. However, not being able to do them to a level 5 is okay, but being able do them is a must. What takes up the majority of time during the IDC is learning how to present the material - not learning the DM material.

In the IDC, the candidates learn how to teach prescriptively. During evaluations, there are certain attributes the candidate MUST hit. It is a very strange way to teach at first. Once you start to realize that is a condensed version of how you will teach every class, it starts making sense. When teaching, you talk about the local environment, equipment, and continuing education in every class. Maybe not as much as in the IDC and IE, but you will do it. In the pool and open water, positive reinforcement is VERY important as is identifying the problems and correcting them. To an instructor candidate, it all seems very strange unless they have previously worked with students.

Besides the above noted deficiencies, I have also noticed a great deficiency in rescue skills. In some cases, it is as if the candidate has never done them. I have had to go back and re-teach a majority of the skills. Is this because they have never done them? No, they have not practiced them since the class. This is a travesty!

Anyone who wants to become an instructor, I have a few words of advice:

1. Teaching is not for everyone. Just because you love this sport does not mean you will be a good instructor.
2. Find a mentor. Tell them from the start that going to the IDC and becoming an instructor is your goal. Just remember, not everyone likes competition.
3. Get in the pool. Work on the 20 skills. (demonstration quality)
4. Practice your rescue skills.
5. The IDC does not make you a good instructor. It supplies the tools. Being a good instructor is up to you.
6. Become very familiar with the General Standards and Procedures and the Guide to Teaching. (You use them a lot during and after the IDC)
7. Get in the pool. Work on the 20 skills.
8. Learn the PADI system, how classes are related.
9. Be sure you understand what you are getting into. You will not become rich as an instructor. But, I would not want to do anything else.