

“ONLINE SPOONPLUGGING INSTRUCTION?”

As a Certified Spoonplugging Instructor (C.S.I.), it has been frustrating for me that I have not been helping more students with on-the-water training. One of the biggest obstacles is the need for students to bring their boats and equipment to Michigan, stay in a motel, and spend at least a few days on the water with me to get the training. The absolutely best way for students to improve their Spoonplugging is to spend time on the water with a C.S.I., but travel, cost, and scheduling of both parties often makes that very difficult to accomplish, and as a result, it seems that demand for this service is low.

One alternative that might be helpful for students and instructors could be for C.S.I.'s to offer personalized online Spoonplugging instruction. Although not as effective as on-the-water classes, it would allow the student to get questions answered on a one-to-one basis with an instructor. This could include E-Mails, Phone calls, map marking, snail-mail, or even meeting together to discuss problems with the students' individual situation. The online Spoonpluggers Forum does a great job informing people on a specific question and several instructors participate in that, but this would offer more thorough and intense help to one individual. The instructor could keep track of the time spent to calculate the fee (e.g. 2-3 hours, \$100.). Much could be accomplished by the instructor in a fairly short period of time, and the student would go out on the water to work on the suggestions, likely coming back later with more questions and maybe paving the way for future on-the-water training.

For Spoonplugging to grow in the future, it is the responsibility of all of us that more people are trained, get involved, and become successful fishermen. If C.S.I.'s did some personal online instruction, it might be one way to help more people and reduce the cost and time commitment of students as well as instructors. We need to find ways to better utilize the knowledge and skills of our experienced Spoonpluggers. This is only one possible idea. Other suggestions are welcome.

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