

# INSTRUCTOR'S CORNER

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Student Evaluations and SLIP

New Information

Your evaluations of a student's driving skills are of real importance and value to the student. They look to you for guidance and the ways and means to improve. They trust your skills and your ability to communicate with them to help them achieve their goals.

Over 10 years ago, Tarheel Chapter BMW CCA adopted [drivingevals.com](http://drivingevals.com) to help us communicate more clearly with our students and to get their honest feedback as to how we can improve both our instructing and our events in general. It has been an amazing tool and we rely on it to help us get better.

One of the feedback items we received from both Instructors and Students was the specific language contained in the SLIP matrix when describing the student's performance on a specific skill. While the language was very objective, it was perhaps not seen as constructive from the student's perspective.

Tarheel asked Dan Chadwick to consider modifications to some of the language with a goal of being more supportive/constructive in the student's mind. Dan was very receptive and over time came up with a really nice solution. This version is now in effect for users of SLIP this year. We at Tarheel now refer to this version as "Y'allified" SLIP, reflecting a sensibility somewhat different from the original version.

In this version, instead of the student seeing the SLIP comments for each skill as seen by the Instructor, the student now sees a generic set of suggestions as to how to improve that skill. We believe it is a very significant improvement and thank Dan for his willingness to consider the concerns and make the changes.

So, here is how it works:

The changes are taking place at SLIP Levels 1 thru 4. Each skill within the SLIP matrix now has two views-what the Instructor sees and uses to evaluate, and what the Students sees as a result. The Instructor still sees the SLIP matrix with the selection of objective evaluations by that student for that skill.

Here is an example of the new format:

This is for a D level (L1) student, and is the Instructor's evaluation of their skill in braking:

Instructor sees/selects: For beginner Student Level 1

Skill as defined in SLIP

Evaluation for that Student

Brakes at proper time & intensity

Abrupt, too soft, very early. Unintentionally trail-brakes. Brakes when frightened.

What the Student sees when they look at their evaluation

L1+. Braking on the track is much faster and harder than on the street. Work with your instructor to establish safe, consistent braking points. Apply the brakes firmly and quickly, but not abruptly. Work up to applying full brake pressure; there is likely much more braking power in your car than you have ever experienced. Come off the brake more slowly than you applied them.

While what the students sees is in once sense “generic” for that level, it is designed to give the student both encouragement and a good idea of how to improve that skill at that level.

The Comments section of SLIP can/should be used to coach the student on the specifics of their skill level.

Example 2: This is for an L4 (High B, Low A) student, and is the Instructor’s evaluation of their skill in braking:

Instructor sees/selects: For L4

Hard, steady, timely.  
Developing trail-braking.

What the L4 student sees when they look at their evaluation

L4. Continue developing your trail-braking, using it to rotate the car in most turns. Experiment with the location, timing, and rate of brake release. Carrying some brake all the way to the ideal end-of-braking point, often close to the apex. Increase your turn-in speed in tiny increments, maintaining a margin in turns where a spin might be costly.

In addition to the revisions now part of SLIP, please remember that the “Comments” section of your evaluation is where you have the ability to give both positive feedback and areas for improvement in detail that is specific to that student. In the comment section, there is an area for confidential input. PLEASE use this only to give information which you believe is very important to the next instructor or the organizers-big concerns or behaviors relating to this student for example. This is not the place for casual input.

**This is a great example of a Comment section:**

“ XXXX was a pleasure to drive with this weekend and made great progress in his driving skills. He was very open to suggestions and trying different ideas to get the car in the right position and over the weekend he was able to string together consistent laps. He has great awareness of how he is executing and provides feedback on both good and bad execution, thus his awareness and ability to diagnose and adjust for the next lap. I think he is actually a better driver than he presents as he doesn't do this consistently or with the same car. Regarding key things to focus on for the next event he attends: 1. Hand Position on Steering Wheel: Get hands consistently at 9 & 3 position and focus on pulling down into the turns as opposed to pushing up on the wheel. He made good progress in doing this but at times reverted back to that habit. 2. Vision and Looking Ahead: He made great progress with this, and it was most apparent in the keyhole where he was able to look to where the car needed to go and position it for a smooth safe exit. He also found a great visual at the exit of turn 14 which helped reduce the need to make steering wheel corrections. 3. Braking Consistency & Feel: This I think will come with more time in the seat as he communicated when he got it right and when he was too early on the brakes and ended up either turning in early or staying on the brakes until he reached the turn in and was going too slow. 4. Throttle on After Apex: At times XXXX was on the throttle too early and ended up with understeer through mid-corner. Part of this was due to running the car in "automatic" mode. I think he has the skill to use the paddle shifters and run it in manual mode next year which will give him better feel for the car in corners and braking. I think this would give him a greater chance to "connect the dots". Lastly, he was fun and enthusiastic and while serious about driving well and improving he didn't take himself too seriously thus it was a great time had by all”.

Thanks again to Dan Chadwick, Phil Antoine, and all who assisted Dan in his updates.  
Comments and or questions? [scottmeyer400@gmail.com](mailto:scottmeyer400@gmail.com)