ARE YOU READY FOR SOME

POWDER?
Cascade Mountain is proud to host one of this year’s premier training events! Special Friday offerings include:

- Free clinics all day offered by the Cascade Mountain SnowSport School. Stay for the whole day or come and go as you please.
- Reduced 2-day and 3-day lift tickets for you and your family
- Reduced rates for Montana ski tuning machines, plus a ski tuning clinic in the afternoon.
- Meet members of the PSIA-AASI Central Education Staff members and cruise around the mountain with them from 3 to 5 pm (no charge).
- Free après social hour hosted by Cascade Mountain with complimentary hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar.

A block of rooms will be held at the Best Western (608-742-2200) in Portage, WI for $71.09 plus tax. Use group name PSIA.

For more information, contact Erika Meier, Training Coordinator, Cascade Mountain Ski and Snowboard Area at emeier1@mac.com.

Register at psia-c.org by January 10, 2014 to receive a discount on your event and room rate.

January 24-26, 2014
Cascade Mountain Ski and Snowboard Area
Portage, Wisconsin
HERE WE GO AGAIN!

By Bill Stanley
President, PSIA-AASI Central

Here we are on the eve of another season. The leaves have fallen, the annual race between Loveland and Arapahoe Basin to determine who will open first has been decided, and work commitments have been made to our Snow Sports schools. All that is left is for Mother Nature to bring us some cold temperatures and snow. I’ve been getting frequent updates, from my friend Dan, on which areas are opening or blowing snow in an effort to get open. I’ve been checking the weather forecasts for weeks, looking for the mention of snow in the forecast or predictions of temperatures cold enough to make snow. By now, some of you may have had an opportunity to make your first turns of the 2013-14 season. I can hardly wait to make my first run. The excitement this time of year is almost unbearable.

In preparation for the start of the season, I like to plan what I would like to achieve as a skier and a teacher. It’s like an annual fresh start. I usually look through my portfolio and watch videos of my skiing to help me decide where to begin and what I want to work on. At this time of year, everything seems possible. I spent the summer rehabbing my knee after ACL surgery, so my focus this season will be to get back to where I was before my accident. As I mentioned in an earlier article, last year I rediscovered how much fun it can be to work with kids. I’m really hoping that the kids I had a chance to ski with last year while working at Boyne Mountain, will return for another visit.

As a Division, we go through a similar process. The Ed Staff members have been working hard getting ready for fall training, putting the finishing touches on education materials, and finalizing event schedules. Each new season is an opportunity to put into practice what we learned in previous seasons and to make changes that we feel will benefit the membership.

As you’ve learned in the past couple of months, one of the big changes we made over the summer was the hiring of a new management firm and executive director. This was not an easy decision to make or implement. However, Cathy and Kay at Zeek Consulting, LLC have done an outstanding job learning about our Division and the needs of our members. They are quickly becoming up to speed on our systems and processes.

If you haven’t yet had a chance to work with our Executive Director, Cathy Stegmaier, I hope you will have an opportunity to do so during the coming season. She is completely committed to making your experience a positive one when contacting our office. We appreciate your patience while they build their systems and processes. It will be worth the wait.

In this issue, you will have a chance to read an article written by our Marketing Director, Bob Neff. The article summarizes our annual member survey. This is the fifth year that Bob has published the survey, and we are beginning to see real trends in our data, which is exciting. Your responses allow us to see what the membership feels we are doing right, and more importantly, where the Division has room for improvement.

Approximately 25 percent of the membership responded this year. While that’s not as strong as in past years, it is still a good result. As I’ve said before, we strongly encourage you to respond to the survey as it is one of the main ways the Board of Directors learns what the membership likes and doesn’t like. I can assure you that every comment is read by each Board member, Cathy and Kay. I’d like to thank everyone who took the time to participate in the survey this year.

Another important item that we all need to think about this time of year is nominations for open Board of Director positions. The voting will take place later this winter. The way the board is currently set up, half of the board seats are up for election. That means that we could have six new members of our Board at our next meeting in May. If you have ever thought of running, I would encourage you to get nominated and take a run at it. As a Board member, you will have an opportunity to be involved in decision making that will shape the future of this organization for years to come. It’s your chance to implement some of your thoughts and ideas or those of your fellow instructors. It would be exciting and positive for this organization if every Section had a true race this year—not just an incumbent running unopposed. Try it! You might like it!

In closing, I want to wish all of you a safe and fun season. Go out and make this the best season yet! As always, I want to thank you, the member, for making this organization what it is today. Be Safe!
t’s hard to believe that as you are reading this, it has been more than three months since we started as your new Division office team. Thank you for the warm welcomes you’ve extended and for your patience as we continue to learn and grow into the most effective office team possible.

Learning has certainly been our focus: learning the intricacies of membership policies and procedures, learning custom web interfaces and computer programs, learning all the moving pieces that must be brought together to create a successful event. And as we learn, we’re excited to identify how we will be able to make things move more smoothly and make it easier for you, the members, to find and use the information you need when you need it.

We appreciate that many of you have been willing to share with us what frustrates you and what changes you would like to see. We’ve identified a few common themes:

• You want timely responses to your requests
• You want a more user-friendly website with easy-to-find content and easy-to-use features and processes
• You want us to remember that not everyone is online and that we need to communicate with all members
• You want better communication about events, especially changes to events for which you have registered

All feedback is being carefully considered as we plan for the future, and we hope you will continue to share your ideas with us.

While we plan for the future, there’s no doubt we’re also focused on the present – Snowsport Season! Events are at the top of our minds so let’s cover a few key aspects of event registration policies and procedures. For current members, the preferred method of registering for events is online through the national website. For those who do not have online access or do not wish to register online or pay by credit card, we are happy to accept your registration and payment via regular mail. However, we are unable to accept registrations by phone or fax.

These policies have been put in place to reduce the number of errors made in processing event registrations and to protect against credit card fraud/theft. When you register online, you are in control of the process, can review your selections and make corrections if needed, and everything takes place in a secure environment. When you register by mail, your information must be manually entered into the online registration system, which introduces a greater chance of errors, and let’s face it – many of us don’t have the greatest handwriting! Fax registrations are even worse – almost to the point of illegibility - and phone registrations are easily lost in the daily flood of phone calls. In addition, when using a credit card to register by mail, fax or phone a physical record of this critical personal information is created. While we follow strict policies to protect against credit card and identify theft, avoiding unnecessary physical documentation is always your best policy. Getting you quickly, accurately and safely registered is our #1 goal, so thank you for understanding that these policies are necessary and for your own protection.

How do you register online? There are two parts to the process: reviewing information on the division website to decide what, when and where you want to attend and then using the available “Sign Up” links to go to the national site and actually register for the event. We are working to make this easier, especially on the division website, but here are a few helpful hints:

• Even though you are clicking a “Sign Up” link for the course you want, you’ll need to select that course (session) again on the national site. You may want to make a note of the course (session) name and number.
• You select that course (session) on the page after you review your personal information. You make your selection by clicking on the check box to the left of the session name and number. If you miss this step, you will think you were able to register for free, but the reality is that you will not be registered at all.
• Registration instructions, including screen shots, are available on the psia-c.org website.
• Please call us if you’re having problems with online registration. We are here to serve you and are committed to continuous improvement.
Based on your input. Student members and non-members will need to contact the office for special registration instructions.

Please note our new, extended hours for the season:
• Monday through Wednesday: 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. ET
• Thursday and Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET
• Saturday (when an event is scheduled): 7:30 to 10:30 a.m. ET

Holiday office closings:
• Tuesday, December 24 – Wednesday, December 25
• Tuesday, December 31 – Wednesday, January 1

We hope you and yours enjoy a safe, healthy and joyous holiday season!

ELECTION 2014
Opportunity for Your Voice to Count

By Doug Carter, Executive Vice President, Alpine Section 3 Director, and Governance Task Force Representative, PSIA-AASI Central

Balloting for the 2014 election commences on Tuesday, January 7, 2014, and will close on the last day of March 2014. Your organization needs your vote! From members nominated to run by 6:00 p.m. EST on December 18, 2014, we will fill seven positions on the Board of Directors that governs the American Snowsports Education Association - Central, the Michigan nonprofit corporation through which the PSIA-AASI Central Division functions.

The positions being filled during this election cycle are:
• One Director for each of the six geographic Sections of PSIA-AASI Central Division representing Alpine Members, and
• One Director for geographic Sections 1, 2, and 3 representing Snowboard Members.

As our new Executive Director shared with you in her recent email on the subject, the important duties and responsibilities of a board member in our organization include:
• Establishing membership dues and other fees
• Approving changes to certification and exam requirements
• Authorizing the expenditures of association funds
• Setting the strategic direction for the organization
• Stewarding association resources

Each year, the results in our annual elections are decided by razor thin margins. Voting in our elections is an opportunity for certified members to help guide our future. Selecting who governs your organization is a great way to be heard and for your voice to count.

Look for an email coming out in January which will announce that balloting has begun. Click on the website link we will provide and vote electronically. It takes less than five minutes. A paper ballot will also be made available for downloading and printing from our website (www.psia-c.org) which contains additional information concerning the nomination and voting process.

DUNN’S DESTINATION
888.933.8800 or 269.781.4454

Laurie Long • Travel Consultant for PSIA-AASI Central Division
Airline, Domestic & International • Vacations • 25 years experience

120 West Drive N, Suite 5 • Marshall, MI 49068 • laurielongLLL@yahoo.com

Jim St. Louis, CMP
jstlcmp@mi.rr.com
vernonpromotions.com
The PSIA-AASI Fall Conference was held at Copper Mountain Resort, Colorado, October 24-27, 2013. PSIA-AASI Divisional education leaders from across the country, including Alaska, and from all disciplines gathered to review and update the National Standards as well as discuss a multitude of educational topics. The Central Division sent five representatives to participate in the National Standards Work Groups, one each for Alpine, Adaptive, Snowboard, Nordic and Children’s.

Thursday evening’s key note address by Eric Larsen set the stage for a successful meeting. Eric is a polar explorer from Wisconsin, who reached both the North and South Poles and the top of Everest in one year! He shared the importance of teamwork and that no one of us is as strong as all of us. Instead of focusing on the end result, begin with one step and manage a larger problem by breaking it into smaller pieces.

The following are the overviews from the Central Division representatives. There are many common threads with the end products from all disciplines being better experiences and results for the members.

**ADAPTIVE**

*By Terri Henderson, Adaptive Administrator, PSIA-AASI Central*

The Adaptive Group, both Alpine and Snowboard, had a very productive meeting. On snow sessions gave the group the opportunity to slide and discuss in depth the equivalencies (adaptations to skill elements that are equivalent to an able-bodied skier’s demonstration of a specific task or demonstration). This provided a clear understanding that can be used consistently across all divisions in exams. We also reviewed Adaptive Snowboard progressions and were introduced to a new Adaptive Snowboard tethering technique created by Josh Spoelstra from the Western Division. The tethering technique is a spinoff of the horse and buggy assist and uses a climbing harness and tethers. Used appropriately, this creates a very stable assist for the rider instead of using direct tethering of the snowboard which can cause over manipulation of the board. Indoor sessions focused on the Adaptive National Standards for both Alpine and Snowboard. We focused on the “what” instead of the “how and why” of the Standards. By the end of the weekend, we had reduced both Standards to around seven pages! We will also be creating standalone documents to accompany the Standards which members can use for exam preparations.

We had the pleasure of interacting with the other discipline leaders to bring our discipline full circle and offer the members consistency between Adaptive and the other disciplines. The pending revision to the Adaptive standards will emulate both the Alpine and Snowboard skiing and riding components. We are beginning to work with the Nords to create consistent Adaptive Nordic instruction for our membership and then move forward to a certification process in the future. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to represent Central Division at the Fall Conference. I hope to slide with you on the slopes soon!
ALPINE
By Kris Agnew, Alpine Administrator, PSIA-AASI Central

Alpine representatives from all nine Divisions met to ski through movements associated with the Alpine National Standards and participate in indoor sessions to discuss a rewrite of those Standards. After many hours working through the process, all nine divisions came to agreement on the proposed revisions to the Alpine National Standards. The Level 3 Standard is the ultimate level to attain, so they broke down all three levels into their respective skier zones and the certification candidates would be responsible for the skiing activities and teaching in that zone. Level 1 would be the novice zone, Level 2 the intermediate zone, and Level 3 the advanced zone.

It was also agreed that a certified instructor be skilled in some basic fundamentals. In skiing, the fundamentals are broken down into activities that demonstrate these skills at all three levels and in teaching the same process applies. It is also important to note that reference material such as the new Alpine Technical Manual and Study Guide, as well as your Central Division education events and reference material will support these Standards. If you want more information, it will be available soon on your Central Division website. This was truly an historic occasion having all nine divisions agreeing to evaluate on the same isolated and applied skills. See you on the slopes!

CHILDREN’S
By Brad Miller, Education Staff, PSIA-AAIS Central

Team work, team work, and more team work summarized the Children’s Group. Members from eight divisions sat down to the table with a pretty aggressive itinerary. As a rookie I was welcomed by a group of folks whose dedication, knowledge and more importantly passion are contagious. This proved to be the ongoing theme and provided me with a priceless education in functional cooperation. Here are some of the highlights.

After examining each division’s score card, three were picked to be taken on the hill for a test drive. The Central Division Evaluation Summary was one of the three chosen and was considered unique, creative and most importantly functional. Special kudos to Central’s Evaluation Summary Card designer, Ned Pinske, and the Children’s Specialist Staff! The three chosen score cards were used to evaluate mock scenarios performed by group members Stacey Gerrish and Sue Kramer. All group participants felt that the three score cards could be used in their respective divisions.

Divisions were not very different when evaluating Children’s Specialist (CS) 1. The Central Division and a few other divisions approach the CS 1 evaluation from an educational standpoint. One or two divisions base their evaluation with more of a certification emphasis. The level of preparedness, teaching and knowledge for CS 2 was very high for most divisions. It is important to note that the different ways of evaluating are driven by each division’s specific needs.

Very soon, you will be able to link up to the new CS rubric on the Central Division website. The rubric was designed as an educational supplement to the CS National Standards. Each column and line were reviewed and edited by the group in effort to provide a document that can work for all divisions. Although intended for the CS participants, there was a general feeling the rubric could be a useful educational tool for other disciplines and their respective needs.
A great deal was accomplished by the Children’s Group at this year’s conference and will have a positive educational impact for the divisions, resorts, snow sports schools, members and most importantly, our customers. Thanks for allowing me to represent the Central Division’s Children’s Group. Keep up the team work! That is how great things are accomplished.

NORDIC
By Dan Clausen, Education Staff, PSIA-AASI Central

The goals and objectives of the Nordic Group were to reinforce the work of the contributors and developers from the previous year. After uploading the ski lift along with all the gravity disciplines, the Nordic Group skied with these disciplines in full view on top of the ski lift which created great awareness for Nords!

Each day, indoors, we collaborated to hopefully agree on the most effective language for our specific sport, and also, to adhere to some of the terms that our Alpine counterparts use to describe movements. The Standards for track skiing certification were discussed and preliminary modification to a table which explains the standards for Level 1, 2 and 3 certification. With a new manual on the horizon, which will include the pending revisions to the Standards, we also tried to simplify information from six skills to three and new descriptions for technical models. I am looking forward to presenting these proposed revisions to our Central Division staff to get their very important input, which will help set the bar for consistency for all nine divisions of PSIA.

One goal was to align the greater message with USSA and present a uniform model for all nine divisions of PSIA. We started by establishing a new pyramid similar to the USSA model, which would allow PSIA to better align itself with the USSA model. The pyramid would include fundamental body position as its base, as well as fundamental movements and movement patterns higher up on the pyramid model. The XC skills would be: push off, weight transfer, and glide. The top of the pyramid would include timing (duration and rate sequence), and power (speed and force), with an emphasis on continued forward motion.

I was pleased to be part of this important process, and it was also a wonderful opportunity for me to give back to our unique sport which has been very good to me throughout my career. I want to thank our team — Brenda Winkler, Paul Peterson, Patti Banks, David Lawrence, Megan Spurkland, Ross Matlock and Scott Mcgee — for all their tireless efforts. Hoping to ski with all of you soon!

SNOWBOARD
By David Seelbinder, Snowboard Administrator, PSIA-AASI Central

What an awesome conference! Yes, I have to say it again. What an awesome conference! Great snow conditions up at 12,000 vertical! Yes, we had a great time riding.

What else did we do? I was involved in the task of re-structuring the “Riding Standards” portion of the Snowboard National Standards. We talked specifically about Direction, Movement, Performance, Size and Terrain. This would be the information you may hear from your tech team leader, if they were asking to see a riding demo labeled as this: Switch, Dynamic, Skidded, Small Radius turn on Blue terrain. Some of the tasks in the Standard needed to be adjusted to match these descriptors. The updated format will be clear and concise for the member and the team leader, as well as being the same message across the Divisions. We also changed the “Applied Movement” section that directly follows the riding tasks. We essentially re-worded the blending of movements that apply the action to the board. We had some discussions on Blooms Taxonomy (cognitive) and how the “triangle” applies to Snowboarding. It was fun and interesting! Look in the Standards for the definitions of “initial,” “elementary” and “mature” (as defined in the Core Concepts on page 20). This is a clue.

We talked about the importance of delivering clear messages as Tech Team Leaders. What does that mean? Gary, the leader tells his group, “Make some funnel turns down this slope — small to start, large to finish. I am going down here to watch.” He then takes off down the hill. I don’t know if I need to do dynamic or basic, skidded or carved, flexed or extended at edge change, switch or regular. Rocky Mountain uses five descriptors: Size, Shape, Edge Change Movements, Direction and Performance. Clear instructions will be coming soon to a hill near you! In Eric Larsen’s keynote presentation, when people ask this question, “Why do we do this job?” If you have to ask, any answer will not make any sense. Hope to see you this winter! 🛴
Most of us would like to be able to ski any way that brings us enjoyment. As instructors, we also need to be able to ski in ways that present clear and meaningful images to our students to help them learn to be able to ski any way that brings them enjoyment. Working with our students, we employ activities that explore movements and build skills to create successful learning experiences that allow the student to progress to more challenging activities (i.e. stepping stones) as their process of learning to ski evolves.

As instructors, we need to give ourselves the same opportunity to learn from that process. There are no shortcuts to expert skiing, but there are a lot of detours that can delay us from getting there. The Cheshire Cat told Alice, “If you don’t know where you are going, any path will do.” Embarking on a pathway of learning the fundamental movements that lead to developing competence in basic skiing skills is the first stepping stone of building a process of learning not how to ski, but learning how to learn to ski any way we want to.

Learning to ski is experiential and requires a balance of watching, doing, feeling and thinking. A fundamental concept of physical skill acquisition is developing better kinaesthetic awareness skills – being more perceptive to how our bodies actually move. As Moshe Feldenkrais coincidentally stated, “If you don’t know what you are doing, you can’t do what you want.” This involves learning to perceive what is actually happening, then choose the correct movements that, with repetition, will result in development of a set of efficient and effective skills. The more skilled your basic movements are, the more variety of skill blends you can create, and the more tactical options you have to adapt to different terrain and snow conditions. Our process of improving our skiing should improve our ski teaching as well.

**WHAT:** This document presents Movements Learning Activities (i.e Stepping Stones). These are organized both by levels and by skill(s).

**WHY:** To provide activities that promote learning movements fundamental to skilled skiing. To develop as both a skier and an instructor presenting images (demos) to your students. All of these activities can help preparation for the evaluation benchmarks used in our certification exams.

**HOW:** To become skilled at these activities will require you to commit to spending the time to first master the movements that the Introductory Activities present, so that you have basic skilled movements to be further enhanced in the related Intermediate and Advanced Activities. With this process, skipping to focusing on the advanced activities without first developing the skilled movements to do them well is one of those detours that will not lead to skiing expertise any time soon. So take your time, enjoy the learning process of the journey, and may your efforts produce the skiing you desire.

**ALPINE CERTIFICATION SKIING BENCHMARKS**

(This document will be a new link under Education/Certification at www.psia-c.org.)

Note: We will be transitioning from the term “Tasks” and using “Benchmarks” to describe specific skiing activities used to evaluate isolated, blended and applied movements and skills.

**WHAT:** These are the current PSIA-C Alpine Certification Skiing Benchmarks, organized by Certification Levels. They each require
2013 MEMBERS SURVEY RESULTS

By Robert Neff, Marketing Chairman, PSIA-AASI Central

Twenty-five percent (25%) of our members are responding to our annual survey which is now in its fifth year and is statistically representative of the membership data population. If you feel your opinions are not represented in the survey results, you should participate in the next survey this coming summer.

The full survey results are available from the Central Division website home page at www.psia-c.org.

Most of our membership (90%) continues to be Alpine certified with 15.3% certified in more than one discipline which is up from 13.6% last year. Increases in certifications have occurred in all disciplines since last year.

How you want to receive information remains about the same as in the past with some slight increases in website and social media for schedule changes and last minute notifications. The Central Line magazine is the most popular method for receiving informational articles (42%) and organizational news (33%).

Satisfaction with National and Central Division remains high at 88.3% and 84.4% (respectively) satisfied to a degree above neutral. Up from 51.8% last year, 55.2% of the respondents feel the cost of a Central Division Education Event is a good value. One quarter of the responses feel the cost is high and 13% feel the cost is low for the value received. Value and satisfaction are perceptions and not necessarily tied to dollar amounts. For example, you may purchase a luxury item and feel you got your money’s worth or on the other hand, buy a cheap item that breaks immediately and you feel you were ripped off. These survey questions are important because they measure perception.

The events you choose to attend are most often chosen by what the event offers according to
44.1% of those responding. A new question this year was “Would you prefer to attend larger events offered fewer times per season that would offer many event selections, or would you prefer to attend smaller events offered at more locations per season but with fewer event selections?” 67% favored smaller events offered at more locations with fewer event selections. This coincides with many comments we get asking for smaller events more frequently offered. Next we asked if the events offered meet your needs. Again this year slightly over two thirds of the respondents, 67.8%, feel that the education events offered by Central Division meet their needs. We took this a bit further for the first time this year and asked those that responded “occasionally” or “rarely” why they feel that way. All responses will be reviewed by your Board of Directors and Discipline Administrators.

We asked what could be done to increase event attendance and we got a pretty even split with lower prices, closer locations and content being the most suggested. There were 111 comments that will all be reviewed.

Finally we asked for comments or questions for future surveys. This question is your opportunity to tell us what is on your mind that may not have been covered in the other questions of the survey. Every year about one third of the survey respondents offer their thoughts. Every comment will be reviewed by your Board of Directors.

Communicating your ideas, opinions and concerns provides valuable information that allows your Board of Directors, your Central Division office, your Discipline Administrators, your Section Representatives and your Education Staff to be of better service to you, our members. After all, we are all members.

NEW EDUCATION DOCUMENTS RELEASED
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

that you develop the mastery of: Isolated (or highlighted) Skills, Blended Skills or Applied Skills. Note that they are but a subset of an Exam day’s skiing evaluation that requires demonstrating different skill blends and movements in exercises, turns and Benchmarks activities. Benchmarks from the designated lists may be requested and additional evaluation will include skiing situations as they occur, or as exercises that are presented in teaching assignments throughout the day.

WHY: These Benchmarks have been selected to ensure that skiing skills being evaluated in PSIA-C Certification Exams represent the PSIA National Standards at each Certification Level. Also to ensure that PSIA-C Exams are conducted with consistency in the skiing Benchmark used from Exam to Exam, and from Examiner to Examiner.

HOW: To be able to ski successfully in a PSIA-C Certification Exam will require you to commit to spending the time necessary to develop your skiing skills to reflect the level of movement precision and accuracy that these Benchmarks require. Start by exploring and practicing the activities in the Alpine Education document: Movement Learning Activities for Developing Skilled Skiing that is available on the PSIA-C web site. In that process, and when you start practicing these Benchmarks, you will need to employ multiple resources to get feedback to ensure that your skiing skills and movement development is on track for your Certification Level. Attend appropriate PSIA-C Education Events, work with Trainers in your ski school, get video review of your skiing and engage others to work in collaboration to help each other learn and prepare for success.

THANK YOU TO THE CENTRAL DIVISION ALPINE TRAINING TEAM FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS ARTICLE.
A great way to begin the season

Attending a PDS clinic in the fall is a great way to get into the groove for the upcoming ski season. The recent PDS clinic that Mark Rudy led at Alpine Valley Ski Area in White Lake, Michigan, has definitely gotten me excited for the snow to fly! We talked about Movement Analysis and its key components – M.O.D.D.S. The other topic that was discussed was Terrain Based Teaching which is a way for students to learn by using terrain features.

We first discussed Movement Analysis using the five key components: MODDS.

- Motivation or goal
- Observe by physically watching the skier
- Describe what you saw
- Determine the cause and effective relationships between body movements and ski performance that you observed
- Suggest a prescription for change.

Learning how to do Movement Analysis correctly is an important skill for any instructor. It is particularly important to the members who are seeking certification, as it is something that they will be tested on during their exam.

Using the first key component of the Movement Analysis Model, we learned that understanding the Motivation/Goal is crucial to a successful lesson outcome. We need to find out if the student wants to be the next Lindsey Vonn, or do they just want to learn how to control their speed so they can keep up with or get away from their kids.

Next, we Observe by physically watching the skier. Mark told our group that the method that PSIA-C would like its members to use is to start from the ground up and added that it’s also beneficial to watch the student from more than one viewpoint. This is helpful because you may see something that you wouldn’t see if the skier is skiing straight towards you. For instance, checking a skier’s stance is easier to see if you are watching the skier from the side of the hill as they ski past you. If they’re bending at the waist and skiing with their hips behind their feet, you will be able to see this much more clearly than if they are just skiing towards you or away from you.

Once we’ve Observed the student, we can then Describe what we’ve seen by breaking down all of the movements into parts that influence the skier’s Stance, Balance, Edging, Rotary and Pressure skills, as well as the D.I.R.T. (Duration, Intensity, Rate and Timing) of their turns. When we’re describing what we see with our students, we need to make sure that we are clear about what we’ve observed and use common terms that the student will understand. If you have a student that wasn’t completing their turns, and looked like a windshield wiper as they skied down the hill, you wouldn’t want to try to explain D.I.R.T. to them and they probably wouldn’t want you to either. But, you could tell them that you see that they are rushing their turns or not completing them.

When we are Describing what we observed, we can also use the other key component of the Movement Analysis Model – Determine. This is how we describe the cause and effect relationships between body movements and the ski performance that we observed. As we look to see what the skis are doing, we can look to see where the snow is spraying from the bottom of the skis in order to get a clue as to how the skier is pressuring their skis. If the snow is spraying from the bottom of just the inside ski, you can determine that they are applying too much pressure on that ski and not enough on the outside ski. We can also see that if they’re skiing with their feet too close together, we can determine that they are not able to use their edges appropriately. Another thing to look for is if the skier is using any angulation. Are they letting the hips get inside of the turn to help fight the forces of the turn in order to stay balanced and get higher edge angles? We can look to see if the ankles, knees, hips and shoulders are level to the slope of the hill, or if the skier is inclining into the hill. We also have to look at where the shoulders are in relation to the hips. Is the skier skiing into and out of counter where appropriate or are they mostly square to their skies? Where are the hands? Is the skier dropping their hands or shoulders? We need to also be able to explain where in the turn that you see an incorrect movement. Is it at turn initiation, the shaping phase or at the finish of the turn before the transition into the next turn? Choices, choices, choices!

One of the members in attendance asked if PSIA-AASI Central could make some sort of list that explained every cause and effect that our
instructors, especially the candidates that are going for certification, could use. That’s a great idea, but there are so many variables considering biomechanics, equipment setup, snow condition, and terrain choice etc. that it would be one very long list! Mark made a great suggestion, though. He said that a great way to practice movement analysis is to just watch skiers on the hill during your chairlift ride, look online at the Movement Matrix or on YouTube to see if you can train your eye so that you can pinpoint what’s going on more accurately. You can also have your fellow instructors video each other skiing or riding and then sit down in the lodge and do some movement analysis together. It just takes PRACTICE!

The final key component of the Movement Analysis Model is Suggest a prescription for change. How are you going to help your student fix what they’re doing incorrectly and improve their skiing skills, keeping in mind their original motivation or goal? For that student that looked like a windshield wiper coming down the hill and wanted to stop putting the brakes on at the end of every turn, a suggestion and prescription for change may be working on turn shapes; making those pretty “Cs,” or as I like to call them, smile shaped turns. With the student that wanted to be the next Lindsey Vonn, start by setting up some cones or gates and work on timing and early edge engagement. Helping to fix our student’s problems or improving on their skills and getting them to the next level is both exciting and rewarding. They’ll leave you with smiles in the snow and on their faces, as well as yours!

The other subject that we discussed was Terrain Based Teaching. This is an area that is becoming increasingly popular. When using Terrain Based Teaching, it’s important to have a fun and use an unintimidating environment. By using terrain features like rollers, banks and mini half-pipes, the skier or rider can explore various sensations of sliding on the snow. Terrain can also help the student learn to make adjustments in order to stay balanced and can help with maintaining speed control, as well. When maneuvering through the different terrain features, you get a lot of feedback from the terrain pushing back at you! The rollers are a great way to teach people how to open and close their ankles to absorb the terrain. If they don’t do this, chances are they’re going to get a little “air.” Banks make it very easy for a student to understand inside and outside ski pressure, as well as long-leg, short leg, and the boarders can get a real feel for what happens when they’re riding on their toe side edge or heal side edge or being too far forward or too far back on their boards. With half-pipes, students have to maintain a centered stance or they will find themselves on their face, or on their butt! The use of banks and half-pipes also makes it very difficult for students on skis to stay in a wedge. The skis will almost automatically come into a parallel position. The half-pipe is also a great way to really get your students familiar with their edges. They have to use their edges to climb the wall, and they can’t ride back down the wall unless they release their edges.

One of the greatest things about Terrain Based Teaching is that it allows the students to have fun while they learn and reduce the fear factor. An added benefit is that it gets them excited about learning! They are usually pretty excited to tell their family and friends that they skied or rode in the half-pipe or in the terrain park! Our group at the PDS clinic walked out to the half-pipe at Alpine Valley. The grass was pretty long. Without any snow, the ground was quite uneven, so we really got a lot of feedback from our feet, knees, hips, shoulders and head on all the muscles that were firing and all of the movements that we were making just to maintain our balance on the steep slope of the half-pipe.

Based on everything that I’ve seen and read about Terrain Based Teaching and learning, it should make for a very fun ski season working with students, especially the kids in our local Alpine Astros program!

Think Snow! 😎

Anne Mattack lives in White Lake, Michigan with her husband, Jeff, and their four children. She is a Level 3 Certified Professional Ski Instructor and a Member of the PSIA-AASI Central Division Education Staff Tech Team. She is also a Children’s Specialist 2 and Trainer 2 Accredited. Anne teaches full-time and serves as the Ski School’s Training Director for Alpine Valley Ski Area in White Lake.

New for this ski season at Alpine Valley, Anne developed and will serve as the Director of a new kids ski and ride program called Alpine Astros. This program will be located on very gentle terrain that will not be open to the general public. We will be using Terrain-Based teaching on our outer space themed area, which should make it a blast for the kids!
had just finished setting a fun course for Telly Day at our ski area when another employee noted that one of my boots was unbuckled. Reaching down to buckle it, I saw that the cable on my center buckle had severed. Being in a pinch for time, I tied a knot in one end of the cable, so I would have at least one locked down across my instep.

There are not a lot of telly shops in Northern Michigan (none in our town), so I thought that there was a possibility the oldest ski shop in town may have some old Alpine parts that would work. I entered the shop the next day and showed the sales person my dilemma. After scratching his head, the sales person asked the manager if he knew where any old cable binding parts might be. The manager rummaged through boxes of antiquated parts, but no cable system fit the bill. The manager finally said, “Check out the hardware store. They may have something that will connect the cable ends.”

Great idea! I knew that the iconic neighborhood hardware would have the part I needed, and ‘golly gee’ they might even put it together on the spot! I entered the hardware boot over my shoulder positive that they would have some kind of fix. I was sent to the back counter where the sales person examined the situation. “No we don’t have anything that will fix that,” he said. I asked where the cable connectors were located, and he repeated, “We don’t have anything that will fix that!” I persisted and got a response that put me on my heels. “Listen, I lived next to Timberlee Ski Area when I was a kid, and I know how things blow apart if they are done wrong. If you want this fixed, you will have to head to XYZ Welding!” Yikes! I didn’t want to attach a chair grip to the wire I just wanted to fix a buckle cable. I said thanks and walked out the door shaking my head in disbelief. Off I went to the big box lumber yard, knowing that at least I could look on my own in an attempt to find something that might work.

It’s not every day that a customer walks into the big box lumber yard with a 2003 Scarpa T-race over their shoulder, even in Northern Michigan. I walked towards the hardware aisle and a polite elderly worker greeted me, “How may I help you?” I explained my dilemma and showed him the issue. “Let’s head to the next aisle. We might be able to find something that works,” was his reply. Within the next five minutes, we had collectively come up with a functional solution costing less than five dollars. I headed straight for the cellar when I got home, and with a couple small bike parts and a little drilling, the cable was fixed. Needless to say, I was one happy customer and appreciated the effort the worker had put forth. Great customer service had helped me fix my beloved boots and gotten me back to my livelihood.

Locally, we have a bank who has had “I can do that” as their slogan for over a decade. Their main objective is customer service. If the person you meet can’t take care of an issue, they will find one that can. As resort employees, priority number one is our customer or potential customer. It is important that we understand that these folks do not have to participate in snow sports, and more specifically, visit our respective areas. If your area is small or large, an “I can do that” attitude can go a long way in securing a long-time customer. Many times it can be as simple as acknowledging the customer’s existence. At our small snow sports area, folks are greeted in a very pleasant way by our office staff member. She helps the little ones put on their tickets and glove guards, as well as learning all their names and birthdays. It is not uncommon for the general manager at Nubs Nob (Michigan) to meet and help people in every corner of the area’s property. He also thanks them for visiting the area. When entering Brandy Wine (Ohio), members of the staff meet folks to help answer any questions. Snow Sports areas across the nation are getting a strong grasp on customer service. They know that without satisfied customers, they have no income.

As snow sports instructors, we have to reach beyond the technical x’s and o’s, and also concentrate on customer service. My first eye-opening experience of customer service was by long-time alpine education staff member John (J.P.) Peppler. In 1986, before the customer service model was in vogue, J.P. stepped up to the plate and helped a person waiting for his cross country instructor. Although J.P. was in alpine gear, he started the lesson engaging the student in basic balance and gliding exercises until the cross country instructor arrived. By spotting the situation and being part of the solution, J.P. was able to make the customer’s experience a positive one.
Opening a door for someone; helping parents get their family’s gear to a rack; or being able to answer basic resort questions are simple ways to enhance customer service. At times, we instructors are on the fly. How many times have you skied by a customer that needed a hand up or walked by a parent who was having a hard time getting their children’s boots on? Another form of customer service is involving the customer in the lesson plan, specifically, in privates or smaller groups. Instead of starting with a canned lesson plan, a great question may be, “What would you like to work on today?” Undoubtedly, the list of things that we can do to increase customer service is endless. Bigger corporations are taking a page out of small town American business and putting an emphasis on customer service in efforts to increase their base. As snow sport instructors and ambassadors for our respective areas, it is incumbent upon us to rally around the customer service model increasing our area’s and own personal customer base.

My experience with my boot repair helped me see the importance of applied customer service. As instructors and members of the snow sports industry, it is important for us to utilize the customer service model, as much as the technical x’s and o’s that go with our respective disciplines. With every opportunity we have, let’s show our customers where the cable connectors are, rather than send them down the road to another hardware store. 

---

BRAD MILLER (ALPINE LEVEL 3, NORDIC DH LEVEL 2, AND CHILDREN’S SPECIALIST LEVEL 2) IS THE SNOW SPORTS TRAINING DIRECTOR AT SHANTY CREEK RESORT. HE IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE PSIA-AASI CENTRAL ALPINE AND NORDIC EDUCATION STAFF AND A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL CHILDREN’S COMMITTEE.
MAKE THE END OF YOUR SEASON
A TRULY PEAK EXPERIENCE

JOIN US FOR SPRING RALLY
AT BRECKENRIDGE

APRIL 2-4, 2014

WITH SKI-IN/SKI-OUT ACCESS AT THE VILLAGE
AT BRECKENRIDGE ($99 - $119 PER NIGHT)
OR ACROSS THE STREET AT DOUBLETREE BY
HILTON ($109.00 - $129 PER NIGHT) AND THE
ABOVE-TREELINE TERRAIN OF THE NEW PEAK
6, THIS WILL BE A SPRING RALLY TO REMEMBER
AND THE PERFECT WAY TO CLOSE OUT THE
SEASON.

REGISTER TODAY (AS 365 FOR ALPINE, SS 365
FOR SNOWBOARD), THEN MAKE YOUR HOTEL
RESERVATIONS EARLY TO GET THE BEST
RATES.

SEE THE EVENT PROMOTIONS PAGE ON
PSIA-C.ORG FOR FULL DETAILS.