



Back-to-School – ASA Style

By Charles S. Hanskat, Executive Director



As summer winds down in the Northern Hemisphere, many are sending their children back to school. This prompted me to reflect on our version of “back-to-school” in our careers and businesses, like how my professional engineering license requires periodic continuing education (CE) for renewal. Some states also require CE for contractors to renew their licenses.

ASA’s Vision is “To expand and advance global utilization of the shotcrete process for concrete placement,” which we do by “providing shotcrete leadership, knowledge, resources, qualification, certification, and education for the concrete industry.” (ASA Mission Statement)

Can ASA be your “back-to-school” for shotcrete knowledge through education opportunities? Definitely! Since our inception in 1998, we have developed a diverse range of educational programs designed for a broad audience, including engineers, owners, DOTs, shotcreters, inspectors, pool builders, general contractors, and shotcrete contractors. The program delivery ranges from online webinars to lunch or dinner onsite presentations and full-day in-person classes.

SO, WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM OUR EDUCATION?

ENGINEERS, OWNERS, AND DOTs

These are generally specifiers who first need to know what shotcrete is and then how it can be used for quality shotcrete placement on their projects. For this group, we offer our 1-hour *Introduction to Shotcrete* seminar (A market-specific version for the Underground market is also available). This is often presented during a lunch-and-learn on-site or sometimes as a webinar — for firms with remote offices, our staff have broadcast on-site seminars to the remote attendees. Presenting our webinars through Teams or Zoom makes it easy for your team members to join. The Q&A segment of the presentation seems to be livelier with the on-site seminars, but a webinar with chat or audio links works too.

ENGINEERING STUDENTS

ASA presents an *Introduction to Shotcrete* at a variety of schools across the country, with a target group of civil

engineering or construction management programs. Most are in-person presentations with the occasional webinar. This allows us to expose students to the unique benefits of shotcrete placement in concrete construction, often for the first and only time. Usually, showing the students (and professors) the flexibility and creativity of shotcreting is an eye-opener for what can be achieved in such a wide variety of concrete structures. We coordinate with professors (to come in as a guest lecturer) or with students (as a speaker at a chapter meeting).

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

This group includes the US Army Corps of Engineers, various State DOTs (main or district offices), and the Canadian Ministries of Transportation. These groups are often involved not only in specifying but also in inspecting the field construction. We’ve presented our full-day Shotcrete Inspector seminar, *Quality Shotcrete, Know It When You See It*, to many of these groups. We’ve also presented our one-hour *Introduction to Shotcrete* or *Shotcrete for Underground Applications*, depending on the needs of the group. If you have a project where the overseeing agency needs a bit more shotcrete knowledge, feel free to recommend our ASA seminars.

CONCRETE-RELATED ASSOCIATIONS

We have made many presentations to the American Concrete Institute (ACI), the International Concrete Repair Institute (ICRI), and the Pool & Hot Tub Association (PHTA), both with local chapters and at their national conferences. This provides us with an opportunity to educate a large number of people simultaneously. Also, many who attend local chapter meetings don’t attend the national conventions, so we are reaching different groups.

The local chapter meetings also tend to have a more diverse cross-section of the concrete industry, with individuals from testing labs, concrete and material suppliers, engineers, and contractors. In contrast, the large national conferences seem to attract more engineers and educators. If you are part of a local chapter looking for speakers, be sure to mention to the officers or staff that ASA can provide a speaker on a great topic — shotcrete!

POOL BUILDERS

Pool and other watershapes are a big market for shotcrete, and most pool builders use subcontractors for shotcrete placement. Though the pool builder has overall responsibility for the pool construction, they may not have the necessary knowledge to identify quality shotcrete

placement. We've developed a full-day seminar for the pool industry, *Quality Shotcrete for Pools – Know It, Demand It*. Attendees learn the basics of shotcrete placement and, most importantly, the visual cues to identify good or bad concrete as it is being placed.

So, who should attend? Owners, project managers, superintendents, and foremen have benefited highly from this seminar. Shotcrete contractors who routinely shoot pools can also benefit from this pool-specific course. Watershape University (WU), a pool educational organization, recognized the value of ASA's shotcrete seminar for the pool industry and requires this seminar as a prerequisite for two of their shotcrete-related certifications. You can find out more about WU certifications at [Watershape.org/Certification](https://www.watershape.org/Certification). We offer the course at select pool trade shows nationwide as well, plus on-site upon request. We have also provided it at ASA's annual convention held in late February or early March.

SHOTCRETE INSPECTORS

Our *Quality Shotcrete, Know It When You See It* full-day seminar is geared toward inspectors who need to know the specifics of quality shotcrete placement. The education gives a broad knowledge of shotcrete that can't be covered in our one-hour *Introduction to Shotcrete*. Those who can benefit from the seminar include inspectors from testing labs, engineering firms, or oversight agencies (such as DOTs).

It's also an excellent course for engineers, owners, and contractors who want to have a more in-depth understanding of quality shotcrete placement for their projects. It's a great educational session for shotcrete contractor staff as well, who may not be hands-on shotcreters but need to know more about quality placement.

Finally, the seminar can benefit attendees pursuing ACI Shotcrete Inspector certification, as not only do they gain a more thorough knowledge of shotcrete, but the course counts as the equivalent of one year of work experience. We offer the course at the annual World of Concrete, ACI's Resource Centers, and ACI local chapters. Companies have also requested the seminar for their staff, and others for specific projects.

SHOTCRETE CONTRACTORS

ASA has a full-day shotcrete contractor education seminar. This course focuses on the specifics of developing and running a shotcrete contracting firm. As in our shotcrete inspector class, it addresses the many aspects of shotcrete placement necessary for quality concrete, but also covers additional planning, safety, and business-related items. The course is a prerequisite for pursuing the ASA Qualified Shotcrete Contractor or ASA Qualified Pool Shotcrete Contractor qualifications. Details on the ASA Qualified Contractor program can be found at [shotcrete.org](https://www.shotcrete.org). Attendees who could benefit from this are shotcrete company owners, operations managers, project managers, and superintendents.

SHOTCRETTERS

For 25 years, ASA has provided a full day of education for shotcreters pursuing ACI certification. The course focuses on the concrete and shotcrete-specific knowledge required for the shotcreter operating the nozzle. Shotcrete contracting companies host most of our ASA education and ACI Shotcreter certifications. Though geared towards the shotcreter, the full-day seminar may also be beneficial for others in the company, like project, operations, or safety managers. We also offer the ASA Shotcreter education at the annual World of Concrete tradeshow.

CONCLUSION

So, who can benefit from ASA shotcrete knowledge and education? The answer — most everyone involved with concrete placement! Even those not directly involved on a shotcrete project may benefit from learning about the creativity, flexibility, efficiency, durability, and quality of shotcrete placement. Investing an hour or a day to learn more about shotcrete placement can make shotcrete projects better, and even perhaps reveal how shotcrete can be an option for a future project where you've only seen form-and-pour. For more details on our ASA educational offerings, visit [Shotcrete.org/Events-Education](https://www.shotcrete.org/Events-Education).

Learning is a lifelong endeavor. As Henry Ford once said, "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young." Let's all stay young!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ASA AND ITS PROGRAMS, CONTACT:

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