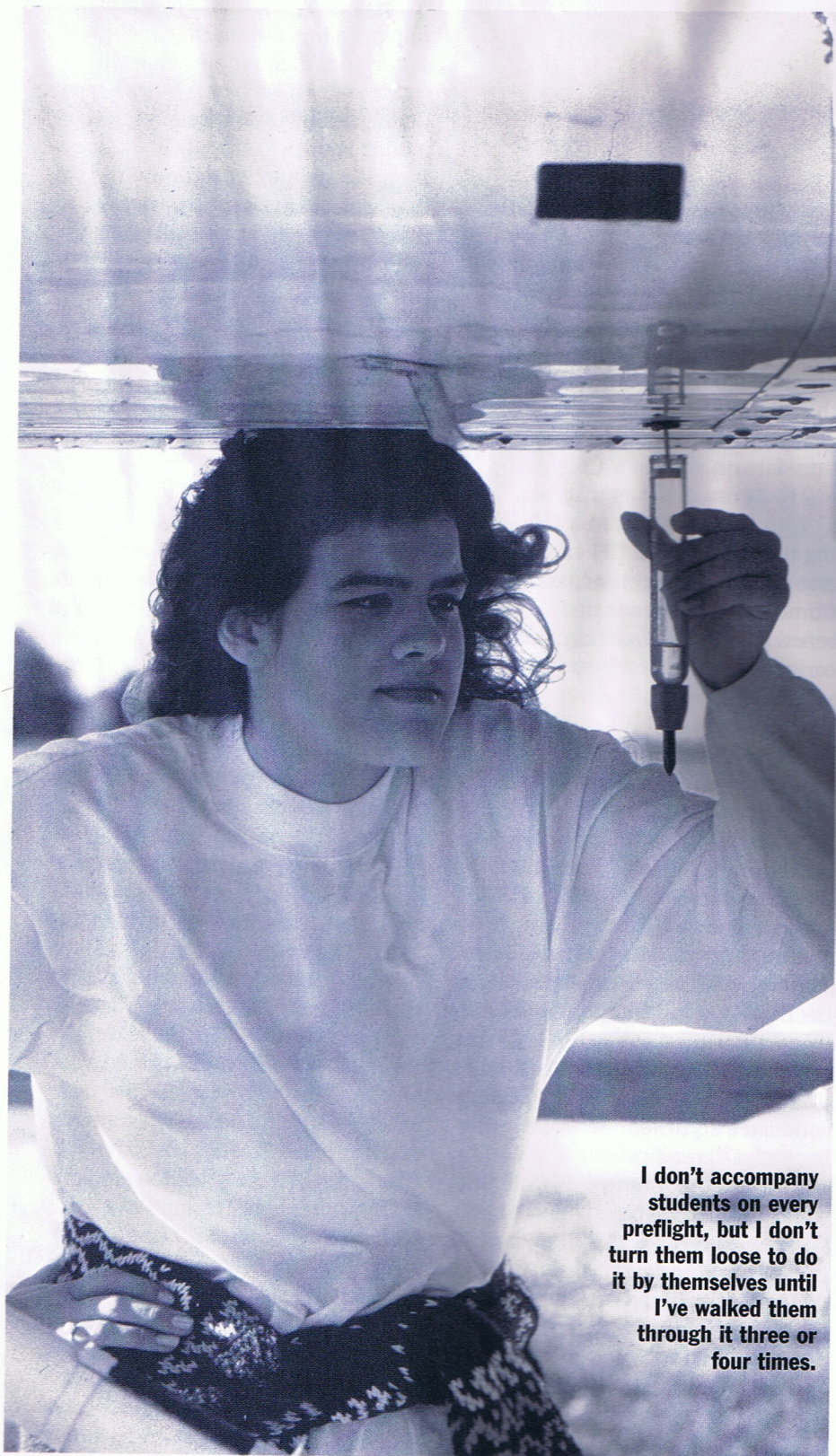


Preflight Training Tool

Instructors can teach a lot on the walk-around inspection

Austin Scott Collins



I don't accompany students on every preflight, but I don't turn them loose to do it by themselves until I've walked them through it three or four times.

I'm big on preflight inspections, which explains why I spend so much time on them, especially with my beginning students. Other instructors have said I spend *too* much time on the preflight and that I am overloading my students with information. Most of them seem to belong to the "fly now, explain later" club, which works only if students learn the essential knowledge and skills.

My philosophy is that the preflight procedures, from documentation checks and weather evaluation to the walk-around inspection itself are not only critical tasks, the importance of which cannot be stressed strongly enough, they can be valuable training tools in and of themselves. Instructors should emphasize them heavily from hour one to set them in the students' minds. There are occasions—especially early in the student's basic skills training—when we spend more time on the preflight than on the flight itself, and I think this is perfectly appropriate and even preferable.

Instructor Attitude

Students will better absorb and retain anything instructors say on the ground rather than in flight. They will give you their full attention because the airplane's engine, wind noise, air traffic, radio chatter, and the new and daunting task of trying