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Teaching snowsports observations from Interski 2019

Citation for published version:

Horrell, A, Allison, P & Renouf, D 2019, 'Teaching snowsports observations from Interski 2019' *BASI news*, pp. 25-27.

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Published In:

BASI news

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TEACHING SNOWSPORTS: OBSERVATIONS FROM INTERSKI '19

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Teaching Snowsports

For many members their first experiences of snowsports may have been a lesson with an inspirational teacher, or it might have been with a family member, or a friend. Whatever that first experience was, as a BASI member, at some point in your development you will have recognised the value that an experienced and knowledgeable teacher of snowsports can bring. You might have a specific person in mind, because it was they who provided the inspiration for you to develop your own performance and helped you to envision a future for you in teaching snowsports.

The theme of Interski 2019 earlier this year was 'Future: Snowsports'. A dominant, if not the dominant theme, was ensuring that people who engage in snowsports have valuable, memorable experiences which make them want to return and stay involved. People entering the sport and returning year on year is essential for the sustainability of the snowsports industry. Each nation had their own view on how best to achieve the goals related to creating quality, memorable experiences. Many 'on snow', evening presentations and the keynote lecture acknowledged the central importance of ensuring that more people have the opportunity to access skilled snowsports teaching. Quality teaching matters, the class of teachers and how to enhance this has been a focus across all areas of education for quite some time.

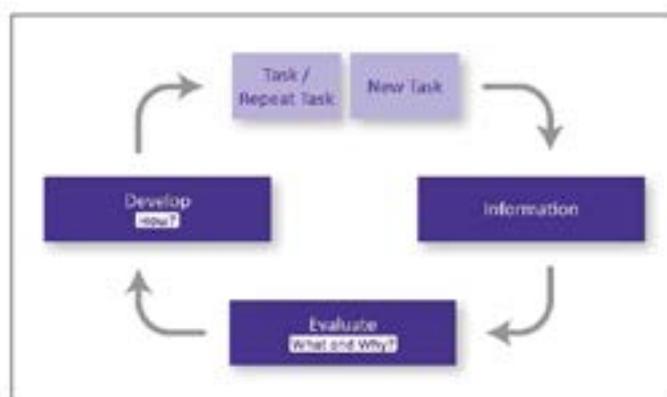
Leading in Snowsports

Creating snowsports professionals who are valued, respected and highly capable teachers is something that many nations aspire to. At Interski 2019, BASI's system of education, training and quality assurance



*Andrew & Pete pictured
at Interski in Pamporovo*

generated a lot of interest from other countries. The vast number of delegates from other nations that attended the on-snow workshops and the evening lectures presented by BASI's National Education Team (NET) provided an indication of the impact that BASI had at the congress. BASI was able to showcase how trainers worked with trainees to develop adaptable snowsport instructors and the importance of using reviewing skills in that process. Other nations have acknowledged the value of experiential learning as a guide for learning in snowsports, however, BASI has continued to evolve the application of the TIED model into the teaching courses at all levels and across all disciplines.



The TIED model will not automatically lead to the development of quality teaching however, it does provide a common approach to frame the way that BASI members work with clients and each other. Using the TIED model encourages a focus on setting shared goals for clients and ultimately ensuring that in each session there is development with the potential to provide the meaningful high-quality experiences which makes BASI members such valued members of the industry.

Curriculum development

At Interski 2019, it was clear that another area where BASI continues to lead is in the curriculum development work it has undertaken in recent years. BASI's pathway of licences is well known to those working within the snowsports industry; what has perhaps been less well understood is how the courses undertaken to achieve each level compare to other qualifications. Interski was a great opportunity to engage in these discussions and many nations were keen to learn more about these processes. In the past 6 years members who have received a certificate will have noticed that at the bottom of their certificate is a statement about the level and the number of credits for the course. On the back of course certificate, the learning outcomes are presented in a way that communicates to employers and educational institutions the transferable skills that are required and developed through BASI courses. These curriculum developments have been the result of working with the University of Edinburgh (UoE) to review the courses at all levels and for all the disciplines. Now 24 courses are aligned to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and for each course the following elements have been established.

1. Learning Outcomes: A statement of what is expected to be achieved on successful completion of a course.
2. Learning Experiences: The experiences candidates have to enable the knowledge and skills required for the learning outcomes to be addressed.
3. Assessment Activities: Tasks the candidate will engage with to provide evidence that they have achieved the learning outcomes.
4. Assessment Criteria: A clear description of levels of achievement and what performance is required at each level.

These elements coupled with the development of Performance Indicators and Actions (PIAs) for courses, which are available on the BASI website, provide a detailed description of specific expectations at all levels and help with consistency between trainers. These curriculum developments enhance the ability of candidates to engage with courses and enable trainers to have shared discussions about the approaches to delivering courses. Interski 2019 provided an opportunity to learn from and review the

approaches that other nations are taking to develop their curriculum. It was evident from the information available that BASI's work in this area continues to be at the forefront of the industry. BASI has courses which promote learning and development and the processes related to ensuring a coherent and quality experience for members.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE)

Integral to the delivery of courses are the processes for quality assurance and enhancement. BASI has well developed internal processes, some of these such as course evaluations will be known to members, but others are perhaps less visible; however collectively these processes are an integral part of the education and training. During courses there are daily meetings with 'point' trainers to review progress and coordinate their operation with other trainers. When there is more than one course at the same venue a trainer will adopt the role of 'trainer support' working between groups to support the delivery. Feedback is collated from each course, from members and from trainers, which is summarised and reviewed annually by a group of trainers and the training manager. This information as well as the trainers' reports help to build a rich insight into the operation of courses and the lessons that can be learned to inform future courses. In addition to these processes, the annual trainers' conference provides a forum for training, development and dissemination; taken together, these processes highlight the strength of the approach BASI has to maintaining the quality and consistency across courses.

In addition, to these internal processes, there is an annual visit (normally to Hintertux) by a member of staff from The University of Edinburgh to observe courses and to ensure that the above mechanisms are in place. This visit also allows for numerous conversations between candidates, trainers, various BASI staff and University staff. In 2019, the QAE visit reviewed the BASI Alpine teaching courses at Level 3, Level 4 and the BASI Snowboard Level 3 teaching course considering the following points:

1. The learning experiences provided to members taking the course
2. The alignment between the courses as described in the credit rating documentation and delivery was the primary focus of the observations
3. The application of the assessment criteria

between courses of the same level and across different levels so that the outcome standards are maintained

4. The role of the 'point' trainer who helps to coordinate with other trainers working on teaching courses and the approaches to teaching, learning and assessment between trainers

Quality Learning Experiences

Our observations and judgements confirmed that the Alpine Level 3, Level 4 and Snowboard Level 3 teaching courses are demanding and the outcomes that candidates reached at the end of the courses provide good evidence that the integrated approach to training and assessment is appropriate. There were differences in the learning experiences between groups, but these were designed to support candidates to achieve the learning outcomes for the course. It was impressive to see how in the same way that trainers expected candidates to model learner centred approaches they were able to adapt their sessions to the needs of the group.

Assessment criteria was being applied in a coherent and consistent way across all courses and teaching groups. We noted that trainers encouraged candidates to engage with the PIAs during the course. As a result of the trainer workbooks, daily briefings from the point trainer and the experiences trainers have at the annual conference, there is a shared understanding of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. This was evident in the discussions trainers had with candidates about progress during the mid-course review and at the end of the course where PIAs were used very effectively. It would be our recommendation that any candidate, before attending a course, should review the PIAs as part of their training and preparation.

Trainers used the TIED model very effectively at the beginning of the courses to model to candidates the way that teaching sessions could be planned so that in the time they had a session could use all elements of the process to achieve the outcome of learner development. Candidates who had experience of working with peers and had a detailed knowledge of how to use the TIED model performed strongly. The design of the courses which mean that while peer teaching is taking place, another candidate observes the peer teaching with the trainer present, provides an excellent model of accelerated learning.

The opportunity to have discussions with the trainer while reviewing peer teaching had a significant impact on how candidates developed their own ability to analyse teaching. In the review sessions all candidates could learn from each other and take steps towards achieving the learning outcomes for the course.

A lot of work goes on "behind the scenes" during courses. Members occasionally get a glimpse of this as a trainer acts on information from another trainer and shares this with their group. It might be about an area where the terrain might be more suitable for the learning experiences planned, but there is a lot more going on. Trainers draw on a wealth of knowledge within the training body to help candidates achieve the learning outcomes; the PIA's inform the process as do the notes that the trainers take and discuss with each other. These QAE visits have reinforced that the language of learning outcomes, learning experiences, assessment activities and assessment criteria, permeates discussions related to courses. It helps trainers understand the practices both on BASI courses and when working with the general public in different contexts. This common language enhances the focus on teaching and learning of snowsports and the ways in which these inform future experiences.

Conclusions

The way that candidates and trainers work together is an important feature of BASI courses and this was evident during the QAE visits this year. Completing Level 3 in Alpine or Snowboard means that a member could be responsible for developing the quality of the teaching and training of instructors at Level 1 and 2. Therefore they need to show the qualities, knowledge and ability to do this and those attaining Level 4 could go on to become BASI trainers. In any education system, the quality of teachers and teaching is a central concern; BASI made a very strong contribution to Interski's theme of 'Future: Snowsports' because throughout the pathways in each discipline, developing adaptable snowsport professionals is at the core. BASI members around the world use their knowledge, skills and experiences when working with clients to provide the best learning experiences possible and this creates a great future for snowsports.