THMCI Exam – Sample Orals Questions

Representative samples of questions for study
THMCI candidate are expected to have a wide knowledge in two handed casting within each subject:
First task within each cast is an oral question related to the specific cast that commonly is asked by all levels of students to a THMCI that teach the specific cast. I.e.

The THMCI exam includes oral questions in each section and these questions are not specified other than what general subject the specific question is related to. The questions can be asked about:

Fly Casting Principles and Mechanics.
Candidates must fully understand and be able to explain two fly casting principles and mechanics to students of all skill levels. FFI casting terminology must be understood and used when appropriate, but communication with students must be in language they will understand.

- Explain the rod bend/casting arc/rod tip path relationship
- What adjustments to casting mechanics must be made when casting from short to long distance?
- What constitutes a good anchor and a poor anchor?
- What role does acceleration play in loop formation? Are there different schools of thought on what type of acceleration is desired? If so, which do you subscribe to and why?
- Explain how the interaction of the upper hand and lower hand affect the loop formation during the forward stroke of a cast.
- Tell the basic principles and important key-steps for all cast in the exam, what are they and describe their functions.
- What is the difference between a closed and open casting stance? How does this affect the mechanics of the cast?
- What Causes excessive line stick?
- Describe the importance of the “overhang” when using a shooting head.
- Describe the disadvantage of too much “overhang” when using a shooting head.

Teaching and Instructional Methods.
Candidates must be well versed in common fly-casting teaching methods and fly casting lesson planning. The candidate must be able to clearly and concisely communicate with students and know how to teach students one-on-one and in groups. Candidates must also understand that they are responsible for their students’ welfare during lessons.
• A “right hand up” two-handed caster’s single Spey presentation unintentionally curves to the left. What are some possible causes and corrections?
• What is a “bloody L” and what is the most likely cause of one in a double Spey cast?
• Identify actions of the caster that can result in tailing loops during casts both with overhead casts and different Spey casts. Describe the corrective action for each.
• What part of a loop gives you the best clue to the cause of most casting flaws?
• What is the advantage of using this cast instead of another specific cast?
• Which safety aspects are important for each cast in the exam?
• Explain your recommended hand grip of a two-handed rod?
• Explain Spey cast vs. Roll cast?
• Where did Spey Casting originate?
• Explain the four traditional Spey Casts?
• What preliminary duties would you perform and/or what inquiries would you make to a new caster?
• What problems should an instructor expect with a singlehanded caster who wants to learn to Spey?
• What are the attributes of a good instructor?
• During your class, one student falls behind the other 3 students. How do you address this situation?
• Explain the difference between a Snap-T, Snap-C and a Circle cast.
• When a strong single-hand caster first learns to cast a double-handed rod, they will “push” with the top hand and the lower hand weakly trails, casting the rod single-handed. How would you correct this?
• Describe how you instruct the “stop “of the rod on the forward cast and on the back cast.
• How do you correct a caster that “swooshes” their forward cast, resulting in a soft round open loop with no line speed that collapse into a pile?
• How would you teach a class when grass is only available?
• Describe the terms “mechanics” and “style” of a cast.
• Your student says “I cannot perform a Single Spey. What should I do?”
• What should the instructor watch During a student’s cast?
• Describe the “Six Step Method” to correcting casting mistakes.
• Explain playing and landing a fish using a double hand rod?

**Fly Fishing Equipment.**
Candidates must be familiar with two-handed fly-fishing equipment, especially that equipment that has a direct impact on fly casting. Candidates should also have at least a general knowledge of the various two-handed fly-fishing opportunities around the world.

• What type of fly line/taper works best for the different type of casts in the exam?
• When would you use or recommend a “Spey” weight forward line with a head length of: 55’-65’-80’
• What rod length/weight would you recommend to a new student for a first rod? Explain why?
• For instruction of beginning students, what is your rod action, weight, and length of choice?
• How do you recommend securing the ferrules of a Spey rod? Is it necessary? Why?
• How would you tie a grass leader?
• How important is a correctly balanced outfit and how does the reel size play a role in the balance?
• What are the advantages and disadvantages of the use of shooting heads for two hand casting?
• What are the advantages and disadvantages of the use of Skagit for two hand casting?
• What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a longer rod?

**Fly Fishing Techniques.**
Candidates are expected to have a good understanding of a wide variety of two handed casting techniques and challenges presented by a wide variety of global fly fishing applications including classic Spey, Scandinavian shooting head, Skagit, sink tip’s and sunk line, slow and fast running water and cold and warm water.

• What to do differently when deep wading and casting this cast compared to standing in shallow water?
• Explain the difference between a Skagit cast and a Spey cast with a long belly Spey line.
• Explain the difference between a Skagit cast and a Scandinavian short shooting head with sinking tip.
• Explain how to match the weight of the Skagit line in relation to rod, style and type of different fishing situations.
• Describe how you would us a double-handed rod for striper fishing. Would equipment be same for steelhead fishing? How would it differ? Why?
• How do you swing a wet fly and what attribute decides how you would change the method of the swing?
• How do you fish a dry fly with a Double Hand rod?
• What constitutes the choice of different densities of sink tips and belly and how do you adapt the setup of line for different fishing situations

**Etiquette.**
Etiquette addresses the impact and responsibilities that those engaged in fly fishing activities have on the environment, the species they pursue, others encountered fishing, enjoying or working in the aquatic environment including access and surrounding areas.

• Are the rules of etiquette the same everywhere? Why or why not?
• In general, what are some things that you should do and should not do with respect to etiquette when fishing different types of streams or rivers.
• Why is fishing etiquette important today and how do you convey that to students?
• What are the fundamental etiquette rules to teach your student about catch and release?
• What are the best handling practices to revive and release a fish after a long fight?

**Additional representative questions for study**

**Representative Questions – Casting**
Essential fly casting mechanics and style variations of well-publicized casting teachers and an understanding of two-handed Spey casting.

1. Describe the parts of the casting stroke.
2. What is the most important element of the casting stroke?
3. Explain the importance of the path the rod tip takes during the casting stroke, both vertically and horizontally. How do different tip paths affect the cast?
4. Describe the casting mechanics that govern the size of the casting loop.
5. Explain the relationship between rod bend and casting arc.
6. Loops have fly and rod legs, which is more important and why?
7. Describe a fly leg that is very efficient.
8. Explain why the rod leg of the loop is important.
9. What is the difference between "substance" and "style" in casting?
10. Describe some different styles in casting. Is one style better than another?
11. Describe the variables in the casting stroke that must be adjusted when casting for distance.
12. Explain how to use drift when casting with a two-handed rod.
13. Is creep always a casting fault?
14. Explain how drag can be used to cast more efficiently.
15. What do elite Spey casters do differently than less competent casters?
16. Describe the difference between a D-loop and a V-loop?
17. As casting distance increases your rod arc should ..........?
18. You are making long single Spey casts with a sink tip line. A stiff downstream wind starts blowing. How would you cope with the situation?
19. Discuss various methods of casting into the wind.
20. A Double Spey cast may sometimes reposition the anchor point farther upstream the centre of the anchoring zone before the presentation cast. Why?
21. What are some possible advantages and disadvantages of using a single Spey versus a snap cast? A snake roll versus a double Spey?
22. Should the anchoring be modified when casting heavily weighted flies? If so, how?
23. What is drift? When is drifting the rod a good idea? How would you teach drift?
24. When might you use the Perry Poke?
25. What does the anchor in a roll, switch or Spey cast do?
26. What is the rod leg of the loop? How does it affect the cast and why?
27. When you are practicing, what do you look at to determine if you are casting well?
28. What determines the shape of the loop?
29. What are some grip styles and what are advantages and disadvantages of each?
30. How would you describe casting stroke and casting arc?
31. When does the loop form?
32. Describe counterflex and rebound and their effects.
33. In your opinion how important is the roll cast and why?
34. What is a wind knot and how is it caused?
35. Can you provide an example of when style affects mechanics in a cast?
36. Explain the most important factors for Spey casting.
37. When do you release the line when shooting it?
38. When and why would you use an overhead cast?

Representative Questions – Fault Recognition and Teaching
Teaching ability and experience - includes demonstration of teaching methodology and analysis of casting errors.
1. What are the attributes of a good instructor?
2. What characteristics do poor instructors exhibit?
3. How do you teach? What is your teaching methodology?
4. Assuming a relatively short distance Spey cast which of the following things must change to cast farther, and why?
   a. - casting arc
   b. - force applied
   c. - stroke length
5. Describe how you teach the roll cast.
6. What communication methods do you use with your students?
7. What methodology do you use for curing casting problems?
8. When would you use a kinesthetic approach to cure a problem?
9. You have one student who has never cast before, and you have only 5 minutes to teach him/her. What is your approach?
10. You have 6 students and 1 hour to teach them. Please outline your approach.
11. You have 10 students and an afternoon to teach them. Outline your approach. How much time would you give to each part of your outline?
12. Describe how you teach the 180 degree rule.
13. Your student can cast a 40 ft shooting head. effectively, what will s/he have to change to cast a 60 ft Spey line?
14. Your new student's D-loop lacks tension and alignment. How do you tell the student to fix these problems?
15. Your student is throwing tailing loops in part because of a too narrow casting arc due to creep. How do you cure the problem?
16. In your small class of students, you have progressed from explanation and demonstration of basic mechanics to practicing roll casts. All seem to be progressing except one student who just doesn't get it. What do you do with that student?
17. What do you tell your students with regard to "style"?
18. What is the most important thing to watch when you are analyzing a student’s cast?
19. Describe a particularly difficult student and what you did to teach him/her.
20. How would you structure a 4-hour lesson for 4 intermediate casters wanting to Spey cast farther?
21. What process would you use to mentor prospective THCI instructors?
22. Explain your communication methods with your students and why they work.
23. Name multiple casting styles and explain how you would teach these styles.
24. When would you teach a student about constant tension, and why?
25. When would you teach a student about drag, and why?
26. What’s your opinion of the use of constant tension to prevent slack?
27. You have one student who has never cast a two-handed rod before and has 30 minutes to learn. What approach will you use?
28. How do you teach rod acceleration? (Assume a straight top leg is desired)

Representative Questions - Equipment
Fly fishing equipment, including rods, lines, leaders, flies and other items.

Rods:
1. What are the primary advantages of a short rod? A long rod? A fast rod? A slow rod?
2. How do rod length and stiffness affect distance casting? Setting the hook? Fighting a fish?
3. How does rod length affect line control?
4. How will over-lining and under-lining a rod affect its performance?
5. Nowadays, does the Two Handed Speyline and shooting heads standard of all 9 wt. actually weigh the same?
6. Could you fish an AFFTA Two Handed Speyline #10 on a two handed rod designed for #7 effectively? And the other way around, a #7 line on a #10 fly rod?
7. Does it make sense to use different weight lines on one rod for different fishing applications?

Lines:
1. What are the major considerations in selecting a particular line weight?
2. What is the primary purpose of the front taper? Belly? Rear taper?
3. Why should you clean your fly line? How do you clean it and how often?
4. Is there any fly line that can be used to serve a similar function as a Skagit line?
5. Are there any benefits to under-lining and over-lining a fly rod?
6. What line would you use to teach casting with heavily weighted flies?
7. Describe where you might use a sinking tip line with a short tip? A long tip?
8. What part of the line typically has the most mass?
9. What characteristic of a line most affects long distance casting?
10. What part of the line primarily determines how much line can be "controlled" during casting or mending on the water?
11. For low water salmon fishing with micro flies, would you prefer a line with a long, delicate front taper or with a standard front taper?
12. Why does a line "kick" when cast without a leader?
13. What are the casting performance differences between a 30-foot shooting head and a 45-foot shooting head?
14. When would you use a line size lighter or heavier than recommended for a particular rod?
15. Describe the taper of a line you would use for throwing heavy flies.
16. What’s the difference between a standard sinking line and a density compensated sinking line?
17. What material is used in modern sinking lines to achieve fast sink rates?

Leaders:
1. Describe how you construct leaders.
2. If a leader has a “50/30/20” profile, what does that mean?
3. Describe some common leader taper formulas.
4. How do you determine what diameter the butt of a leader should be?
5. What is the advantage, if any, of a tapered leader?
6. To save money, your student has tied on 14’ of 8 lb. test monofilament as a practice leader. What problem will occur?
7. If you want to attach a loop on the fly line end tip to use as a loop to loop connection to attach your leader, what alternative to make such a loop?
8. What are the advantages and limitations of a very long leader? A very short leader?
9. Why would you want to lengthen your tippet? Shorten your tippet?
10. Are there advantages or disadvantages in using a very long leader with a line that has a very long, fine front taper?
11. How does fluorocarbon monofilament differ from nylon monofilament?
12. Explain advantages and disadvantages of fluorocarbon monofilament vs. nylon monofilament.
13. What are polyleaders and in what situations are they appropriate to use?

Representative Questions - Fly Fishing
1. I'm a traditional Scottish two handed caster. I want to go winter Steelhead fishing. What equipment do I need? How will the casting differ from summer fishing in Scotland? The same question for Sea run brown trout in Patagonia. The same question for small river salmon fishing in Iceland.
2. Does the traditional swing speed of the fly need to change to successfully fish when water temperature has fallen?
3. Discuss the use of traditional single hook salmon flies, tube flies, riffling hitch, dry flies and heavy weighted tungsten flies in various fishing situations.
4. What techniques do you use to create more fly "drag"?

Representative Questions - Etiquette
Angler etiquette in various fishing conditions.
1. Discuss angler etiquette when wading, when drifting a river in a boat.
2. What do you tell your students about angler etiquette?
3. You could also review the FFI Anglers Code of Ethics