New Snowsports Instructor Guide

Ski with us. Ride with us.

WESTERN DIVISION

Contents

Introduction	3
PSIA-AASI – Who We Are	4
Who Are Our Customers	7
Keeping it Safe	9
How We Teach	12
How We Learn	20
Professionalism and Practicing the profession	24
Where Do I Go Next?	25

Introduction

Welcome to teaching skiing and snowboarding!

This *New Snowsports Instructor Guide* will introduce you to the profession of teaching snowsports. 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) Level I certification.

This *New Snowsports Instructor Guide* introduces you to PSIA-AASI models and concepts, used across all of the different snowsports that instructors teach. The intent of this guide is not to replace the manuals and resources that PSIA-AASI produces, rather it is to introduce these to you and guide you to more in-depth information about these topic areas. This Guide will not be the only resource you will need as you train; it provides you a way to track your personal progress in becoming a professional snowsports instructor and, if you decide, as you train towards your PSIA-AASI Level I certification.

How to use this guide

This guide is broken into topic areas that are particularly relevant to new instructors, including: an introduction to PSIA-AASI, an overview of who our customers are, and other subject matter specific to teaching and learning.

We suggest starting from the beginning and working your way through the guide. Each topic is presented in an individual section and is introduced as an overview only with a list of links and resources to find more in-depth information. There are Study Questions at the end of each section, drawn from the section's content as well as from additional resources. There are many resources available to you as you work through this guide. The *PSIA-AASI Core Concepts for Snowsports Instructors, PSIA-AASI Children's Instruction Manual, 2nd Edition*, and the discipline technical manuals are good first places to start. Check with your supervisor and/or trainer to find out how to find these resources. A list of resources is provided at the end of the Guide.

The study questions ask you to share your experiences and understanding of the information you are learning. You may be asked to share examples of how you use the information or might use it if you aren't teaching yet. Be prepared- many of the study questions may require you to draw information from a variety of resources to answer or they may be answered from a single source. You many choose to try to answer every question over the course of your training, answer only some or highlight those questions that you want to bring to your trainers. The questions are designed as a tool for you to use to broaden your education. Regardless, the goal is that you don't simply remember the terms, but that you understand and are able to apply the ideas and concepts.

Teaching snowsports is an exciting and rewarding way to spend time sharing a sport you love with new and different people. It requires a commitment on your part to learn, grow, and change yourself, just as we are asking our students to learn and change. Teaching snowsports is a profession that can be pursued full time as a career or on a part time basis. Regardless of your personal goal, enjoy the journey!

PSIA-AASI – Who We Are

Snowsports instructors are professional teachers and professional 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 alpine area with 146 vertical feet, or a large 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 maybe even 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.

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.

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-AASI national offices are headquartered in Lakewood, Colorado and the association is represented throughout the United States by nine autonomous geographic divisions, which conduct training and examinations for a variety of snowsport disciplines. The association also develops education programs and materials to serve specific snowsports populations, such as children and adaptive skiers / riders. With more than 31,000 members, PSIA-AASI members represent the whole of snowsport instruction in the United States.

PSIA-AASI encourages its members to pursue snowsports instructor credentials as a means to validate their skills and abilities, for professional development and recognition, and to increase their knowledge about snowsports and teaching. By providing its members with the opportunity to obtain nationally recognized instructor credentials, PSIA-AASI is helping to increase public awareness about the joys of skiing and riding as well as advancing the snowsports instruction profession.

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 organizations 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:

- Adaptive Alpine
- Adaptive Snowboard
- Alpine skiing
- Cross Country skiing
- Snowboarding
- Telemark Skiing
- Children‘s Specialist
- Freestyle Specialist

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 organization‘s 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.

PSIA-AASI develops national certification standards that each division implements into their certification exam processes, which validate your skills as an instructor. There are four primary categories of membership: Registered, Level I, Level II and Level III. As a new instructor, you would first become a Registered member. As you desire to become a better instructor, you would then train and be examined at Level I. Successful candidates demonstrate the knowledge and performance criteria of the Level I 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.

Becoming Certified – The Level I Experience

You, and you alone, are responsible for coordinating your training toward Level I certification. We strongly encourage you to ask your area trainers and your supervisor or manager to assist you in preparing for your Level I. Participate in training clinics at your area to gain an understanding of, and experience with, the PSIA-AASI models and concepts introduced here. Your trainer may provide information and help you understand more completely the information contained herein, but it is solely your responsibility to prepare for the Level I event.

The Level I process assesses your knowledge, skills and abilities in three primary categories: on-snow skills in skiing or riding, teaching, and professional knowledge. Level I participants are expected to demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of PSIA-AASI models and concepts and proficiency in their use for students in the beginner zone. You should not only "book-learn" about these but also gain experience using these in actual lessons. Teaching real lessons provides invaluable experience and context to the theoretical information provided during any training session.

Training takes many forms including attending on-snow clinics, studying manuals, discussing teaching topics, teaching students, watching and reviewing video, mentoring, and even reviewing web articles and e-learning courses. Documenting your progress will help you verify, assess and prioritize your strengths and weaknesses. Take advantage of the opportunities presented to you as you prepare. With a thorough foundation of training and experience, you will be as well prepared as you can be. Twenty documented hours of training is required before taking your Level I exam.

If you choose to follow the path to Level I certification, ask yourself why. Consider your motivations. If you are clear about your goals, you will likely be more successful and find this journey rewarding. Extrinsic motivations may include pursuing pathways to salary increases, tangible evidence (i.e. a Level I pin) of professional skill, the ability to teach to specific clients or groups, and additional opportunities within your school. Intrinsic motivations include a personal commitment to learning, educational growth, commitment to personal and professional development, the empowerment of ownership and an internal belief that increased knowledge will help you make a difference.

PSIA-AASI produces many materials and resources for instructors including manuals, teaching aides, and e-resources such as PSIA-AASI's *Movement Matrix* and the *Entry Level Instructor Guides*. Important manuals include PSIA-AASI's *Core Concepts for Snowsports Instructors*, which addresses multi-disciplinary teaching concepts and models, as well as technical manuals, which address specific discipline skill sets. These resources, in addition to your school trainers and division clinic leaders, are intended to help you learn and grow as a snowsports instructor and will be invaluable if you are training towards certification. Refer to your division website for more specific reference material. As part of your preparation towards PSIA-AASI Level I, a minimum of 20 hours comprised of training, preparation, and teaching is required. A signature from your school manager, director or trainer validates that you are adequately prepared prior to attending the PSIA-AASI Level I. (See pg. 19)

Additional Resources:

- PSIA-AASI website: www.thesnowpros.org
- PSIA-AASI divisions: http://www.thesnowpros.org/BeaSkiorSnowboardInstructor/Divisions.aspx

Study Questions:

List two reasons why you enjoy skiing or snowboarding.
Why would like to pursue snowsports teaching?
What are the components of a good teacher?
In your own words, describe the relationship of the snowsports instructor to the industry.
Think back to your favorite teacher, and describe why you feel they were effective.

Who are our Customers?

Our students are our customers and our guests. They may be adults or children, people who are fit and athletic or people who are less active. They may be from other states or countries. Regardless of who they are, as an instructor, there are three core tenants to follow:

Figure 1

The safety of the guest must remain the primary concern of every instructor. Your Responsibility Code and other safety guidelines are used at many areas to help set the rules of the road for safety. Unless the guest feels that he or she is in a safe and secure setting, learning and fun cannot occur.

Whether teaching children or adults, we teach to the whole person, always trying to incorporate the cognitive, affective and physical (CAP) makeup unique to each student. Teaching models have been identified to help understand how we teach to each client and are introduced in the next chapter.

A snowsports instructor not only represents him/herself, but also the snowsport school, the area, and PSIA-AASI. Customer service is one of the most important things that we as instructors provide. In PSIA-AASI, we describe the way we interact with customers as "customer-centered." Every time we interact with a customer, we may leave a positive, neutral, or negative impression. In order to act in a customer-centered way, a good rule of thumb is to try to see every situation from the perspective of the customer and how your actions will affect this impression.

Our customers are like us; when we purchase a product or service, we have expectations about the product and the service we receive. There are several things we can do as instructors to make our customers' experience more enjoyable. First, take the time to learn and use your student's names. Begin by learning how to recognize equipment issues before the start of the lesson. It's easier to address these before you leave the meeting area than once you have started your lesson. Develop a checklist that includes observing the customers' choice of clothing, protective gear (goggles, sunscreen, etc) and type and condition of boots, skis/board, and bindings. If having a successful first experience means returning to the rental shop to address an uncomfortable boot fit, a change in ski or board length, or to put a basket on a pole, this is usually time well spent. Learn how to pace your lesson to avoid fatigue or information overload. Use timely moments to share the Responsibility Code and safety considerations with your students to ensure they know you have their best interests at heart.

Each of us has the ability to positively impact a customer's perception of the area, the school, or the other area employees. It is important to understand that customer service extends beyond

simply teaching a lesson, to anytime you can impact a customer's perception. Here are a few results of high customer satisfaction:

- Brings more people to the resort or area as they tell others of their good experience
- Creates more revenue
    - For you, the instructor
    - For your snowsports school
    - For your resort
    - For your industry

Meeting the needs of your customer, timely problem solving and good customer service all fall under the PSIA-AASI ATS Service Model. Learning from your interactions, mistakes and successes make you a better instructor over time. Below is a basic matrix for ensuring customer service satisfaction.

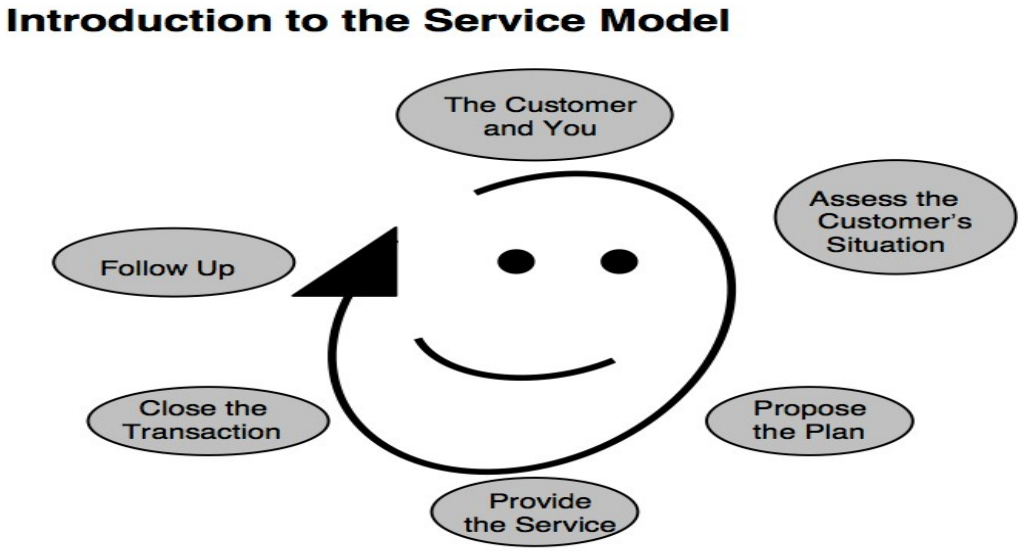


Figure 2, The Service Model

Just as your student is your customer, there are other customers to be aware of who have valid interests in your success as a teacher. Following are examples of *internal* customers and expectations they may have:

- Other Instructors
    - If your student takes a lesson from another instructor, what can that instructor expect your student to know and be able to do?
- School Trainers and Directors
    - Are you delivering the best lesson you can and inspiring the guests to want to come take more lessons?
- Resort or Area Management
    - Are you a good ambassador for the area and working to help all guests enjoy their experience?
- The Snowsports Industry

    - Are you welcoming your guests into the snowsports world so that they will want to continue to ski or ride?
- PSIA-AASI divisions
    - Are you an active member of your division taking advantage of the education and offerings they provide?
- PSIA-AASI national
    - As a certified instructor, are you keeping yourself current with equipment and technology, industry trends, and teaching methods?

Additional Resources:
- Entry Level Instructor's Guide- What It Means To Be An Instructor
- Entry Level Instructor's Guide- Working With Students

Study Questions:

What are the components of PSIA-AASI's CAP model?
Describe how you integrate safety, fun and learning into your lesson. Discuss how you adapt this when teaching children, adults or in a group lesson setting.
Describe how pacing can make or break a lesson. How would the pacing of a lesson change for a child versus an older client?
In your words, describe how you connect with your students.
At your area or resort, why do people take lessons?
How do you make a good first impression?
What is the Responsibility Code and why is it important in snowsport instruction?
Thinking about the different people that take lessons, what different expectations might each have? How do you manage these different expectations?
When teaching a child what are important points to discuss with parents before and after the lesson?

Keeping it Safe

As snowsports instructors, our first duty is to our student's safety. A student that feels safe and is having fun is a student who has the potential to learn. Safety awareness is important throughout a lesson. Many safety concerns are covered at the beginning of the lesson however, you should be prepared to address safety at any time. Here are example safety topics that are typically covered with your students over the course of a lesson:

- Your Responsibility Code (Check with your area as they may use other specific guidelines specific to skiing or riding on certain terrain)
- Smart Style
- Terrain, conditions and weather
- Pacing
- Physical preparedness
- The outdoor environment: clothing, sun, wind, cold exposure
- Wildlife and the natural environment
- Proper lift procedures for your area, if applicable
- Equipment needs

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:

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 students to understand their physical condition by asking questions and set your instructional goals accordingly. Asking questions about other physical activities they enjoy and sports they may participate in will provide some of this information. 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. If you use warm-up exercises, check to see if the guests have any physical limitations they want you to be aware of. Low-impact exercises, with equipment off, can help loosen tight muscles and prepare the guest for activity.

Terrain – Terrain selection can enhance or inhibit success. Use the proper terrain for the level and the ability of the guests in your class 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.

All of us have basic needs that must be met as humans. Abraham Maslow presented these as a pyramid with the most fundamental (physiological) needs to be met first forming the base, progressing up through social and emotional needs (safety and security, sense of belonging,

and self-esteem) until a person can achieve self-actualization. Are your students able to concentrate on learning if they are hungry and tired? Being self-actualized means being ready to learn.

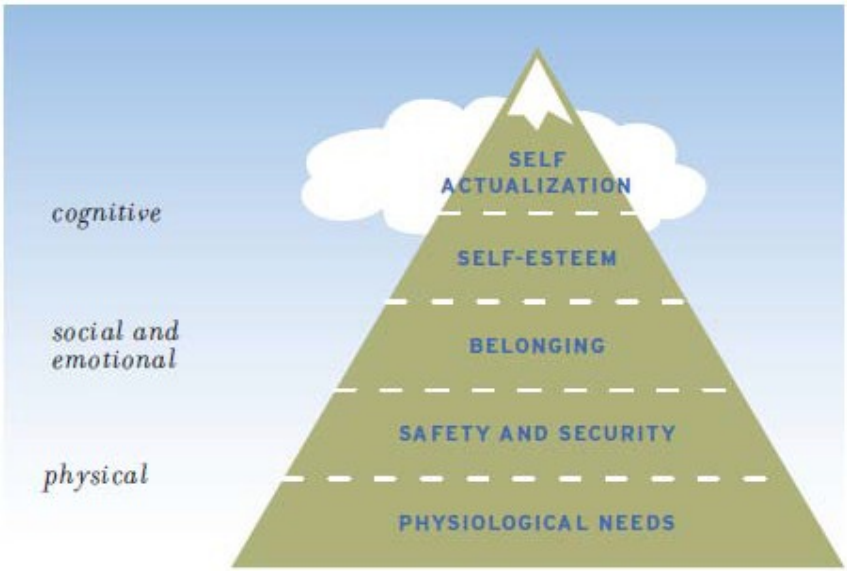


Figure 3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Additional Resources:

- Chapters 5 and 6 in the *Core Concepts for Snowsports Instructors* manual
- Your Responsibility Code: http://www.nsaa.org/nsaa/safety/know_the_code.asp
- Smart Style: http://terrainparksafety.org/
- Helmets: http://www.lidsonkids.org/

Study Questions:

Describe Smart Style and how it is used at your ski or ride area.
As an instructor, how do you manage safety and incorporate safety awareness into your lesson?
How do you recognize fear and manage how it affects student learning?
Describe one element of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as it relates to fear and safety.
What factors should be considered when choosing terrain for your student or class?
What are the signs that your student may be developing altitude sickness, 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?

How We Teach

Teaching is much more than simply explaining how to do something. The most effective, and successful teachers make a point of:

- Developing a trusting relationship
- Understanding students and how they learn
- Being an active and effective listener
- Creating a safe learning environment

The best teachers do this throughout their lessons and PSIA-AASI provides resources that can help you, and your students, be more successful. The PSIA-AASI Teaching Model incorporates the core components of how to create a successful lesson. See Chapter 1 of the *Core Concepts for Snowsports Instructors* manual for more information about the Teaching Model. The Teaching Model provides a way to organize your lessons so that you learn about their students, design a teaching plan tailored to them, practice and anchor the learning, all while creating fun and memorable experiences.

The use of a teaching model should also help to build a partnership where the instructor understands the goals of the student and then uses this information to make adjustments throughout the lesson to help the customer reach their goals. Your goal as an instructor is to create a successful learning partnership with every student. Understanding your student's makeup, or profile, allows you to adapt and adjust your instructor behavior to create an effective learning partnership.

TABLE 1: The Teaching Model

Student Makeup +	Instructor Behavior =	Learning Partnership
Discover your student's:	(Teaching Cycle)	Create a lesson that:
■ Characteristics and background	Use your skills to:	■ Is creative, individualized, and student-centered
■ Learning styles and preferences	■ Introduce and develop trust	■ Is interactive, experiential, and FUN!
■ Motivations, understandings, and desires	■ Assess students and their movements	■ Contributes to the student's success
■ Emotional states	■ Help determine goals and plan experiences	

Table 1, The Teaching Model

The Teaching Cycle provides a pathway to present the lesson information. There are many teaching cycles, but all have common components including a beginning, middle and end. Teaching cycles are designed to be flexible; you may need to move back and forth within the cycle to meet the changing needs of your student. However, teaching cycles all hold core components that lead to successful, well-managed and professional lessons. As your

experience and understanding of teaching and learning grow you will find yourself continually adjusting where you are in the teaching cycle so that you best meet the needs of each student at that moment.

Adapted teaching cycles such as the *Children's Teaching Cycle* still use the foundational components from the ATS model.

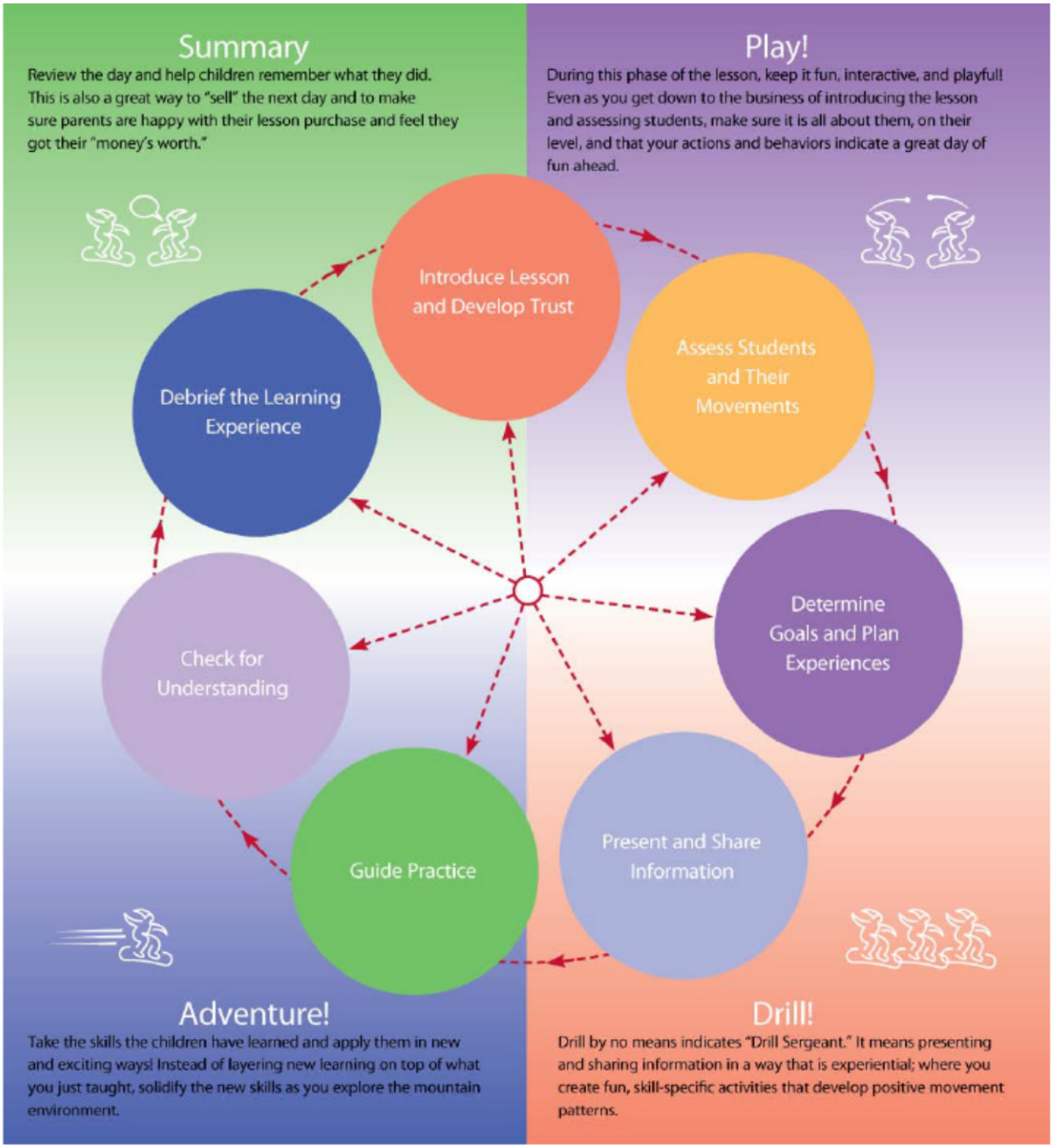


Figure 4,The Teaching Cycle

Teaching Styles

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*.

Movement Analysis

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.

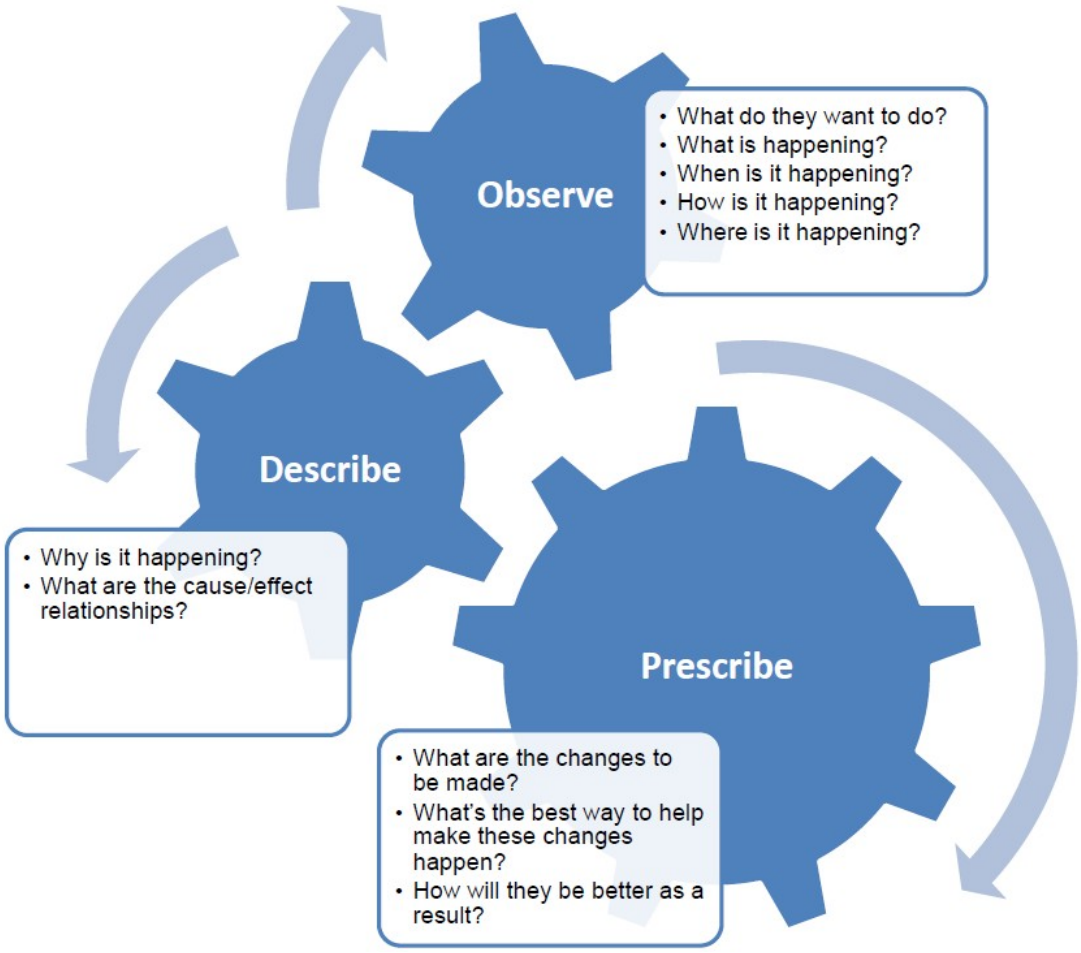


Figure 5, The Basic Components of Movement Analysis

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.

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.

Additional Resources:

- The worksheets below can be used to learn about yourself and to document your experiences as you begin teaching.
- *Entry Level Instructor's Guide- Working With Students*

Study Questions:

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.

In what part(s) of the Teaching Cycle do you address safety with your students?

How does the Learning Partnership affect the outcome(s) of your lessons?

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 at least 3 different ways you can check for understanding.

At the completion of your lesson, list the ways you can help ensure the guest will return.

Describe the difference between an exercise and a progression.

In your own words, describe teaching transfer.

How do you manage your group lesson when there are variable skill levels within the group?

Which joints of the body flex and extend?

Which joints in the body rotate?

List 3 ways to show active listening.

When we teach, it's important to know where the center of mass is in your student. In you your own words, define center of mass and why it is important in relation to skiing or riding.

When working with children, how do you set boundaries for appropriate behavior?

Learning and Teaching Styles worksheet

Teachers use three kinds of sensory learning cues to communicate with their students: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (VAK). Students tend to respond better to some kinds of cues than others, depending on their learning style. It is common to categorize people who prefer visual stimuli as watchers; people who prefer auditory stimuli as thinkers; people who prefer kinesthetic stimuli as feelers; and people who prefer the stimuli they generate by their own actions as doers. We all are able to respond to any learning cue, though we tend to lean toward one type or another.

✓ Check which learning styles would exhibit which of the following behaviors:

Behavior	Doer	Watcher	Feeler	Thinker
Last to take a turn at something new				
First to take a turn at something new				
Rehearses movements with eyes closed				
Repeats what you say in his own words				
Asks to see more demonstrations				
Wants an explanation				
Move to learn is this one's motto				
Receptive to signals from the equipment				
Dominant				
Intellectual				
Mimic				
Sensitive				

Both command and task styles of teaching have their uses in a lesson.

✓ Check which style best meets each goal:

Lesson Goal	Command	Task
Learning a new skill		
Practicing a new skill		
Analyzing movement		
Giving individual feedback		
Introducing information		
Handling an emergency situation		
Getting the group to stop at a given landmark		
Cycling the group on a certain run		
Playing a game of "Simon Says"		

Teaching Logs

Log entries allow you to track your teaching and provide a tool for you to practice and discuss your lessons with trainers. Make additional copies of the log sheet as needed.

Look at the sample log below. Be brief but thorough in your lesson review. Your log should:

- Be descriptive enough to be understood by others.
- Be reviewed by others in a timely fashion to make your discussion more valuable.

Focus on the teaching basics presented in this section as you give your lesson. Have fun, but also make sure you do the following:

- Discover your guest's expectations and what they want from the lesson. Assess your guests' basic movements/skills.
- Identify your guest' important strengths to better understand their performance.
- Develop clear and relevant lesson goal(s) for the guest(s).
- Identify a specific technical focus that would help the guest(s) attain their goals.

Date	Guest(s)	Age(s)	Experience Zone	Hours
1/1/10	*6*	*6 and 7*	*Beginner*	*1*
Briefly describe your guest: *[Note: In addition to the number of guests, how old they are, and what ability level, describe how much they know about skiing or snowboarding, the winter environment, and what brought them to take a lesson with you.]*				
Describe your guests' current movement and skill ability: [Note: *If this is the first time your guest's have ever slid on skis or a snowboard, they need to be introduced to every aspect of the sport. Everything is new to them. These guests want to discover the excitement of sliding across the snow, to feel the wind on their faces and experience the freedom of gliding across the snow.]*				
Describe your lesson: *[Example: The first thing we did was get to know each other. For fun we came up with a Team Name (Space Rangers). Then we gave everyone individual names. We played around by doing Trains (follow the leader). We also played some other games so that I could assess their movements. We were able walk like a duck and they loved making "quack-quack" sounds. We played a game of red light/green light. They all had a lot of fun and left looking forward to next week.]*				

Teaching Logs *(Duplicate as needed)*

Date	Guest(s)	Age(s)	Experience Zone	Hours
Briefly describe your guest:				
Describe your guests' current movement and skill ability:				
Describe your lesson:				

If applying to attend the Level I, your Ski/Snowboard School Director, manager or trainer must sign:

As Director, Manager, or trainer, I attest that this applicant is a member of my staff, that the candidate has received exam training and preparation, and that the applicant has completed the 20 hours required of training, preparation, or teaching.

_____

Director, Manager, or Trainer signature Date

_____

Snowsports School

How We Learn

The goal of teaching is to enable learning. In snowsports instruction, students must learn to move, understand the movements they are attempting and feel comfortable and inspired to attempt them. While every student will have a slightly different way of learning, all students will have to go through a cycle of experiences to learn the sport of skiing or riding. It is important for a good instructor to have a method for creating experiences that will be effective for a broad range of students.

Learning styles or preferences characterize the ways students collect, organize, and transform information into skills. Learning preferences can be broken down into two basic components: how we perceive and communicate information, and how we process that information. Within the ski instruction community, two schemas are used to help describe a student's learning preference:

- *Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic (VAK)*
- *Watcher, Feeler, Doer, Thinker*

Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic (VAK) largely depicts the channels that an instructor uses to deliver information and a student uses to collect or perceive information. While students may have a preference to one or two of these areas, it is important to recognize that most students will need to perceive information through all three channels to effectively learn a new skill. Skiing and riding are movement sports; therefore learning to develop a kinesthetic awareness of the interaction of the ski or board to snow and how the body moves in space is critical early in a student's career. The Watcher, Feeler, Doer, Thinker concept is a combination of both perception and processing of information.

Much like VAK, students may be predisposed to learning in one or more different ways but for learning to be effective and lasting, most students will have to pass through a series of experiences. For more information on the learning process refer to the *Core Concepts for Snowsports Instructors* manual.

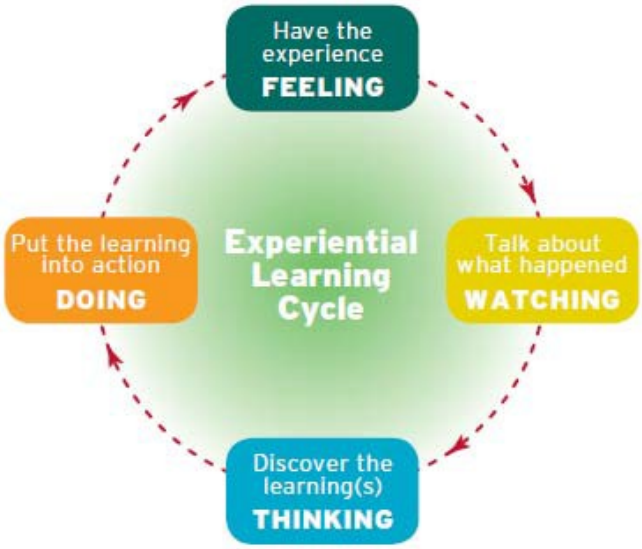


Figure 6, Experiential Learning Cycle

VAK describes how the perceptual motor system, the process in which the brain receives information and then processes a response, works. The brain sorts and organizes information. The physical motor response, or outcome, starts in the brain and is involved in a feedback loop of the senses. Our senses tell us how we receive information regarding position and movement through

space. Our senses are how we hear, see, feel and taste. Three sensory receptors that relate to balance are the eyes, inner ear and kinesthesia, the perception of body movements (for skiers and riders, often starting at the soles of the feet).

Learners of any new movement pattern, regardless of sport or outcome, move through three levels of motor skill acquisition:

- Initial: crude movements, lacking in rhythm, will more focus on sensation than quality.
- Elementary: starting to gain some control, will look at body part to connect what is happening with movements, will enjoy exploring if in control. Will focus on active avoidance of fixed or moving objects.
- Mature: refined, coordinated, and mechanically correct. Will be able to share equally attention to environment, other people and tasks at hand.

Understanding that each level must be passed through helps the newer instructor understands what they may be seeing in their student. Some students acquire new skills quickly and adroitly, while others may struggle and take longer. Regardless, each level has its own unique characteristics and allows the body to adapt and process new learned movements.

The cognitive, affective and physical attributes of each student play a role in their capacity to learn and move. Your ability to understand your student's profile will help you understand how your student will be able to process information and learn best.

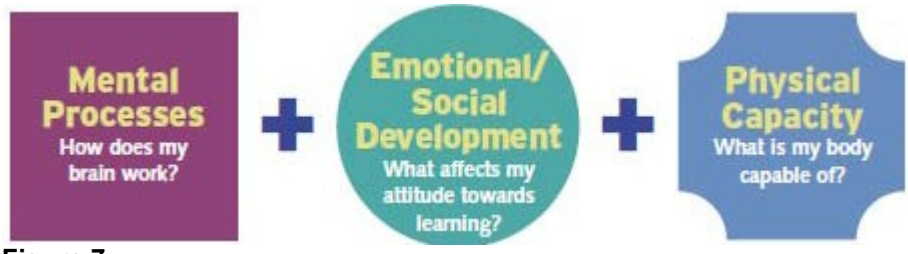


Figure 7

Additional Resources:

- *Entry Level Instructor's Guide- What It Means To Be An Instructor*
- *Entry Level Instructor's Guide- Working With Students*

Study Guide Questions:

Describe four learning styles.
Describe the elements of VAK as sensory input to learning.
What are ways you can determine your student's learning preference?
Where in the teaching cycle do you address your student's learning styles?
Where in the student profile do you assess your student's learning styles?
In your own words, describe how you know your student is listening to you.
Describe in your own words how you know your student has moved from the elementary to mature stage in skill acquisition?
Describe how the CAP Model applies when teaching a lesson.
When working with a group lesson with a wide range of ages, what are ways you use the CAP Model to address each student's needs?

Learning Preferences worksheet

List simple questions and behaviors in the chart below to help identify your personal learning preferences:

Watcher	
Questions& Answers	*Behaviors*
Thinker	
Questions& Answers	*Behaviors*
Doer	
Questions& Answers	*Behaviors*
Feeler	
Questions& Answers	*Behaviors*

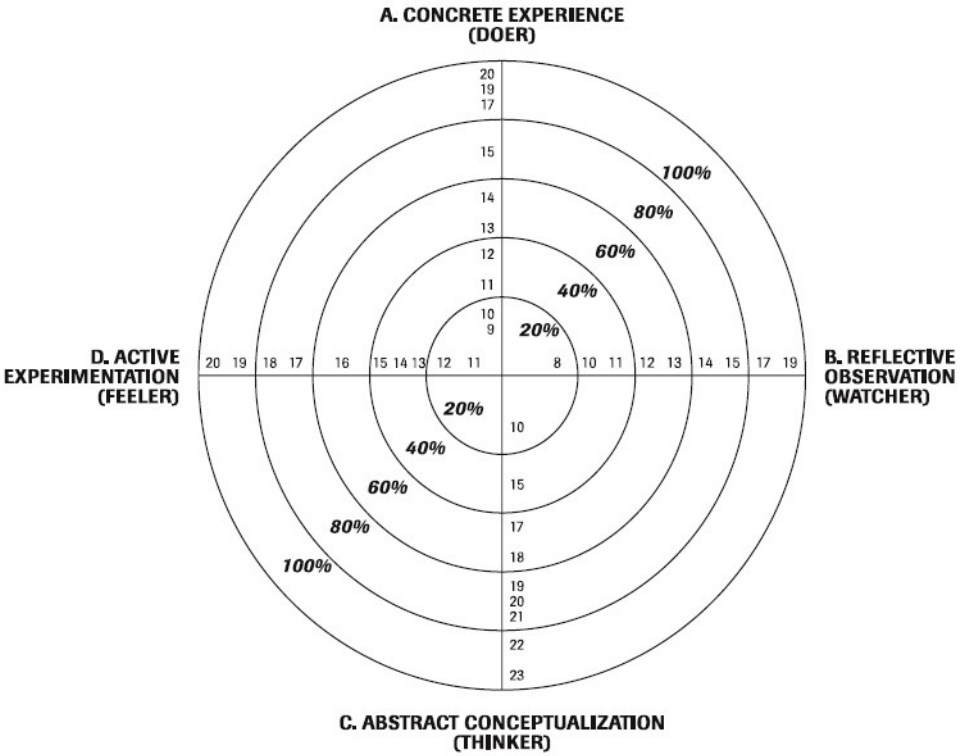
Learning Styles Inventory

There are nine sets of four words listed below. Rank each set of words by assigning a 4 to the word which best characterizes your learning style, a 3 to the word which next best characterizes your learning style, a 2 by the next most characteristic word and a 1 by the word least characteristic of you as a learner. To make this test more relevant to ski teaching, associate your thoughts with learning a sport with an element of physical risk. Be sure to assign a different number to each word in each set.

I am:	1.__discriminating	___tentative	___involved	___practical
I am:	2.__receptive	___relevant	___analytical	___impartial
I am:	3.__feeling	___watching	___thinking	___doing
I am:	4.__accepting	___risk-taking	___evaluative	___aware
I am:	5.__intuitive	___productive	___logical	___questioning
I am:	6.__abstract	___observing	___concrete	___active
I am:	7.__present/oriented	___reflecting	___future/oriented	___pragmatic
I am:	8.__experience	___observe	___conceptualize	___experiment
I am:	9.__intense	___reserved	___rational	___responsible
	A _____	B _____	C _____	D _____
	add lines 2 3 4 5 7 8	add lines 1 3 6 7 8 9	add lines 2 3 4 5 8 9	add lines 1 3 6 7 8 9

Add the numbers in each of the four columns as indicated by the numbers below the tally lines.
Enter these values in their proper axis on the target on the next page. A = Concrete Experience (Doer), B = Reflective Observation (Watcher), C = Abstract Conceptualization (Thinker), and D = Active Experimentation (Feeler). Once totals have been entered on the target you can determine your type of learning style and read the description.

Dick Leider, Human Renewal Associates



Professionalism and Practicing the Profession

At a resort or any snowsport area, the ski or snowboard instructor often spends the most time in direct contact with students and the general public. Because of this, instructors often influence students in many respects, sometimes unintentionally. In order to earn and maintain the respect and confidence of our guests and from our co-workers, instructors need to maintain the highest degree of ethical conduct. Loss of that respect and confidence is detrimental, to the profession of teaching snowsports, other instructors, and the industry. The following conduct guidelines are not meant to be all-inclusive. Rather, they are to guide you as you work with guests, other employees of your home area, other instructors, area management, and anyone you might have contact with while wearing an area uniform. Check with your supervisor or manager, as there may be additional conduct guidelines in place at your snowsports area.

Instructor guidelines:

- Consistently demonstrate a positive attitude towards snowsports and teaching;
- Be truthful in all dealings and advice with customers;
- Render professional opinions based upon fact and knowledge, rather than speculation and prejudice;
- Refrain from rendering negative opinions or advice unless truth and good taste require it.
- Assist in improving the snowsport teaching and educational system by providing honest feedback with recommended solutions.
- Participate in continuing educational programs designed to maintain and improve your professional competence.
- Enthusiastically support other stakeholders of the snowsport industry and related service organizations. Other stakeholders include equipment manufacturers, distributors and retailers and area operators. Related service organizations include the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA), the National Ski Patrol System (NSP), United States Coaches Association (USSA) and its regional divisions, United States Amateur Snowboarding Association (USASA) and agencies of federal, state and local government responsible for the management of public lands.

Appearance

Many areas have their own appearance policies. Check with your school director, manager, or supervisor to ensure you meet the policies of your area or school.

Continuing education and hours

Certification requires regular continuing education to ensure you are up to date with current technology and teaching techniques. PSIA-AASI instructors are required to attend either two days, or 12 hours, of continuing educational clinics every two years. Refer to your division policies for further details on the types of clinics offered and accepted by your division as well as specific credit requirements.

Communication

Occasionally you may have questions, concerns, or just need clarification about something. Knowing where to go is important. For questions about training and certification, check with your supervisor or manager. For questions about a division event, consult your division office. If you have questions about membership or your member benefits you can contact your division office or national Member Services at mist@TheSnowPros.org

Responsibility to resort/area

Know your area management's policies regarding teaching outside of your regular teaching assignment and hours. If you are approached by anyone to teach a lesson in an un-official capacity, please consult your supervisor or manager immediately.

Equipment

As a professional, you are representing your area and in some respects, the entire industry. The special purchasing programs offered to instructors are a direct benefit of being involved with PSIA-AASI or your school/area. It is your responsibility to understand any restrictions or specific use guidelines included in these programs. Equipment is often offered through these purchase programs and the equipment you teach on is a representation of you and your knowledge of modern snowsports equipment. At the start of each season, consider whether your equipment is suitable for a professional instructor and, more importantly, whether it is safe to use.

Additional Resources:

- *Entry Level Instructor's Guide- What It Means To Be An Instructor*
- ***32 Degrees*, Fall 2011, Fall 2012**

Study Questions:

How would you respond if your guest asks you to provide another lesson for their family but wants to pay you directly for the lesson in lieu of hiring you through your school?

What is your definition of a professional instructor?

How does your behavior/professionalism affect lesson outcomes?

Describe the value of continued education in your profession.

Where do I go next?

For many instructors, training is just the beginning of a journey towards personal and professional development. As a professional instructor you have the potential to grow your communication and interpersonal skills as you learn to work with guests of all ages and from diverse backgrounds.

One professional development opportunity that many instructors pursue is PSIA-AASI certification, which validates your skills and knowledge at specific levels of competency. The credentials PSIA-AASI provides are recognized nationally and internationally and are ~~portable~~ transferable across the country from division to division. In addition to the core PSIA-AASI certifications in Adaptive Skiing, Adaptive Snowboard, Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Snowboarding, and Telemark Skiing, PSIA-AASI also offers certificate programs for Children's Specialist and Freestyle Specialist.

Regardless of whether you pursue or are successful in your certification, the most important achievement will be your personal development. The journey of learning and growth is extremely rewarding and should be enjoyed.

As you continue to grow as an instructor and seek knowledge, there are many resources available to you. You were exposed to many of these as you worked your way through this Guide. Below are additional resources available to you through PSIA-AASI and your division, including the national standards.

PSIA-AASI National Standards

PSIA Adaptive Alpine Certification Standards

AASI Adaptive Snowboard Certification Standards

PSIA Alpine Certification Standards

PSIA Cross Country Certification Standards

AASI Snowboard Certification Standards

PSIA Telemark Certification Standards

PSIA-AASI Children's Specialist Standards

Reference Material

All Disciplines

- *PSIA-AASI Core Concepts for Snowsports Instructors*
- *The Movement Matrix (web-based)*
- *Cues to Effective/Ineffective Teaching*
- *Children's Instruction Manual, 2nd Ed.*
- Stretching Chart
- *Get a Clue!* booklet
- *Park & Pipe Instructors Guide*
- *Park & Pipe Tip of the Day* cards
- Division-specific education materials

Adaptive Skiing and Snowboarding

- *PSIA-AASI Adaptive Manual for Snowsports Instructors*
- *AASI Adaptive Snowboard Guide* (PDF download only)
- Adaptive nordic guide *(available through US Paralympic)*

Alpine Skiing

- *PSIA Alpine Technical Manual: Skiing and Teaching Skills, 2nd Ed.*
- *PSIA Adult Alpine Teaching Handbook*
- *PSIA Children's Alpine Handbook*
- *Guide to the Physics and Biomechanics of Skiing* (PDF download)
- *Tactics For All-Mountain Skiing*
- *Skiing Tip of the Day* cards
- *Visual Clues to Effective/Ineffective Skiing / Movement Assessment Pocket Guide, 2nd Ed.*
- *Alpine Stepping Stones Pocket Guide*
- *Alpine Technical Manual, 1st Ed.*

Snowboard

- *AASI Snowboard Instructors Guide*
- *AASI Snowboard Teaching Handbook*
- *Focus on Riding* DVD (Includes *Tiny Bubbles*)
- *AASI Snowboard Movement Analysis Handbook*
- *Snowboarding Tip of the Day* cards

Nordic- Cross Country

- *PSIA Nordic Technical Manual*
- *Classic/Skate Skiing Tip of the Day* cards

Telemark Skiing

- *PSIA Nordic Technical Manual*
- *Classic/Skate Skiing Tip of the Day* cards