

Column: Condor Corner

Issue: September 2013

Title: More Simulation-based Options for the Self-Directed Glider Rating Candidate

Author: Scott Manley - CFIG

Introduction

You are a candidate for a glider category rating, initial or add-on, and are sold on the benefits of incorporating simulation-based learning into your flight training. Your problem, however, is that the instructors and/or management at your club or commercial operation, at least with respect to simulation, are at best ambivalent, seemingly disinterested, and in some cases downright hostile. The ambivalent types, while admitting to seeing some merit in simulation-based training, seem to lack the motivation to actually adopt it. The disinterested clearly want nothing to do with simulation.

Now feeling you have no options, and because you really want to learn to fly gliders, you capitulate.

The purpose of this installment of Condor Corner is to let you know, despite being surrounded by disinterest, you do in fact have options, and here they are.

Option 1 – Find a Simulation-Savvy CFIG

If you're really lucky, your local club or commercial operation already has at least one CFIG who is onboard with simulation-based training; i.e. competent, experienced, and excited about using simulation to do a majority of your glider flight training. Unfortunately, CFIGs who meet these qualifications are still few and far between. Russ Holtz at Soaring NV, Mario Gerhardt at Cleveland Soaring, and your author (Madison/Beloit, WI) come to mind.



Simulation station - Soaring NV

If you can't find a simulation-savvy CFIG locally, your next best bet is to find one who will conduct your simulation-based training at-a-distance. Again, that list is pretty short, but currently includes Nyal Williams and me for primary training, and Frank Paynter for advanced (XC, Competition) training.

Note: As part of the Simulation-based Glider Flight Training Initiative (SGFTI), I would like to begin compiling a list of qualified, and excited CFIGs who offer simulation-based glider flight instruction, either locally or at-a-distance. The list would serve to connect qualified instructors with interested glider rating candidates. Contact me if you are either and we'll get the match making started.

Option 2 – Find a Simulation-Neutral CFIG

If you can't find a simulation-savvy CFIG to work with, your next option is one who is neutral on the issue. While not motivated to provide simulation-based instruction, a neutral is at least OK with your using it. Here is what you do.

After each real-life flight lesson:

- 1) Ask your neutral CFIG to review what she taught you that day. Have her write down the important points and procedures or take notes during the post-flight debriefing. If you want to embarrass her (not recommended), ask for a copy of the lesson plan. A good lesson plan would already contain this level of detail.

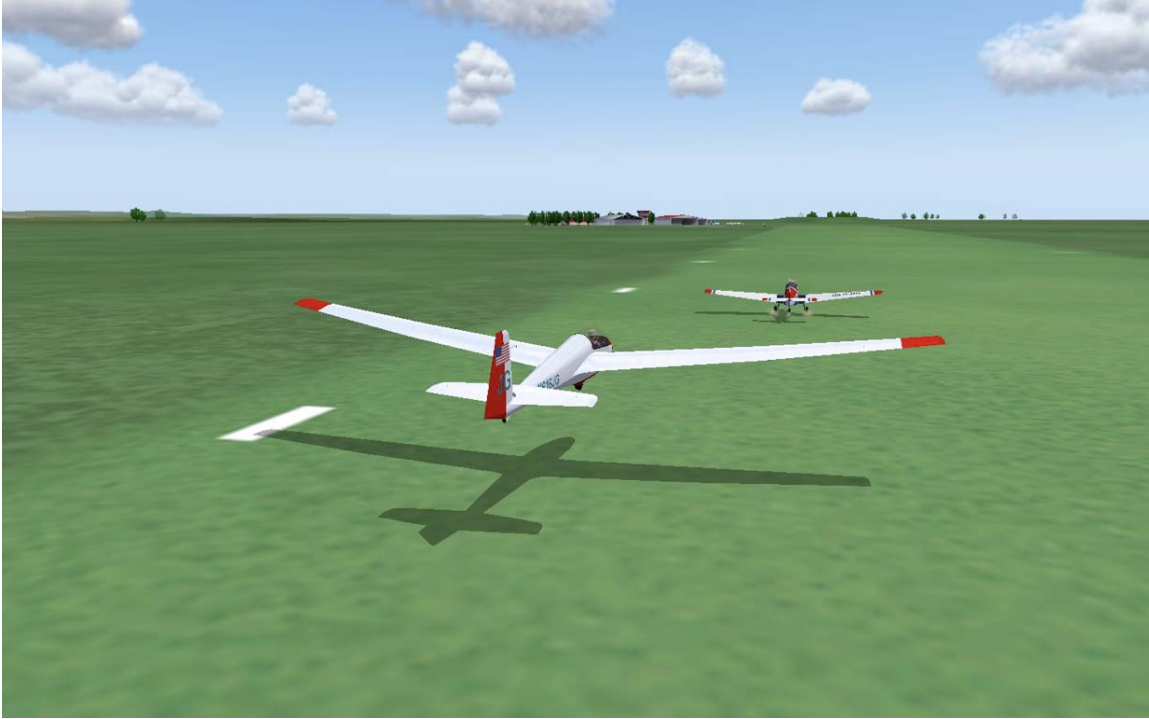
- 2) Before your next lesson, use Condor to practice the maneuvers/procedures you learned that day.
- 3) Record your Condor practice sessions as Replay files and watch them yourself. Compare your performance to the notes from your lesson review (i.e. perform a self-critique). If necessary, make corrections and practice some more.

The ability to evaluate your own flight performance is an important, high-level qualification to act as pilot-in-command of an aircraft.

- 4) If you have a laptop computer, install Condor so you can take your Replay files to your next lesson and show your instructor your practice sessions. Have your instructor critique your performance just like he would after a real flight.

If you don't have a laptop and your club/commercial operation has a computer that could run Condor, ask if you can install Condor for the purpose of doing reviews with your instructor. If you use your Condor license for this purpose, you must ensure no one else uses your Condor installation on that computer (license compliance). If you can't ensure your sole use of Condor, it would be worth buying an additional license. Who knows? Your club or commercial operation might even see the value in what you are doing, cover the cost of the additional license, and be able to provide this benefit to other students.

Another benefit of having Condor installed at your club/commercial operation is that your training could be conducted on days when other candidates are weathered out. You could also use the club/commercial operation Condor installation to do the after-real-flight reviews, with your instructor talking you through the maneuvers/procedures again, in simulation, as part of the critique/review process. You could even take a copy of your post-flight review session home as a Replay file on a thumb drive and use it as a demonstration/reminder to augment your practice sessions.



Post-flight Review – Aerotow Takeoff

Option 3 – Find a Qualified Mentor

If Options 1 and 2 above are not available to you, your next option is to find an already licensed pilot (private, commercial, or ATP), with a glider category rating, to act as your mentor. If that person has Condor experience, and especially if he/she is a licensed and active teacher (elementary or secondary), all the better. In fact, it is my belief a rated glider pilot, with a college degree in education and actual teaching experience, is significantly more qualified to teach you to fly a glider than most folks with the title of CFIG.

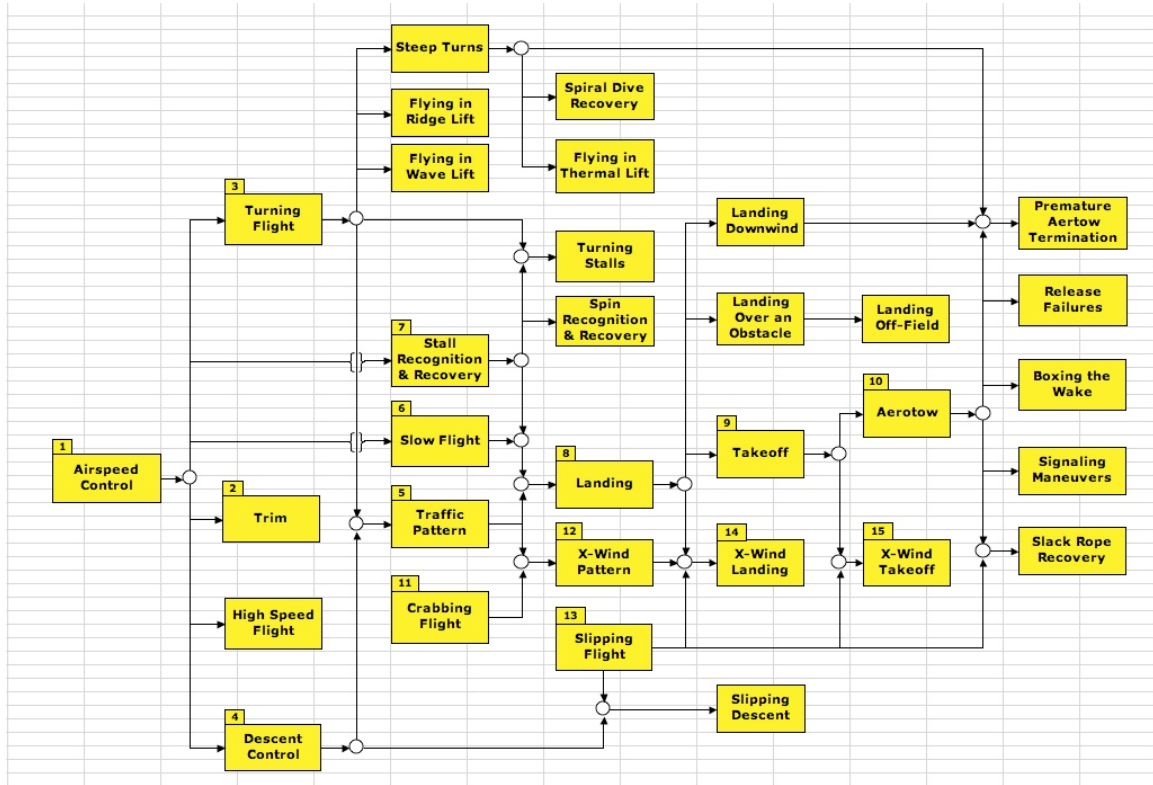
By the way, if your primary instructor is disinterested, and especially if they display any hostility, you would be well advised to keep your Condor activities covert. Have your instructor conduct and document your real-life post-flight reviews (Option 2, steps 1-3 above), but conduct step 4 with your glider pilot mentor (GPM).

Option 3B is to have your GPM do most of your flight training in simulation. When you show up for your real-life flight lessons, your instructor will be amazed at how quickly you seem to catch on to things.

Option 4 – Simulation-based Self Study

Like other areas of endeavor, there is a lot you can learn, on your own, about how to fly a glider. There are a number of excellent glider flight training syllabi available (Holtz, Knauff, Wander). Buy them all and read them all. Appreciate the similarities and

differences. Use Condor to implement what you read. Augment these syllabi with the Lesson Sequencing/Prerequisite diagram available by request from me.



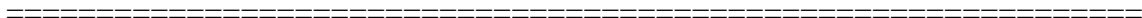
Lesson Sequencing / Prerequisites Diagram

I am planning to add to your self-study resources this winter by creating and making available Condor-generated demonstration videos (Replay files), supplemented with audio files and/or text documents. Humans are primarily visual learners. We naturally observe and emulate the behaviors of other human beings (sorry, but I can't help thinking "Monkey see, Monkey do"). Being able to experience visually what you read will dramatically improve your self-study experience and enable you to self-evaluate as you compare your performance to the demonstration. Additional performance evaluation can be provided by your CFG or GPM (glider pilot mentor).

In Conclusion

Don't let anyone's disinterest in Condor stand between you the benefits of simulation-based flight training.

You have options. Exercise them.



Scott Manley owns, and occasionally actually flies, a DG-303. The back of his pilot's license reads: Commercial pilot: airplane single-engine land & sea; instrument airplane; glider. He lives in Madison, Wisconsin and flies as a commercial pilot and glider flight instructor for Sylvania Soaring Adventures in Beloit, Wisconsin.

Feel free to contact him at: smanley@wisc.edu