

2015 Interski Report – Tom Langtry
Ushuaia, Argentina

On Snow Workshops

1. Denmark

- Denmark presented their teaching philosophy and methods for running group lessons.
- The focus was on creating an environment where guests get to know each other and bond during the lesson. By doing this the idea is to also help students form connections with each other and lose any self-consciousness they have about skiing in front of people they don't know, thereby increasing their enjoyment of the group lesson and likelihood to want to return.
- At the start of the on-snow session they asked all the participants to take off their skis and stand together in a circle shoulder-to-shoulder (which they called the 'Circle of Love'). They then asked everyone to introduce themselves and share where they were from and what their favourite experience so far at Interski was. The close-circle arrangement helped everyone get to know each other, instead of just allowing the instructor to get to know the individual group members - as can happen when students are standing in a line with their instructor in front.
- Then when starting skiing they got the group to team up in pairs with someone they didn't know, and ski down the run. The second run they then asked everyone to swap partners. Then same again third run. The result was that within the first 30-40 minutes of the session everyone in the group had had a little personal experience with at least three other group members they hadn't previously known. This worked very well in achieving the goal of everyone relaxing and enjoying the group environment and lesson, forming small relationships/connections with each other.
- They also presented their method of 'skier analysis and feedback'. Instead of the traditional 'sandwich' method (positive, negative to work on, positive) they presented the section to work on as 'let's focus on developing this area of your skiing which will give you greatest improvement'. The focus was on keeping the improvement experience as positive as possible, while still developing a change/improvement in the student's skiing. They avoided using phrases like 'fix your skiing' and 'weakest skill', but instead used more positive phrases like 'improvement in this area' or 'technique development' or 'enhanced ability for balance'.
- They said they approached feedback with the guest as a two-way process. Rather than just telling them "This is what you need to do" they would ask the guest what they felt when skiing, and how they could relate this feeling to the instructor's feedback.
- While we (the group) didn't try this feedback method during the session I can see how it could maintain a positive environment for the students, when presented well.
- Throughout the session they continued to get everyone to pair-up with someone they hadn't yet skied with. This continued to help everyone develop small relationships with each other. By half-way through the clinic everyone was cracking jokes and laughing together and having a great time.
- At the end of the session they got everyone to take their skis off and stand again in a circle shoulder-to-shoulder. They asked everyone to share what they had enjoyed from the session. They then did the rest of their 'lesson summary'. This again helped create a feeling among the participants as being a 'part of the group' and facilitated bonding with each other.

Impressions

- The session they ran was in itself successful in getting the participants to relax and enjoy interacting with each other, thereby proving their method works. A number of the participants commented that this was their favourite session of Interski and that they felt like they 'were part of the group', again highlighting the success of the teaching methods.
- You could see from the smiles on everyone's faces and the chatting that everyone enjoyed themselves.

- I personally thought the session was very effective and successful, and would help achieve an excellent guest experience in group lessons.

See PDFs from Denmark

- Denmark-Interski-2015 On-Snow Highlights.pdf
- Denmark-Interski-2015 On-Snow Overview.pdf