



Professional Ski Instructors of America  
American Association of Snowboard  
Instructors  
Eastern Division

Level I Adaptive Workbook

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## **The Level I Adaptive Workbook**

### **Introduction**

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The Level I Adaptive Workbook introduces you to the profession of teaching snowsports to individuals with disabilities. This guide will help you in your training as a new instructor and as you train toward the Professional Ski Instructors of America-American Association of Snowboard Instructors (PSIA/AASI-Eastern Division) Level I certification.

This guide introduces you to the PSIA-AASI models and concepts used by instructors to teach adaptive students. The Level I Adaptive Workbook is an educational tool to help you prepare for your Level I Adaptive ski or snowboard exam. It will provide you with background on PSIA/AASI and also help you learn about our organization's fundamental beliefs on snow sports instruction. This workbook will also help steer discussions at your exam. It is required that you complete the whole workbook, think about the questions, make some notes, and come to the exam prepared to discuss the material. **You should bring a copy of the workbook to your exam.** Part of the Level I Adaptive exam is based on your professional knowledge and this workbook is a great way to familiarize yourself with these concepts. Our hope is that this workbook will help you think about your own personal goals as an instructor and also what you hope to gain from your PSIA/AASI membership.

Teaching skiing or snowboarding is one of the most rewarding jobs you could ever have. From the challenge of communicating with students and understanding their wants and needs to the sheer joy of helping them learn to slide on snow – and progress from there – you gain rich experiences beyond compare. Your students learn skills that boost their self-confidence and life skills they can apply anywhere. To help your students experience the thrill and excitement of skiing or riding is to create memories that last a lifetime.

As an instructor, you foster the skill development of your students while exploring an exciting mountain environment. Students often bring to the lesson a sense of adventure, and you have the opportunity to share your passion for snowsports while creating an atmosphere of safe and fun learning.

## **PSIA-AASI: Who We Are**

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The Professional Ski Instructors of America® and the American Association of Snowboard Instructors® (PSIA-AASI) is a non profit education association – and close-knit community – of 30,000 plus snowsports professionals dedicated to creating life-changing experiences for others through snowsports instruction.

Snowsports instructors are professional teachers and athletes. Our offices are the snowsports areas in the mountains, forests, and woodlands across the country. Our office may be a Nordic area, a small hill with 146 vertical feet, or a destination resort with thousands of vertical feet. Regardless, instructors often spend more time with guests than any other employee. Because of this, we have the opportunity and obligation to create the best experiences possible for our customers. That means these experiences are memorable and may even be life changing! To our customers, instructors are the “face” of our area, and we should conduct ourselves as professionals and exhibit an outgoing and welcoming persona. This first impression is critical to establish trust in you, your school, and the students’ confidence in your ability to meet their expectations. PSIA/AASI provides training, resources, and certification to ensure that snowsports instructors are able to provide the guests with the best and safest experience possible.

### **About PSIA-AASI**

**Vision:** Inspiring lifelong passion for the mountain experience.

The Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) and American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI) are nonprofit associations dedicated to promoting skiing and snowboarding through formal instruction. Working together, the two organizations establish credentialing standards for snowsports instructors and develop education standards and materials that serve as the core components of instructor training. PSIA-E provides you the opportunity to grow personally and professionally through education programs and materials.

**Mission:** We support our members, as a part of the snowsports industry, to:

- Develop personally and professionally
- Create positive learning experiences
- Have more fun

PSIA has evolved into a sophisticated and influential entity since its fledgling beginnings over 50 years ago. The early days of ski instruction in the United States were typified by a variety of programs and techniques, many of which were brought to this country by European ski instructors. Teaching principles varied across the country, as did the process of instructor certification—bestowed in those early years by an assortment of regional associations. Initially there was no set of standards regarding what was taught. Instructors could choose to teach Austrian, French, or Swiss methods, to name just a few. The fact that the certification standards were so different from one part of the country to another was the catalyst that drove the formation of a national organization for ski instruction.

PSIA was incorporated in the fall of 1961 by a group of seven instructors who hailed from different parts of the country. By 1964, this group developed a truly American ski technique, which was first described in the organization's inaugural manual, *The Official American Ski Technique*. Finally, there existed a standard for what American ski instructors taught. As time went on, the American Ski Technique (AST) evolved into the American Teaching Method (ATM) into its current form known as the American Teaching System (ATS).

As snowboarding hit the snowsports scene and gained popularity, PSIA saw the need to do for snowboard instruction what it had done for ski instruction. The first training and education programs were developed—by PSIA—in 1987, and in 1989, the association published its first snowboard-oriented education resource, the *Snowboard Ski Instruction Manual*. In 1997, PSIA formed the American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI) as an affiliate association.

Today, PSIA-AASI is the largest provider of skiing and snowboarding instruction in the United States and offers instructor certifications or certificates in multiple different disciplines. These certifications and certificate programs are considered the gold standard in the snowsports industry and serve as testimony to PSIA-AASI's reputation for producing high-quality instructor education materials and for helping adults, children, and adaptive communities enjoy alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, and snowboarding more fully. This commitment, combined with the organizations' never-ending pursuit of developing new educational programs and materials that serve the needs of our members, schools, and snowsports area management, is why PSIA-AASI's members, products and services are unmatched.

There are four primary categories of membership: Registered, Level I, Level II and Level III. As a new instructor, you first become a Registered member. As you become a more experienced instructor, you then train and are examined at Level I. Successful candidates demonstrate the knowledge and performance criteria of the Level I national standard. Levels II and III progressively require more depth of knowledge, skill at applying this knowledge, and demonstration of a greater range of sliding skills on progressively more difficult terrain and conditions.

Additional Resources:

- PSIA-AASI website: [www.thesnowpros.org](http://www.thesnowpros.org)
- PSIA/AASI Eastern Division website: <https://www.psia-e.org>

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## **Teaching First-time Skiers and Riders**

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Our existence as ski and snowboard teachers revolves around creating a safe and exciting experience for our students. We exist to meet their expectations for skiing or riding. We exist to create and manage an environment to which they will want to return time and time again. Perhaps the most crucial part of teaching beginning sliders is preparation of the “game plan”; what you are going to do, why you are going to do it, and how you are going to encourage your students to accomplish movements that will lead to skillful skiing and riding. Your credibility with your student rests on your choices. Your degree of success (and that of the student) will depend on your strategy for your student’s development and your ability to improvise and change your lesson plan given the experiences that occur during the lesson, and your energy and judgment.

As with any equation, the formula for success with beginners has many variables. A lesson for a beginner, especially a beginner with adapted needs, invariably leads to a variety of variables, and thus has many solutions. A great teacher has a solid understanding of the fundamental movements of efficient skiing or snowboarding, how variables presented by the student’s disability will affect the outcomes, and how to manipulate the variables to create a solution that leads to success for the student. Adaptive snowsports schools across the country use many different teaching systems, but the fundamental movements that lead to effective skiing and riding remain the same. To be effective as a teacher, it is critical to make accurate technical analyses while keeping the student’s goals and abilities (as well as your goals) in mind. Remember, you exist to give your beginning student an exciting introduction to skiing or riding.

## **Why Teach?**

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The process to become a certified snowsports instructor is a journey. The journey will take you through training at your home mountain and practicing what you learned in clinics you have attended, to becoming accustomed to providing for the needs of your students and growing from students who challenge what you know about snowsports. There are a number of reasons one may decide to teach snowsports: the love of the sport, sharing your passion with others, particularly those with disabilities, relaxation on the weekends, or creating a lifestyle that fulfills your goals. For all these reasons, and the ones that are personal to you, teaching should be one of the most rewarding jobs you will ever have.

As instructors, we have the honor of representing our mountain, school or program, and sport. Becoming affiliated with an adaptive program or snowsports school is the first step as you will receive great training and will also learn from your peers. Becoming an effective instructor is the next step and will take a desire to further your training and a lot of trial and error, dedication, and persistence. Teaching in any form is a constant learning experience. PSIA-AASI membership provides a way for instructors to continue striving for excellence in their teaching and personal development as a snowsports professional.

Welcome and enjoy your journey!



***Thinking about it***

- List two reasons you enjoy skiing or snowboarding.
  
- Why would you like to pursue snowsports instruction?
  
- Why have you chosen to work with individuals with disabilities?
  
- In your opinion, what are the three most important characteristics of a good teacher?  

_____ Passionate	_____ Flexible
_____ Patient/Supportive	_____ Well Prepared
_____ Knowledgeable	_____ Certified
_____ Experienced	_____ Sense of Humor
_____ Fun Loving	_____ Motivation



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## Who Are Our Customers?

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### *Teaching Students with Adapted Needs*

For any winter sport professional who wants to gain a sense of what really matters, coaching in an adaptive program may fit the bill. They may be adults or children, their disabilities will range from relatively mild disabilities to very involved disabilities, they may be fit or may be sedentary. The one thing to know is they will never be the same! To coach students with adaptive needs, a pro must look for what each student can do, instead of what they can't. This can often be a monumental challenge that forces you to change your own definition of success. Adaptive alpine skiing and snowboarding have seen participation levels rise immensely over the past decade. As adaptive instructors, we provide much more than a service. We allow families to ski and ride together for the first time, students to feel the wind on their face, and we enable individuals to accomplish something for themselves when their lives can be so dependent on others.

Regardless of who our student is, it's important to keep in mind at all times the three core values of snowsports instruction: safety, fun, and learning.



*When students feel safe and are having fun, the learning quotient is higher.*

### **Safety**

One of your most important tasks as an instructor is to know Your Responsibility Code. Since students don't necessarily understand the elements of safety in the winter environment, it's up to you to teach and model etiquette and safety oriented practices on the hill. It's also important to be aware of the code of conduct for freestyle terrain known as Smart Style.

## **Fun**

Few people are lucky enough to be able to change lives by sharing their passion for a sport or activity. Our students and their families spend a great deal of personal time and money coming to our resort/program, buying equipment, and paying for lessons.

Instructors who focus only on the technical aspects of the sport lose sight of the reason most of our students participate. We ski and ride because it's FUN!

## **Learning**

People with disabilities take lessons for a variety of reasons: to improve their fitness, to get outside of their disability through the freedom sliding on snow offers, or to learn something they can do together with their families. Facilitating improvement in your students is crucial for teaching and learning success. Always emphasize what students are doing well and how they can improve. An instructor who focuses only on what students are doing wrong is doing an injustice to the student and to their overall interests and success. Nothing is more valuable to your student than an instructor who expresses genuine interest in them.

A positive learning environment generally includes the following ingredients:

**Friendship** – A genuine liking of one another develops between you and your student

**Equality** – You and your student view each other as equals

**Security** – An environment is created that focuses on the student's safety and comfort

**Purpose** – The student is made aware of the reasons for what they are asked to do

**Enjoyment** – A positive, fun, and refreshing learning experience is fostered

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## **Keeping Your Student Safe**

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Students of all ages need to feel safe and secure before productive learning will occur. An important part of your role as their instructor is to educate students about safety and, to the best of your ability, manage the variables within your control to decrease potential risks. Safety encompasses many aspects of the lesson, including group dynamics and

class handling, equipment, terrain choices, even attire. Consider these elements throughout the lesson to establish a solid framework of safety.

Of course, safety starts with you, so make sure you're well rested, hydrated, and nourished. Wear sunscreen and proper clothing (remembering that weather can change quickly), and choose the correct equipment for the snow conditions, level of class, and terrain to be skied or ridden. Also be sure your equipment is in good shape, with your skis/board tuned and your bindings' DIN release-force set properly. With proper preparation you can more fully devote your attention to the students in your care.

### ***Making Smart Choices/Class Handling***

When determining how best to teach students, you'll want to make smart choices and follow time-tested guidelines for handling the lesson. Set expectations and lesson guidelines, select terrain and tasks that are appropriate for student age and ability levels, and take it down a notch when introducing new tasks or more challenging terrain. One valuable adage to remember is "old task, new terrain; new task, old terrain. Also, it's helpful to "ski to the lowest level" of proficiency within the lesson by choosing tasks and terrain that accommodate the least skilled student in the group, rather than have that student continually struggle to keep up with the rest of the class.

To help minimize potential risks and hazards, always be aware of your surroundings. Learn how to recognize beginner-area stress points, such as low areas to which gravity might draw a student, and know where and when high or crossing traffic develops.

### ***Safety Checklist***

Whether your student is starting a ski vacation or just visiting for the day, knowing where (s)he is from, how many hours they have traveled, and if they are adequately rested will greatly influence your decisions regarding their energy and the pacing of the lesson. Many students taking lessons aren't familiar with the winter environment, so help prepare them for a day on the slopes. Review the following checklist to help promote a productive, fun day and reduce the possibility of a negative experience – for you *and* your students.

During the first lesson, it is not unusual for a student to be, or become, very self-focused. As an instructor, identify when this is happening and help them so that this doesn't negatively affect their experience. The following factors are examples of safety considerations that may impact their experience:

**Food:** If possible, suggest students eat something before the lesson.

**Hydration:** Help students understand why drinking plenty of water, especially at high altitude, is important. When possible, and needed, stop for a water break.

**Equipment:** Instructors should perform a visual check of their student's equipment before each lesson. For skis and snowboards, check if the equipment is the right size and type for the guest and the techniques that they will be taught. Do the boots fit properly and are they on the correct feet? Are the bindings working properly and do the boots fit the bindings? Is the guest wearing appropriate clothing for the weather and activity? Or, are they overdressed, underdressed, or missing key items such as goggles?

**Cold Weather:** Cold weather can affect guests both psychologically and physically. On cold days, try to keep the class moving and keep stops brief. Look for areas out of the wind and away from blowing snow if you are going to stop or be talking for a while. Whenever possible keep the guest's back to the sun for added warmth. Facing away from the sun also allows the student to more clearly see you if you are talking to them.

**Sun and Wind Exposure:** Discuss the need for using sunscreen and eye protection such as sunglasses or goggles. People new to snowsports and the winter environment may underestimate the effects of exposure to the sun and wind in the winter even on warm or foggy days.

**Physical Condition:** Work with your student/their caregiver to understand their physical ability/needs by following your program's student evaluation protocol

and set your instructional goals accordingly. The altitude and amount of activity may be different than what they are used to, so check in with them frequently to see if they are feeling tired or thirsty. Frequent breaks for water, rest or even food, if available, are helpful and can keep them energized.

**Terrain:** Terrain selection can enhance or inhibit success. Use the proper terrain for the level and the ability of your student as well as the technique being taught. Instructors and guests should realize that going to terrain that is too advanced too quickly could create defensive habits, which later may be hard to eliminate.

**Psychological Condition:** Students may experience many emotions over the course of a lesson. Fear may be an emotion you see in your students as they explore new terrain or even a new skill on old terrain. Talking about fear and anxiety with the guest can let them know that fear or apprehension is natural as they learn new things. Other emotions you will encounter are excitement, joy, nervousness, exhilaration, and frustration. Learning how to accurately interpret body language as a sign of how students may be feeling at a particular moment and understanding why they are taking a lesson and learning a snowsport can help you adapt your teaching and communication to best address these emotions.

***Know the Code!***

Your Responsibility Code provides safety tips to follow while on the slopes.

1. Always stay in control
2. People ahead of you have the right of way
3. Stop in a safe place for you and others
4. Whenever starting downhill or merging, look uphill and yield
5. Use devices to help prevent runaway equipment
6. Observe signs and warnings, and keep off closed trails
7. Have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload a lift safely, prior to use.

Each ski resort determines its own terrain difficulty, there is no standard for every trail rating. The levels of all trails are relative to each other. For example, a beginner level trail (green circle) at a steep ski mountain may be markedly more difficult than an intermediate level trail (blue square) at another resort. Below are very generic trail designations and may vary greatly between resorts.

**Green Circle:** Easiest trails and more mellow slopes

**Blue Square:** More difficult trails and intermediate slopes

**Black Diamond:** Most difficult trails and vertical slopes

**Double Black Diamond:** Expert skiers and riders only

**Orange Oval:** Terrain park

**Caution Triangle:** Heads up, this terrain may contain hazards

**Red Octagon with slash through skier:** Trail or area is closed. No skiing or riding allowed.

### ***Smart Style/Park Smart***

The National Ski Areas Association "Smart Style" Terrain Park Safety initiative is a cooperative effort with the help of the Professional Ski Instructors of America and the American Association of Snowboard Instructors that emphasizes the proper use of terrain parks. Smart Style is all about safety and having the knowledge to enjoy your freedom and the freestyle terrain.

Park Smart reinforces five important points for the use of freestyle terrain.

**START SMALL** - Work your way up. Build your skills.

**MAKE A PLAN** - Every feature. Every time.

**ALWAYS LOOK** - Before you drop.

**RESPECT** - The features and other users.

**TAKE IT EASY** - Know your limits. Land on your feet.

For more information visit <http://www.terrainparksafety.org/>

Additional Resources:

- Chapters 5 and 6 in the Core Concepts for Snowsports Instructors manual
- Your Responsibility Code: <http://www.nsaa.org/safety-programs/responsibility-code/>

- Smart Style: <http://terrainparksafety.org/>
- Helmets: <http://www.lidsonkids.org/>
- Chairlift Safety: <http://www.nsaa.org/safety-programs/kids-on-lifts/>



***Thinking about it***

- As an instructor, how do you manage safety and incorporate safety awareness into your lesson?
- What are the signs that your student may be developing sunburn or hypothermia?
- List one safety-related item you carry with you as an instructor.
- What are some of the possible threats present in the winter environment that skiers and riders need to be aware of?
- What is the Responsibility Code and why is it important in snowsport instruction?
- Safety + Fun = Learning is a core tenant of snowsports instruction because? (Choose your favorite)
  - \_\_\_ If a student does not feel safe they will have difficulty learning.
  - \_\_\_ If it isn't fun, students will not be eager to participate or come back for more.
  - \_\_\_ Students want to feel they got their monies worth.
  - \_\_\_ Instructors must reach a safe and effective balance between the student(s) capabilities, the goals, and the mountain environment.

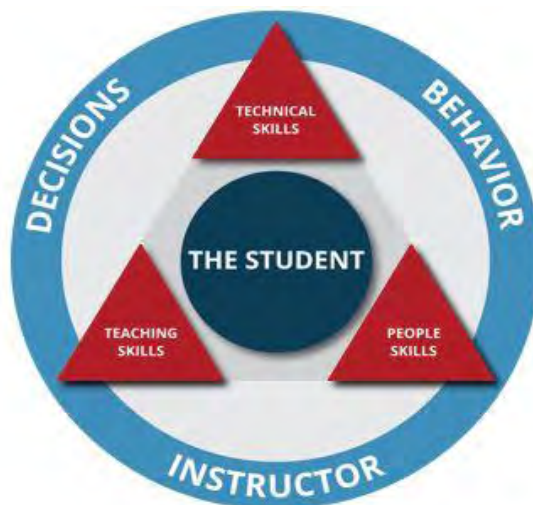
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## Making a Learning Connection

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The PSIA-AASI Student Centered philosophy centers on the integration of *People Skills*, *Technical Skills*, and *Teaching Skills* to provide the complete guest experience.

In the United States, the conversion rate of beginner students to lifelong skiers and riders is only around 17%. Making a connection with your student, providing a fun lesson experience and helping your student progress in their skill level are all critical to increasing conversion. New instructors often focus on rapid delivery of skill steps and push their students to progress at a rate that is not conducive to learning. No price can be placed on the importance of making a strong learning connection over pushing your student to progress faster than necessary.



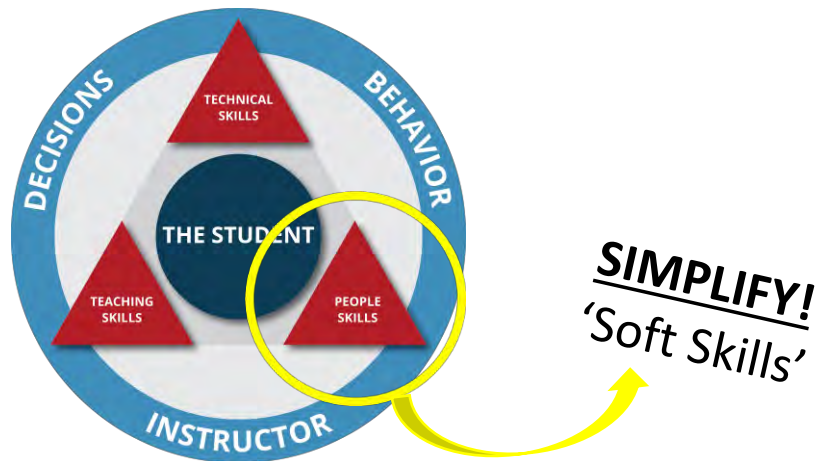
To make a true learning connection, the instructor blends the following to provide the student with an exceptional experience:

**People Skills:** An empathetic approach to building relationships based on trust and respect; this approach reinforces the culture of snowsports.

**Technical Skills:** A clearly defined set of fundamental mechanics that can be adapted and applied to any ability level, situation, application, or outcome and that are at the core of everything we do.

**Teaching Skills:** A method of developing content and adapting delivery based upon the physical, mental, and social needs and desires of each student.





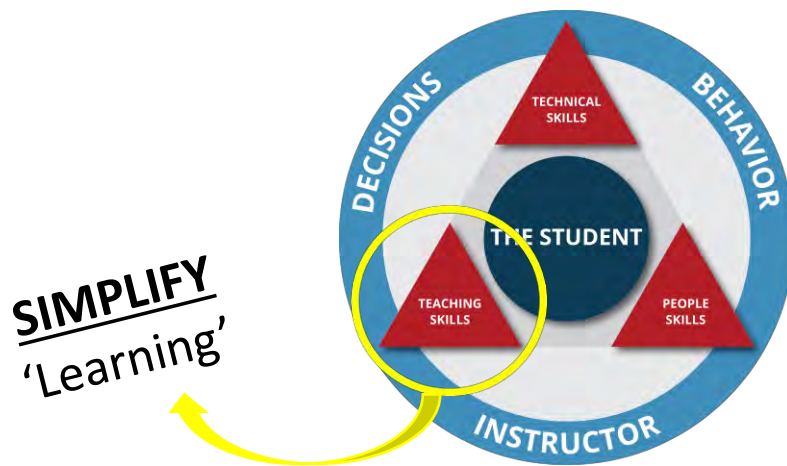
**People Skills: Student Centered Interpersonal Skills**

Your people skills – also known as "soft skills" – have as much of an impact on your success as a ski or snowboard instructor as your technical skills. Interpersonal skills are used to build trust and target a personal connection to the guest. Empathy-based decisions ensure that the guest’s needs and desires are central to the experience. These skills depend upon the instructor’s ability to understand themselves and moderate/adapt their response to the student’s needs and the situation.

Four actions that will help you develop a personal connection with your student are:

- Read – Recognizing student behaviors
- Welcome – Carefully choose initial contact
- Engage – Learn their ‘why’
- Assess – Process what we discover and act





### Teaching Skills: Teaching Fundamentals

The instructor's role is that of a facilitator who helps design the learning environment. The instructor creates learning experiences for students to identify sensations and stimulate emotions. The learning partnership is at the core of this experience.

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### How We Teach

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New teachers are often worried about what they are going to do in a lesson or clinic, rather than what their students will do. As a result, important clues that could help the teacher succeed are lost. In the first few moments of a lesson, students often reveal their true motivation for embarking on the learning experience, allude to fears or apprehensions, and share insights that can help the teacher determine how they will learn best. This may include everything from their hobbies to family life and previous lessons. All this can be missed if the teacher is not vigilant in actively listening and staying attentive to this important information. In fact, listening to your students describe precisely what they are looking for, how they learn best, and what experiences they have had in the past will begin to develop an atmosphere in which they work with you to develop a course of action. By getting the learners to talk about their experiences, they will begin to form a trusting partnership. As you question them, and listen actively to their responses, they become part of determining the direction of the clinic. Suddenly, you are no longer there to provide the action plan; you are simply there to provide direction, as they get involved in their own plan of exploration and discovery. There are four elements that, when artfully combined, create the magical environment where a

connection is made between the teacher, the guest, and the mountain environment. The effective uses of these elements combine to create a complete and satisfying learning experience.

### ***Developing Trust***

Trust is the cornerstone of the new guest's successful experience. If at any time the instructor/ student relationship is compromised the guest may leave the sport never to return.

A competent instructor is skilled at

- Developing a trusting relationship.
- Understanding their students and how they learn
- Questioning and listening effectively
- Creating an environment that puts guests at ease
- Observing student behaviors to determine underlying emotions.

### ***Assessing Movements***

Because the teaching/learning environment is fluid by nature, and circumstances change as learning proceeds, teachers must be able to accurately assess student performance and adjust goals as the lesson progresses.

A competent instructor is skilled at

- Understanding efficient and effective movements of beginning skiers and riders.

### ***Working the Learning Environment***

An artful instructor is able to work the learning environment effectively so that the student/teacher bond of trust remains intact.

A competent instructor is skilled at

- Using available terrain effectively
- Using a variety of activities with new participants that will help establish a comfortable, fun environment
- Developing and using fun skiing formats
- Providing information and suggestions for the use of alternative snow tools.

### ***Closing the Loop***

Effective communication is the final element in the learning loop. As with the other three elements, the ability to communicate well can make or break a learning experience. It can provide direction, reinforce a positive change, and redirect unproductive movements or actions. An effective communicator also understands information on teaching and learning styles.

A competent instructor is skilled at

- Providing effective feedback.
- Effectively debriefing a student at the end of a lesson.

### **A Simple Plan for Delivering an Effective Lesson**

Introduction (Goal Setting)

- Introduce yourself
- Open a dialogue with your student so that you create the feeling that learning is easy and fun
- Ask questions so you learn about your student and what (s)he wants from you.
- Watch your student so you can discern his/her skill level (and what (s)he needs the most)
- Plan what to do to reach an achievable goal, one that satisfies what your student wants and what you can offer.

Body (The Progression)

- Speak concisely in simple language. Ask, “Am I being clear?”
- Show clearly what to do. Make sure your student can see you.
- Point out parts of the body they should look at. Ask, “Could you see that?”
- Let the student do it.
- Give necessary logistics (follow you? follow another student? where to stop, etc.).

### Give Feedback

- Be specific. Check for reaction. End on a positive note.
- Repeat or progress to the next step based on your student's performance and attitude.

### Summary

- Review and reinforce what is gained from the lesson.
- Give practice tips.
- Tell your students what they could learn in a future lesson and if appropriate, when you are available.

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## Teaching Styles

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There are a variety of teaching styles, which provide a way to structure lessons and deliver information. Following are common styles used by many snowsports instructors:

**Command:** The lesson is controlled fully by the teacher. All demonstration, explanation, execution, and evaluation decisions are made by the teacher.

**Task:** The teacher outlines the parameters of a task. The teacher explains and demonstrates the task, points out safety considerations and practice boundaries. The students are free to perform and practice the task within the boundaries. The teacher should move about, evaluate, and give feedback or variations of the task depending on the student's individual needs.

**Reciprocal:** The teacher establishes partnerships to observe and assess the student's performance. The teacher explains the task, the boundaries, and the evaluation criteria. Students are free to perform and evaluate each other doing the task, giving each other feedback on the performance. The teacher is free to watch and give feedback. Teachers must close the activity with relevant conclusions.

**Guided Discovery:** The teacher uses a series of questions or experiences to guide students to the desired results. Each step builds upon the previous step. The teacher leads the group to make the discovery.

**Problem Solving:** The teacher poses a problem to the students. The students may work out the answer independently or as a team. The teacher sets time limits and work areas. The problem may have more than one solution.

Each lesson and situation requires the instructor to choose a teaching style based on the student's abilities, the subject, and your own experience. For example, when introducing a new movement or skill, you might use a command or task style, and when practicing this new skill you might use a reciprocal format. Then, once students are ready to apply the skill on their own you might use a problem solving technique. The important thing is that there is not one "right" way to teach everything. Understanding your students and what you are trying to accomplish will help determine which style is appropriate when.

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### **The CAP Model: Teaching the Whole Student**

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#### *Overview of Childhood Development*

As you begin your journey as an instructor, it is important to gain knowledge about the growth and development of human beings as it relates to skiing. With more experience, you will need to gain more understanding of how this development can affect what and how you teach, and as a master teacher, you will rely on developmental information to help you truly individualize instruction for any student you encounter.

To help you organize your thoughts regarding developmental issues, we refer to the information as "The C.A.P. Model." The acronym merely helps you to remember the three basic categories [Cognitive, Affective, Physical], which make up human development as it relates to skiing/riding. One goal is to help children understand how to behave and move in desirable ways. The level at which a child understands, behaves and moves depends on growth and development.

The CAP Model – which offers a framework for observing students and determining their abilities in the areas of cognitive, affective, and physical development – helps instructors set appropriate expectations for each student. You will discover that students, regardless of age, develop at different rates in different areas, so let their understanding and development dictate your behaviors and lesson content. Also be sure to consider “the whole student” with regard to disability, personal experiences, knowledge, attitudes, skills, motivations, emotions, and learning preferences.

**Cognitive (i.e., how people think):** Consider your students’ mental skills to help enhance desired motor response and skill development. You can then provide appropriate material based on how each student thinks and gains understanding. The areas of development include:

- Logical and mathematical abilities
- Verbal-linguistic abilities
- Visual abilities
- Understanding of specific concepts

**Affective (i.e., social and emotional needs):** Consider your student’s feelings, emotions, and motivations to help you better connect with your students and address their motivational needs. This area of development includes:

- Internal beliefs and values
- Identity and self-esteem
- Teamwork and sportsmanship
- Moral values

**Physical (i.e., skills):** Consider each student’s physical movement abilities, coordination, and use of motor skills so you can provide movement experiences that help improve skills related to physical needs and abilities. This area of development includes:

- Body development and proportions
- General and sport-specific strengths, balance, and coordination

- Overall fitness level and fundamental movement patterns

Your ability to communicate skiing /riding information to children (cognitive) depends on:

- How children process information
- How children express themselves
- How children reason

Young children understand the world in concrete or experience based terms. This means they comprehend only what they can see or touch, or have seen or touched before.

Abstract thinking begins to develop by age eleven or twelve. Concepts such as cause and effect, time and space, and distance and speed, are developed over time. A child's understanding of these ideas can affect their understanding of communication attempts.

The ability to process information grows with the child. Very young children may not be able to attend to putting on skis while receiving stimuli from another source. Very young children may have difficulty sequencing more than one or two tasks, while older children may be able to sequence three or more. Processing of cause and effect, and rules and their consequences, develops with age.

Motivation to ski /ride (affective) depends on:

- How children relate to their peers
- How children relate to adults
- How children think about themselves

Egocentricity, the principle that the child is the center of the universe, affects children's behavior. Young children often think they are the cause of any ongoing event. They also have difficulty putting themselves into "someone else's shoes." Older children show egocentricity by thinking that others are always watching them, even when it is obvious they can't be. This causes everything from shyness to cockiness.

Younger children are anxious to fit into the group and please others. Older children are more concerned with their position within the group. They are more readily influenced by



their peers. Younger children are usually not competitive; playing alone is enough. Older children may be competitive, and have their self-worth tied to their accomplishments.

Development of appropriate skiing or riding movements (physical) depends on:

- How children’s bodies are proportioned.
- The amounts of strength children possess.
- Spatial awareness.
- Whether a child has developed the ability to use parts of the body separately.

Young children’s heads and trunks are large in proportion to their limbs. By 8 or 9 years the proportions approximate that of adults. As a result of a higher center of mass, a small child may have a “back” stance with a reliance on heel pressure.

Younger children move the whole body as a unit. The development of fine motor skills is apparent by ages 9-12. Separation of upper and lower body and left and right sides of the body occurs over time as the child grows. The muscles of a young child function as if more loosely attached than those of an adult, affording less strength, yet greater flexibility.



***Thinking about it***

- Identify one way you can build a trusting relationship with our students.

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- What are the components of PSIA-AASI’s CAP Model? (Choose the best answer)  
 Cerebral Affected Patterns                       Children and Adult Programs  
 Children Action Plans                                       Cognitive, Affective, and Physical

**PSIA-AASI-E LEVEL 1 ADAPTIVE WORKBOOK**

- How might the CAP model be relevant to your work teaching students with physical and intellectual disabilities?

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- Describe how you connect with your students.

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- Why it is important to understand the CAP Model? (Check all that apply).

To understand...

that children develop at different levels and abilities.

concepts of making specific body movements at various ages and stages of life.

the cognitive, behavioral, and physical development of each child.

it would not be appropriate to teach a concept to a child before they were able to understand it or physically able to move.

how to keep the lesson fun with appropriate humor and activities.

which teaching styles to use and how to use it effectively during the lesson.

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## Learning Styles

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A learning style is the cognitive mode of a learner: it is a person's preferred technique in approaching learning. It is the way a person processes information; the way a person's sensory, perceptual, memorial, decision-making, and feedback mechanisms operate. The learner's motivation, previous training, readiness, age, and ability to process information influence their learning style in a specific situation.

### ***Feeler***

People of this nature are receptive learners; they learn predominantly through gut intuition. They try many things to find a way. They tend to be emotional. They learn by doing and by evaluating on the way. These individuals are doing-oriented, though s/he will be very sensitive to the connection between what s/he does and its outcomes. This type of learner is aware of similarities and differences of experiences. They are particularly kinesthetic and will learn sports relatively easily because of this strong sensory awareness. If instruction gets too analytical, this student will quickly lose interest.

### ***Watcher***

People in this category like to set the picture. They like to know the purpose of practice. They need to watch others, are good listeners, and are introspective and contemplative. These individuals tend to hang back, studying everyone's performance. This provides him/her with essential information: s/he emulates what s/he sees. Talk will be largely useless with a learner like this, unless the talk creates images for him/her to visualize. This type of learner will do well if allowed to position him/herself where s/he can best watch the teacher.

### ***Thinker***

People in this category are analytical, logical, thorough, and theoretical. They would rather read than listen to lectures, they are often loners or dreamers. At times they are meticulous to a level of obsession. These individuals read books and magazines about skiing/snowboarding long before taking a lesson. Detailed explanations are needed in order for him/her to understand what needs to be done.

**Doer**

People in this category tend to be pragmatic, practical, and functional. They are searchers who see a purpose in learning. They are good problem-solvers and work well with others. These individuals are constantly active. Being idle is not for him/her; skiers will be seen poking holes in the snow with their ski poles while boarders will be seen drawing figures in the snow or tossing snowballs at their boards until finally it is their turn or it is time to actually ski/ride. Extensive talking tends to frustrate this learner.



**Thinking about it**

- The following are examples of the first clues to a student's learning style. Indicate which learning preference they suggest the student might have.

\_\_\_\_\_ Student asks you how to put their equipment on.

\_\_\_\_\_ Student indicates they know someone from your hometown which they read off your name tag.

\_\_\_\_\_ Student at the first timer's meeting area is already in their equipment and is walking up the hill.

\_\_\_\_\_ Student tells you their skis/board is sticking to the snow.

\_\_\_\_\_ Student is looking at others put on their equipment.

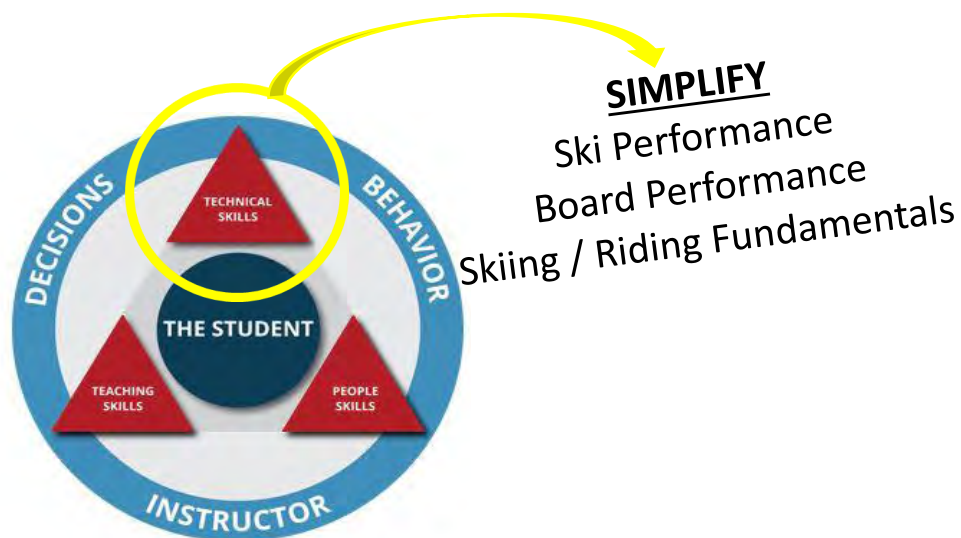
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## Technical Skills: Fundamental Mechanics

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Through the years, instruction for people with disabilities has evolved from taking students “out for a ride” to embracing the belief that instructors should actively teach them to ski and ride, capitalizing on each student’s abilities and encouraging independence. Today, we support individuals in accomplishing the skills of skiing and riding to the best of their abilities.

The Skills Concepts/Performance Concepts clearly define the essential actions of the skis or snowboard. Skill blending identifies how to adapt the action of the skis or snowboard to any desired outcome. The skiing/riding fundamentals define the mechanics and movements essential to any ski or snowboard performance outcome. Ski/board performance and movement blends are key to technical proficiency. Biomechanics play a significant role in ski and snowboard movement patterns.



To be an effective instructor, it’s important to have a base performance level you can compare your students to in order to determine what skills need to be worked on given your student’s particular abilities and disability. In both PSIA and AASI’s teaching systems you can look to the board or skis first, because, regardless of the person, their physical capabilities, or the snow conditions, the skis’ or board’s capabilities are relatively constant and unchanging. Once you understand what the board or skis should

be doing, you can begin to understand what the student can do to achieve the desired outcome.

These are the actions of the skis and the board on the snow

Ski Performance

Tip (Edge control)

Turn (Rotational control)

Bend (Pressure control)

Board Performance

Tilt (Edge angle)

Twist (Torsional flex)

Pivot (Rotation)

Pressure

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## **Alpine Skiing**

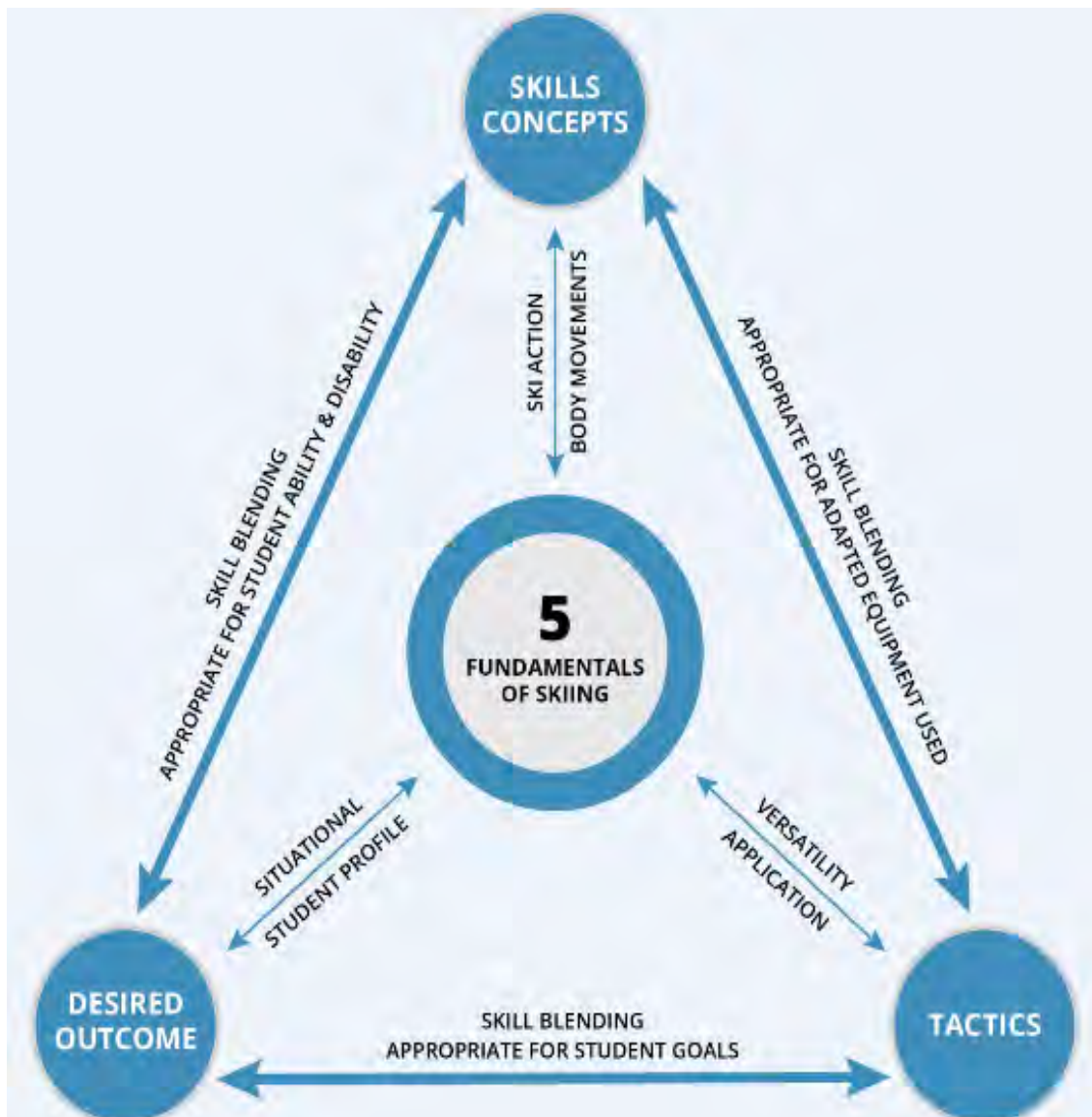
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PSIA's American Teaching System is built on the principle of a student-centered learning partnership that adheres to a guiding set of skiing mechanics. There are five fundamentals that, taken collectively, form the central component of a developmental framework for adaptive alpine skiing. These fundamentals take the following elements into account:

- **PSIA's Skills Concepts:** The technical model of American ski instruction, based on the knowledge that three skills – rotational control, edge control, and pressure control – are integral to all turns, and are essential for maintaining balance.
- **Tactics:** The strategic choices a skier makes to achieve a goal. Decisions are based on intent, knowledge, and level of performance within the context of the skiing environment.
- **Desired outcomes:** The goals of the lesson are largely based on what the student wants to achieve. Outcomes can also represent an effect of a particular lesson strategy or task within the lesson that supports those goals.

The five fundamentals of skiing that relate to every desired outcome for all skiers, including those using adaptive equipment are:

- Control the relationship of the Center of Mass (CM) to the Base of Support (BOS) to direct pressure along the length of the ski.
- Control pressure from ski to ski and direct pressure to the outside ski.
- Control edge angles through a combination of inclination and angulation.
- Control the skis' rotation with leg rotation, separate from the upper body.
- Regulate the magnitude of pressure created through ski/snow interaction



### ***The PSIA Skills Concept***

The Skills Concept divides the movement skills of skiing into three categories and offers a helpful framework to help us understand, observe, and assess skiing movements and skills. These concepts also serve as a common language and means to communicate and discuss skiing movements with our students, fellow instructors, and others. The movements of any skier can be described in terms of these three movement categories.

When considering the skills required to achieve a particular outcome, the skills concept helps us identify the primary and secondary skills required of the task or outcome. Finally, the skills concept helps instructors identify a student's areas of strength and areas that are priorities for development or refinement. From here an instructor can consider a student's goals and objectives, identify the skills required to achieve them, the student's skill level, and create and implement a lesson customized for the needs of the student.

Regardless of terrain, speed, skier intent, or adaptive equipment used, great skiing has certain similarities. Skiers rotate and edge the skis precisely and effectively manage forces to attain the desired outcome.

The three skills that that make up the PSIA Skills Concept are:

***Rotational Control:*** Turn the skis; the ability to control the direction the skis point

***Edge Control:*** Tip the skis; the ability to tip the skis on edge and adjust their angle

***Pressure Control:*** Create and manage the forces acting on the skis; movements that manipulate forces (as opposed to movements that manipulate the ski or skis directly) along the length of the ski (fore-aft), from ski to ski (side-to-side), and by flexion/extension movements that manage pressure on and off the skis (up-down/longer-shorter).

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## **Snowboard**

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AASI's Snowboard Teaching System (STS) includes three main concepts—riding, teaching, and service—that are integral to our profession, plus supporting concepts addressing board performance, movement, and the learning process. The technical piece; the riding concepts, provides a clear understanding of how we move on our snowboards and how they perform underneath us. STS is student-centered, meaning that *the student is the main reason we are teaching, and the goals of that student must*



*be the focus of the lesson.* Although it may take some students longer than others, it's possible for anyone to accomplish personal riding goals with appropriate and student-centered instruction.

### **The AASI Movement Concepts**

Because snowboarding requires movement, it's important that riders understand how they are supposed to move, and why, to achieve the desired result. Movement involves rotation, flexion and extension, or a combination (circumduction). These movements are fundamental, meaning that they're the most basic ways to look at what muscles and joints do. These fundamental movements are referred to as **Movement Concepts**—the movements a rider can make.

Flexion/extension and rotation create the direction and amplitude of movement. This in turn determines how the snowboard moves in response to the body.

- **Flexion/extension:** Refer to the closing and opening of a joint.
- **Rotational movements:** Involved in changes of direction, turn initiation, and spinning in the air.
- **Circumduction:** An example of the combination of movements commonly applied in snowboarding is circumduction, used in steering movements. Circumduction is a combination of movements that together describe a cone. One way to understand circumduction is to lie on your back in the snow with the snowboard in the air, keeping your leg joints flexed. Imagine a point in the middle of your board, between your bindings. Now, rotate hips and legs so that your feet cause the nose and tail of the board to move along an arc. The movement that your legs are making is circumduction. The reason we describe the shape as a cone (in this case, an inverted cone) is that the range of motion at the point where rotation originates is less than the sweep of the arc and the feet.

### **The AASI Performance Concepts**

Snowboard performance is a result of movements or combinations of flexion/extension and rotation movements in the rider's body. The snowboard performance concepts (tilt,

pivot, twist, pressure) result from movement and snowboard-snow interaction and are largely dependent on each other. You can rarely change one aspect without having an effect on the others. Board performance is based on what a person could observe if watching the board from below. Understanding movement and snowboard performance concepts allows you to assess the cause-and-effect relationships that determine what a rider is doing, and how to make changes.

The **Snowboard Performance Concepts** are:

**Tilt:** When a rider tilts the board on edge, he/she manages the snowboard edge angle relative to the riding surface. The rider establishes and adjusts board tilt with large movements of the CM relative to the working edge through flexion/extension of the ankles, knees, and hips, with fine-tuning movements of the foot and ankle.

**Pivot:** When the board rotates around a particular point along its length. A reference pivot point would be centered between the feet. Depending on snow conditions, terrain, and intent, this pivot point may shift beyond the front foot. Extreme instances, such as nose and tail rolls, bring the pivot point out to the tip and tail of the board.

**Twist:** Twist can be seen by a distinctive overlap in the tracks left in the snow by the edges. The old edge is engaged in the snow as the new edge is becoming engaged, due to the active twisting of the board to start the turn. When this happens, the deck of the board twists slightly.

**Pressure:** Pressure distribution encompasses the degree and location of forces between a snowboard and the snow along the snowboard's length (tip to tail) and width (edge to edge). Pressure adjustments, made through flexion and extension, may be applied across the snowboard or concentrated in one spot.

## **Movement Analysis**

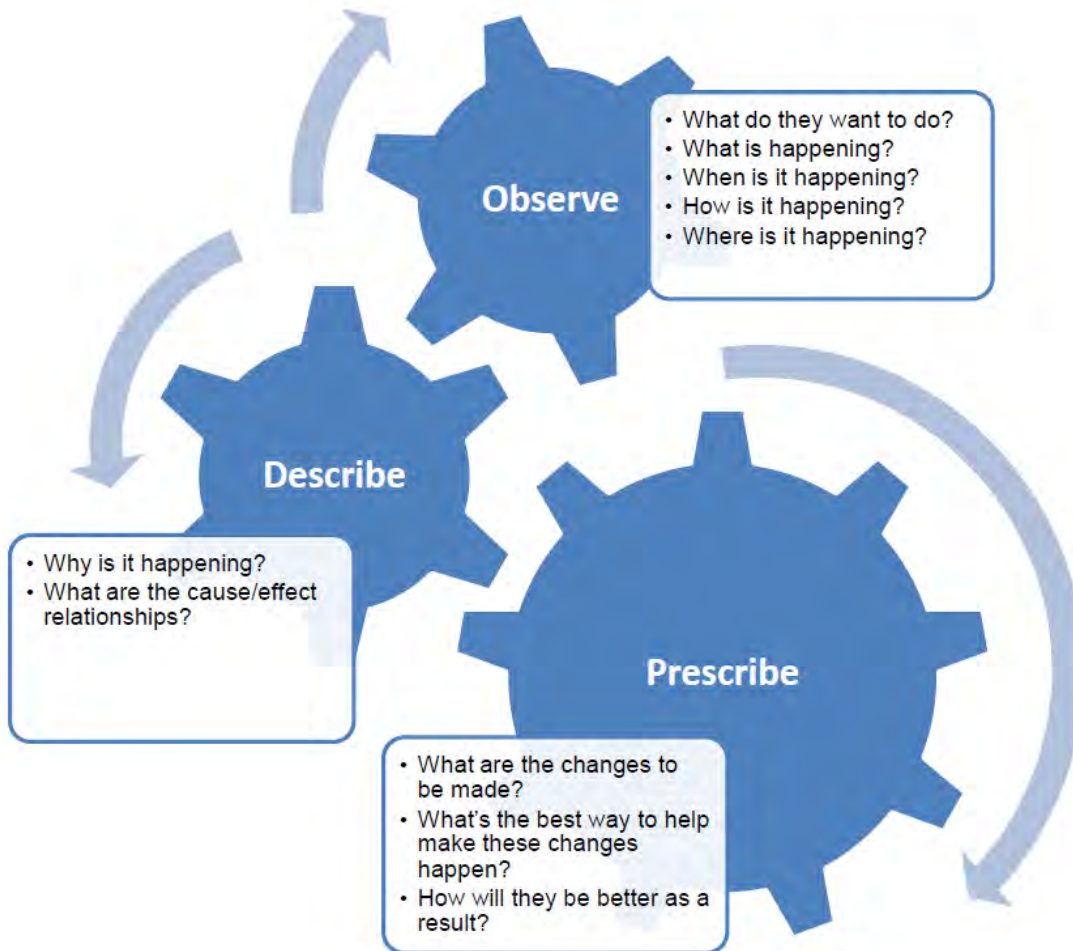
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One of the most important skills a sports teacher needs is the ability to accurately assess the movements a student uses to perform the activity. An instructor needs to be able to watch a customer's athletic performance, and understand, physically and mechanically, what is happening. Then, in a non-judgmental way, describe what has been displayed and offer advice that will enhance the student's performance. This is an on-going process throughout a lesson and as practice continues, an instructor's accurate feedback and advice guides the customer's progress. At the most basic level, movement analysis includes phases of observation, description, and prescription.

No two people ski alike and everyone perceives instructions differently. All people have their own learning style and all teachers have their favorite way to teach. An essential tool for teachers of snowsports is **Movement Assessment** (aka Movement Analysis). MA is a process of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of your student so you can develop a lesson tailored to each person and his or her individual style. Below are some tips to help you develop your approach to movement analysis.

There are a variety of movement analysis methods. All include some form of these key components: the ability to observe movements and outcomes, the ability to describe what you see objectively and the ability to prescribe a plan of action.

Movement assessment is an art that takes practice, practice and more practice. It is also very personal and unique to each and every ski professional. Some ski pros look at the whole body first, then move to the feet and the track that is left in the snow. Others believe that everything can be told by first looking at the track that is left in the snow. Research this topic. Talk to your peers to find out 'how' they do movement assessment. Try several techniques and figure out which one works best for you and your students. You may find that you have to change your movement assessment style to match the learning styles of different students.



It takes time and practice to develop the ability to accurately analyze what the skis or board are/is doing on the snow and recommend adjustments. Movement analysis is a component of instructor behavior within the Teaching Model. Once you have identified goals and have tried a few tasks to assess how the student moves, you will need to provide feedback to your student.

There are many ways to provide feedback. Regardless of how you deliver feedback, you should focus on specific skills and make sure these relate to what the student is working on. In other words, if you are focusing on activities involving both feet, do not give feedback on the position of the hands.



***Thinking about it***

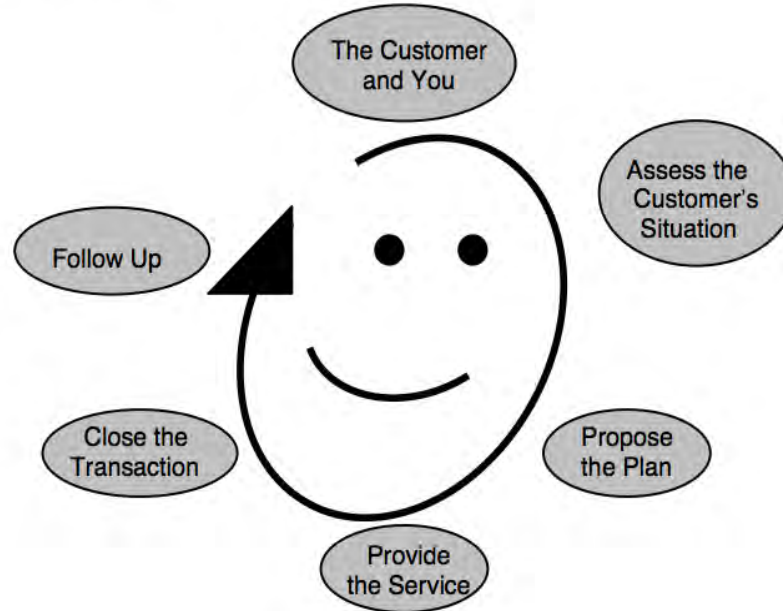
- In your own words, describe two teaching styles you have used and why. What were the successes and failures of using each style?
- Why is movement analysis important? Describe how you would use movement analysis within a lesson.
- Ultimately, your success as a teacher is dependent on several factors. In your own words, what do you feel is most important to your success? To your students' success?
- Think about a student you recently taught. Provide a brief profile of this student and describe what you did to effectively communicate with them. How do you know your tactics or techniques were successful?
- Describe how you would present information differently to a child versus an adult.
- In your own words, how do you develop trust and rapport with your students?
- Describe your plan for assessing your student's movements.

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## Introduction to the Service Model



Your resort is in the business of creating memorable experiences. Those experiences are shaped by interactions with resort staff members. From the moment a hopeful resort enthusiast picks up a phone or logs onto the web to make a reservation, until the gear is packed and the trip home has begun, hundreds of interactions with staff members contribute to the overall impression of the resort. As a coach you have the longest interaction (face time) with the guest, more than any other person or any other department. We need to be able to assist the guest with all questions about the resort. Snowsports teachers, through the relationships they build with students, have the power to enhance the resort experience exponentially. Important qualities for instructors in the modern world of ski/snowboard teaching include:

- Understanding and responding to guest expectations
- Providing value to the guest through skill development
- An understanding of their responsibilities to the ski industry, their home resort and their guest.

Instructors spend more time with customers than any other employee on the mountain. Since customers return to businesses where they get good service, you are

instrumental in creating return business and this business benefits you and your employer. A number of publications cite statistics about customers and the effects of their complaints on business. The stats may vary slightly but they overwhelmingly arrive at the same general conclusions:

1. 96% of customers who feel they were served poorly do not complain
2. 90% of those who feel they were served poorly will not return
3. Each person who feels as if he or she was served poorly will tell at least nine other people, and 13% will tell at least 20 others.
4. 95% of customers will return if their problem is resolved on the spot

If we can understand the customer's needs and expectations, we then have a chance at fulfilling them. If we are motivated, we also have the opportunity to exceed them. If we satisfy and exceed them on a continual basis, we develop repeat business and *loyal* customers. If we don't understand customers' needs or expectations, we greatly increase the chance for a dissatisfied customer. It all starts with understanding the customer.

Because each customer is different and because our vacationing population is constantly changing, master service-oriented teachers need to be exceptional communicators. They also need to be adaptable to constant change *and* also motivated to change their own perspectives constantly to truly understand each customer's perspective.

Because each instructor is different, with different backgrounds, personalities and strengths, there is no one model of providing excellence in customer service that works in all cases for all individuals. There are, however, a few concepts that together form a way to look systematically at constant improvement in customer service.

1. Strive to understand your customers' perspectives, expectations and needs. Ask open and generative questions and understand visual cues.
2. Make a plan with them to accommodate their needs and share it with them. Get their buy-in on the plan with closed questions, continuing to communicate

changes that may happen in the plan as your time with them progresses. Think win-win: remind yourself how their successes or happiness invigorates you.

3. Deliver the service, treating your customers and their needs with respect and understanding. Keep building a trusting relationship so that the guest is willing to learn, take chances, and enjoy new movements you're sharing with them. Enjoy their successes with them. Remember the details, such as appearance, attitude, and thoroughness.
4. Look for opportunities for improvement, or differences between the service you think you're providing and the service they perceive to be receiving. Adapt and change accordingly. Why wait until the end of the lesson or when you get the customer feedback form? If you focus on constant improvement, you will necessarily understand them better.
5. Debrief and follow up. Discuss with your customers the experiences that led to successes and those that didn't, inviting them to share their perspectives first with you, before you add your insights. You will not only increase their level of learning and understanding, but you may also hear some of your opportunities for self-improvement, if you actively listen.
6. Follow through with your end of the learning and service partnership: make personal change and improvement, make your next experience with your customer been better, and seek training and self-understanding wherever you can, help other instructors by sharing your experiences, insights and successes.

Think of your personal improvement as a continuous cycle, one that improves constantly while you teach and before you teach again. Actively listen to not only understand your customers, but also to understand how well you're satisfying their needs. With this feedback, you can adjust and change if necessary, improving as you go. If you confidently give them what they know they wanted, you'll satisfy their expectations. If you knowingly give them more than they know they wanted, you'll exceed their expectations and they'll be more likely to return. Again, it starts with understanding and a motivation to continually improve the experiences you provide. Remember our role in the industry. Remember why you're there.



As instructors, if we are going to be motivated to give every guest the experience of a lifetime, we need to constantly remind ourselves why we teach, why we work at ski resorts, and what motivates us to be happy. Just like learning and changing and improving the services we provide, making yourself happy is a process that can be learned. Happiness is largely a result of our state of mind, which is something we can choose to change by learning positive emotions like compassion and kindness. A compassionate person tends to communicate more easily. If being compassionate doesn't come naturally, being understanding of your customer's needs may not either. But rest assured, as humans we can choose to change. We can choose to be happy. By reminding yourself daily about what your own personal passions are and how teaching skiing or snowboarding helps you fuel your own personal fire, you can train yourself to be happy. You'll have more fun at your resort and you'll provide better service at the same time. You win, the customer wins, and the industry wins.

***You can make a difference in someone's life. It's up to you. It starts with understanding and a smile!***