

The VLJ Training Equation

wwelbourn@aic-allianz.com
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As we approach the first delivery dates of the Light Jet and Very Light Jet aircraft, the initial training and transitioning programs for these aircraft have evolved to where we now, as underwriters, can assess the parameters of the training experience. This article will focus on the programs developed for the Cessna Mustang, the Eclipse 500 and the Adam A700 aircraft.

CESSNA MUSTANG

Cessna has partnered with FlightSafety International on a Customized Mustang Training Plan keyed to a Proficiency Index™ (PI). The PI is advertised as an approach to processing enrollment criteria needed to enter the Mustang Training Program, as well as a method of predicting and enhancing training success, along with being a tool to determine course eligibility. It is based on a system that takes into consideration previous and current aeronautical experience and is a composite of various factors. The PI Categories are: A) Certificates, Medical, Age; B) Military, Flight-test or Demo-pilot Experience, Turbine Experience, and Technically Advanced Aircraft Experience; C) Recent Instrument Experience; D) Formal Flight and Ground Training; E) Other Pilot Experience; F) Mustang Experience; and G) Single-Pilot/Crew Pilot PIC Experience and Recent PIC Experience.

Once all the PI Categories are filled-out, the index computes a total value for the training applicant, using a maximum value and a minimum acceptable range for each category. This value is then used to determine the curriculum for which the applicant is eligible. The curriculums run from SIC to Crew PIC and finally to Single Pilot PIC, with various intermediate assessment options along the way.

Before entering the formal PIC and SIC curriculums, there are several pre-course training options: An Instrument Multi-Engine Refresher course, a Turbine Transition Course and a Garmin 1000 Course. The actual PIC and SIC curriculums are aircraft specific full-motion simulator based programs administered by FlightSafety International. In addition to these programs, FlightSafety also offers several other pre-course and post course services. These are mentoring services, where a FlightSafety Mentor Pilot accompanies the pilot to observe how they handle the aircraft. Pre-course mentoring helps prepare the pilot for the type-rating program and post-course mentoring helps the pilot become comfortable in the flying environment of their new aircraft.

Finally, FlightSafety offers several on-line Distance Learning courses. Currently, courses are available for Garmin 1000, High Altitude, Turbine Transition, and TCAS Training.

ECLIPSE 500

Just as Cessna has found a partner in FlightSafety International, Eclipse is partnering with United Airlines on a training program. Eclipse describes it as a multi-phase pilot training curriculum including an initial flight skills assessment, self-paced computer-based study, high-altitude physiology training, unexpected situation hands-on training, a type-rating transition course, post certification mentoring and subsequent recurrent training.

The program begins with a Pilot Qualification Review, to check currency and overall skill levels. A pre-requisite is a private pilot certificate, with instrument and multi-engine ratings. The next steps include A) a Flight Skills Assessment at a United Training Center, where the pilot is given a Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator Test, and a Cockpit Resource Management course, after which the pilot is evaluated in a non-aircraft specific full motion simulator, to assess instrument proficiency and airmanship skills; B) A Self-Paced Study Program on Jet basics and Eclipse 500 systems and; C) Unexpected Situation Hands-on Training, which allows pilots to experience emerging situations in a controlled environment. This program also includes upset recovery (using an L-39) and high altitude physiological training.

At this point, if the pilot doesn't meet the standards necessary to enter the Eclipse 500 type rating transition course, a United Flight Training Center or a local provider will provide supplemental flight training. After this training, the trainee will then retake the initial flight skills assessment.

The actual type rating training is done at a United Flight Training Center. It is a FAR 142 type-rating curriculum, which builds on the home study pre-course of the Eclipse 500 Systems. The program is one of scenario-based training, focused on the pilot. A type rating is conferred upon successful completion of the course.

All type rated pilots, new to jet aircraft, will be required to initially fly with an Eclipse 500 mentor pilot. This mentor pilot will

provide the final assessment of the pilots' readiness to safely fly solo in the aircraft. All mentor pilots are independent contractors, trained by Eclipse and United Airlines. Mentor pilots are available on an on-going basis to assist pilots even after they're approved for solo flight. Recurrent training at a United Center is required at six months for pilots in the mentor program. For others, recurrent training is at 12-month intervals. The recurrent training components are web-based home study, classroom review and a proficiency check in a simulator.

ADAM A700

The Adam A700 training consists of up to 7 components, with minimum requirements for the transition course being a private pilot certificate, with multi-engine and instrument ratings. The program begins with Pre-Course Material, consisting of computer based material focused on systems, risk management, turbine transition training, advanced weather training and avionics. Adam can track all training activity, including testing and evaluation. After successful completion of this Pre-Course training, there is a Pilot Survey. This survey focuses on recent experience, systems experience and personal training requests and allows the pilot and Adam Aircraft to determine an appropriate training track.

If it is determined that the pilot requires additional instrument proficiency training, he/she will receive IFR Proficiency Training in a Cirrus SR-22. The focus of this training is to increase instrument efficiency. Pilots who have limited experience in EFIS equipped aircraft or in pressurized complex aircraft received Pre-Course Training in the A500. Since the A700 and A500 are similar in construction and flight characteristics, Adam feels the A500 makes for a positive learning transfer to carry forward to the A700.

Prior to beginning the actual A700 type-rating course, there is the Aircraft Delivery. Ownership is transferred prior to any flight training in order to provide what Adam feels is a welcome respite from the intense training environment. The actual A700 Type Rating Course is approximately a 5-day course of ground and flight instruction on-site in Denver. After the type-rating course is completed, a practical test is administered. Upon successful completion of this test, an A700 type rating is awarded.

As with Cessna and Eclipse, Adam has developed what they call a Flight Experience With Mentor Pilot program to aid in the transition to the A700. Adam provides up to 25 hours of instructor/mentor pilot flight experience at no charge and the time must be used within one year of delivery. Recurrent training will follow their FITS approved Recurrent Training Syllabus, which calls for 3 computerbased training scenarios and one flight per year.

The information in this article was taken from the various manufacturers and training facility Web sites, as well as from written promotional materials. I would recommend visiting these Web sites for a more in-depth review of the training attendant to these aircraft.

William Welbourn is Chief Operating Officer of Allianz Aviation Managers, LLC.

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