

# THE INSTRUCTOR SPOTLIGHT SERIES

*Get to know the people behind the purpose*

**BY DEIDRE ALVES, M.ED.**

Our powerful IRWA purpose, “We improve the quality of people’s lives through infrastructure development,” is brought to life by our IRWA CLIMB Certified Instructor Team who teaches our infrastructure students with gusto and brilliance. Over the next few months, I will be bringing you The Instructor Spotlight Series, which will highlight some of the instructors on the team and enable them to share their thoughts on teaching for this impactful industry and what it means to be an infrastructure educator. We are very lucky to have this high-caliber team to serve the educational needs of our current and future students. Let’s meet our next instructor in the series, Fred Easton, SR/WA.

**FRED EASTON, SR/WA**

**What is the most rewarding part of instructing for the IRWA?**

I love the opportunity to serve the IRWA! The most rewarding moments are those times when I get a sense that the audience not only understands the material, but has figured out how to apply it in their own lives and careers. When I know I’ve made a difference in people’s lives like that, it offsets the four-hour flight delays, the lumpy hotel mattress and the



time away from my family. I live for the benefit of sharing knowledge and information.

I've also had those experiences when a class is filled with one or two "had to" students—the ones that were forced to sign up by their manager. Converting these students to learners of the content who can benefit from the information and changing their mindset to that of a lifelong learner really makes me smile.

I appreciate the interaction of helping people understand what we do. I recently had a project manager at the start of class who wanted to know why his right of way staff is "holding up all of our projects." At the end, he learned that "land acquisition is far more complex than [he] thought." The benefit of that project manager gaining an understanding of all that is involved in our work is so very rewarding to me!

**IRWA' s purpose is to improve the quality of life through infrastructure development. As an instructor, how do you contribute to the fulfilment of this purpose?**

I contribute to our purpose by improving the knowledge and capabilities of our members and learners. An infrastructure professional who better understands the process, documents and other disciplines involved will help build higher quality infrastructure faster and without losing the public's trust. I like to tie-in a touch of ethics into every class I teach—a bit more than a touch for Course 100! I believe trust, or lack thereof, in our profession is one of the biggest issues a right of way professional may encounter. We are still paying for the unethical practices of our predecessors every time we first introduce ourselves to land owners. Increasing our awareness and adherence to ethical standards will pay huge dividends over time and cut the cost and time of the land acquisition process, making it easier for us to improve people's lives.

**What is the most important thing you would like your future students to know upon entering your class?**

Participate! It's the only way to gain the most benefit from my class—and most classes. While I've got some great stories and I love to share them, I do a lot of exercises and activities. Often, the activity is focused on getting the participants to share their ideas and experiences. When you do this, the entire class benefits! Also, if you do participate, the exam is a cake-walk. There are always those students so worried about the exam that they miss learning about the best content. Just relax, don't worry about it, participate and have fun. If you concentrate on the content being demonstrated, your understanding of that content will be such that you'll easily handle the exam.

*A special thank you to Fred for being a part of our Instructor Spotlight Series. For more information on our CLIMB Certified Instructor Team or to book one of our CLIMB Certified Instructors with your Chapter today, please visit [www.irwaonline.org/members/irwa-course-instructors](http://www.irwaonline.org/members/irwa-course-instructors) and click "Find an Instructor" or contact [education@irwaonline.org](mailto:education@irwaonline.org). 🌟*



*Deidre Alves is IRWA's Chief Learning Officer.*