
Scaling

Scaling is a self evaluation tool that's used frequently in driver education. Although useful, it's misuse, overuse, or lack of inspirational use can be detrimental to teaching.

The most common scale used is 'on a scale of 1 - 10...'. This is used in many aspects of our life. To give feedback on a service or resource, to evaluate performance, to scale pain or other emotions.

This is a simple but effective way of encouraging self evaluation.

Here are some ground rules:

1. Have a reason to use scaling

Don't introduce scaling without a good reason. Have a motive for using it. Know exactly what you are scaling and what you want to find out. Using a wishy-washy scale will give you a weak answer! Make sure your scale has a determined 'point'.

For example, can you hear the difference between:

'On a scale of 1-10 how do you feel about roundabouts?'

*'On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate **your confidence** on roundabouts?'*

2. Confirm the scale

Confirm the scale so you and your pupil know the parameters and which end of the scale is which!

'On a scale of ability to drive roundabouts with 1 being 'I need full support from you please!' and 10 being 'I'm so able to drive roundabouts I consider them to be my super power!', where would you rate yourself?'

3. Use scaling at the appropriate time

Many instructors fall into the trap of what we call 'backwards scaling'. In other words, they have a whole conversation with their pupil about a particular subject, what the pupil knows, what the pupil can do, how the pupil feels about it, what they need to practice, THEN they scale. At this stage there is no point in scaling - the evaluation has been done! Instead, scale first and then use the answer for the basis of the conversation.

'You scored yourself a 6. Tell me all the positives that make up the 6.'

'So you're a 6 at the beginning, what would you like that number to be at the end?'

'How can you get that 6 to the 8 you'd like to be?'

'Anything I can do to help?'

4. Don't judge the answer

It's NOTHING to do with the number! It's the ability to self evaluate that you're encouraging. The process of thinking, reflecting, analysing and finding solutions is THE purpose of using a scale... not the number. By asking reflective questions, you can structure a conversation that gets to the real learning needs and helps set the goal for the drive itself. Never dismiss or undermine a pupil's answer. It's not your scale... it's theirs, even if you think you're doing it to boost their confidence.

'4?! You're not a 4! I would say you were nearer a 7!'

Your role is to get them to define the 4 and what it means to them, and to think positively about improving it.

5. Use it as a positive rather than a negative

Can you hear the difference between:

'You say you're a 5... why not a 7 or 8?'

'You say you're a 5... give me all the good reasons you're a 5'

6. Know the end aim

Without having a vision of the end result or something to aim for, the scale becomes redundant. Know what to aim for, to give the drive a purpose and an end goal!

'What would you like that number to be by the end of the session?'

7. Look for solutions

Failing to do this is a common trap. Scaling with no future positive steps, stops the self evaluation and development cycle from happening. Encouraging positive progress is what develops the learning.

'Great! So how can we get that 5 to an 8?'

'What would be useful to do/learn/practise/answer to move that number higher?'

8. Use it to confirm roles and responsibilities and to set a level of instruction

Once the groundwork is done, it leaves a nice lead on conversation to confirm exactly what support you will be giving to help them achieve the goal.

'So how can I help you get to that number?'

'What is it that would be useful to help you improve?'

'What could we do to get better at it?'

'Would you like me to give you some guidance, or are you wanting me to just be here as you experiment yourself and step in only if needed?'

9. Revisit

Because scaling is a self evaluation tool, it needs to be revisited to conclude that learning has taken place. Revisiting can happen often and not necessarily at the end of a lesson. It could be used throughout the drive.

For example, your pupil may be comfortable scaling themselves after each individual task. You know your pupil is self evaluating when they shout out random numbers as they drive!

'So based on today's drive, where would you rate yourself on that same scale now we've been practising for a while?'

What do you do if you get answers that you aren't expecting, or you don't feel are realistic?

This is a regular question instructors ask, based more on fear than reality. In reality, pupils rarely give extreme answers, but when they do, it can be due to the failure of the question that was asked, or the instructor's bias.

'I dunno' answers tend to be given when the scale is weak and lacks a point (see ground rule 1), or when it's being over used. An answer that is way off what you consider a reality, can also be due to the scale being too broad.

For example, your pupil completes a parallel park with NO observations, instead he is transfixed with staring into the blind spot mirror to get his accuracy correct, and you ask *'on a scale of 1-10 how would you rate that park?'* And he says *'10!'*

Remember - don't judge. Their answer is important, even if you feel it wasn't accurate. By following the previous ground rules you'll find out exactly what they were taking into account when evaluating themselves. It could be a 10 because:

'Because I didn't touch the kerb this time'

'Because I saw I was getting too close and I fixed it'

'Because I knew which way to turn the wheel to straighten up'

'Because I didn't stall like all the other attempts!'

These are really useful things for them to have evaluated about their performance!

Your job now, is to see if they have recognised areas to improve. A simple question like *'anything you'd like to improve on if you were to do it again?'*, will tell you they appreciate that the accuracy and car handling skills were so much better, but now they know they need to add in the observations. If they said *'No, it was great!'*, this is also just as useful as it tells you what they don't know!

It could be your scale was too broad. Try funnelling to be more precise.

'On a scale of observations with 1 being 'I would have missed the elephant walking behind the car' and 10 being 'I would have seen a mosquito flying past', how would you rate your observations?'

This highlights areas to now work on and bring in to complete the whole task well.

Using other scales

Remember, it's the skill of encouraging self evaluation that's needed. There are plenty of other ways of doing this and you may have some great scaling tools to help.

- ▶ What other types of 'scales' could you use?

Example... *colours... animals...*

Think out of the box and ask pupils what works for them!

Watch this video:
Debrief and scaling

Date: _____

- ▶ How long should a debrief take?

- ▶ Based on Lou's top questions, can you come up with different questions that don't lose the meaning?

Give me ___ skills that we've practised today?

Give me ___ things that have gone well? Why did it go well?

Give me ___ things that you feel you still want practise on?

Give me ___ positives that you're taking away from today?

Based on today's drive, what's the next step for you?

- ▶ What additional questions could you ask if your pupil is privately practising with mum/dad?

Example... *What skill are you going to go and show your dad from today?*

- ▶ If you kept the lesson the same but changed other factors within the lesson, or outside factors, what could you change?

Example... *Changing the time of day, so you could do the same lesson but in rush hour, or at night time?*

- ▶ How/why could this be effective?

- ▶ Can you find the competency within the Teaching & Learning Strategies section in the ADI1, which relates to the use of scaling, and the warning that comes with it?

Hint: Look within the part that shows what the examiner is looking for, and what shows a lack of competence. Look at pages 53-58 in the ADI1

- ▶ What other tools could you bring into your lessons to encourage a pupil to self evaluate?