



## **2023 Interski Report**

***By Kyle Armstrong***

It was an amazing experience to be a part of the Interski Team once again!

You all should be proud of our team and what we were able to produce. We worked extremely well as a team, and we were able to up our game as individuals and as a team. We collaboratively developed our common goal of our teaching methodology and are cohesive about our messaging which will strengthen the understanding of our Membership moving forward. Our message was received loud and clear by all the other ski nations and there are a lot of areas where we continue to be leaders in the industry. The other nations were impressed with how well we all skied. They felt that the Skills Framework was a great way to explain skiing simply and the Collaborative teaching approach is a great tool to teach instructors the decisions we make day to day.

It was a busy week filling every minute with training and learning opportunities and sharing with all the other presenters. The buzz and excitement to share was incredible and we didn't want it to stop. That is why we will be collaborating with other nations outside of the Interski program with emails, zoom calls, and online workshops.

I really appreciated the professionalism of the team we had. The Coaches did a great job keeping us on track with allowing us the freedom to work to our strengths as a team. We were able to support each other when in need, collaborate on new ideas, ask open questions to each other, and get real and honest answers. The chairlift rides where we were problem solving and allowing each other's strengths to shine was awesome.

To the team, "These moments we shared will always stay with me! It's funny to be home trying to explain what it was all about. I know when we see each other all the moments we shared will come flooding back and only we alone will really know what it was all about, and the effort and work we put in. We will always be the Levi Finland Interski Team! I am proud of what we accomplished and to have been a teammate with you!"

To all the aspiring Interski Team members out there. Your hard work and dedication to the sport doesn't go unnoticed! Keep developing your craft. Understand the skills involved that the CSIA has to offer and push your limits and explore the possibilities. The CSIA's methodology gives a great basis and foundational framework to be an instructor at its excellence. Mastery is to understand all this but also make it your own; take deep dives into where your skill sets and desires pull you. This is what the next team will demand. No one individual creates the Interski team. The individual skill sets of the team and the common messaging is what makes the CSIA leaders in the industry.

Kyle Armstrong



Country: Sweden

Facilitator: Frederic Ericsson & Tess Axen

Brief Bio: Ski School Director in Sweden and Demo Team Member and Trainer

Session Topic: Self Leadership for Ski Instructors (Experiential Learning)

Purpose/ philosophy/ justification for inclusion in system:

- Self-leadership is a necessary need for Sweden because they have a low rate of retention of ski instructors. They feel that having the involvement in the learning process with experiential learning will help retain instructors, because developing a growth mindset will help. Investing in engaging training and building leadership will hopefully allow for more instructors.
- There was a cool question during the session. How do we know when someone is unconsciously incompetent and consciously incompetent (a good reflector)? The goal wasn't to say everyone must be consciously competent, but what are the signs. We have this in our methodology but how they posed the question in the experience was interesting.
- The experience/task design was to follow lead on 3 runs. First run was to only ask what the other person is doing, 2<sup>nd</sup> run follow and try to do what they are doing, 3<sup>rd</sup> run ask leading questions to understand how they are doing it and outcomes of when you tried doing it.

Implementation: (ex. training trainers/ evaluation/ member engagement)

- We already implement the Experiential learning process in our teaching methodology but researching how they are trying to retain instructors is an interesting thing to keep an eye on.

Challenges? Successes?

- Investing in the training of their instructors where the student feel they have more involvement in the learning process is their hope to help battle a revolving door of instructors.

Similarities to related CSIA concept(s):

- Similarities to our industry to help retention and adding the professional image of instructing in an industry is an interesting topic to continue to dig deeper into.

Differences to related CSIA concept(s):

Investigation potential for evolution of CSIA concepts:

- Research more of what other countries are doing to battle the industry retention rates. For example, it created an interesting discussion about leadership mentorship and engagement in all ski areas and systems.
- The Swiss (Laszlo Nef) were talking about how their social media “funny video clips” are engaging more youth, while also having a spin off effect that businesses are seeing ski instructing as a profession, creating engagement with an older generation as well.
- Valuing mentorship leadership and the power of the peer's approach is something the CSIA can foster in Snow Schools through the TD course or the Level 4 Academy process. The people in the Level 4 Academy or the TD course should have leadership/mentorship training and somehow implement in a Snow School.



Country: New Zealand

Facilitator: Campbell Mason

Brief Bio: NZ Trainer Demo Team Member

Session Topic:

- International athlete success drives Guest Demand for Freestyle and Big Mountain in NZ Snow Sports Schools.

Purpose/ philosophy/justification for inclusion in system:

- NZ has a 2-level Park system they have pulled out separate from their core curriculum but to become a fully certified instructor (Level 3 NZ) it is a mandatory requirement to have a minimum of Park 1 certification.
- They changed the freestyle curriculum out of “pathway curriculum” (Level 1 and 2) because the membership felt that it created an unachievable barrier for higher levels when it was in the system. (My belief is it was because the curriculum was trick-based rather than skill-based).
- Inclusion: that all instructors need to have some component of Freestyle skills to be fully certified.
- Inclusion: To have a multi-level system of snow park training
- Park Level 1 in their system is very much safety and etiquette based.
- Park Level 2 is more skills-based.
- They are seeing a big uptake in this program because the Snow Schools are having an increasing demand for park lessons, especially because of the success of the top athletes in the Olympics.

Implementation: (ex. training trainers/ evaluation/ member engagement)

- Training the Course Conductors for a Level 2.
- Building the curriculum and evaluation process for a Level 2 program.
- Developing the skills of our organization will take time and consistency.

Observations and outcomes?

- NZ is seeing a higher demand for this product and a tighter relationship to the Snow School's needs and the wants of the end user.

Challenges? Successes?

- Very new in the NZ pathway. Keep an eye on their development.

Similarities to related CSIA concept(s):

- It is very similar to the CSIA SPC

Differences to related CSIA concept(s):

- Separated into a 2-part system to increase engagement of Snow Park instructors.

Investigation potential for evolution of CSIA concepts:

- Investigate what were the components that they found most instructors didn't want to do in the old program that included snow park, and the benefits of having it separated out. There are components of freestyle skills that are best to be separated out of the core curriculum of the CSIA, but there are still components that should be included. The reasoning behind why they decided to separate this from the core curriculum can lead to an understanding of what is too much for the membership.



Country: Montenegro

Facilitator: Indoor

Brief Bio: Session leader was someone that was kicked out of another system.

Session Topic: Emphasis on the fact that drifted turns are important in both intermediate and advanced skills.

Purpose/ philosophy/justification for inclusion in system:

- The indoor session was to point out how if we only teach people 1 technique (carve turns) it limits the skills of our students. Basically, it was stating that if your focus as an organization is movements or stylistic focused or too focused on 1 type of ski to snow interaction, you limit the skills of the end user. It strengthens our point to be skills focused and understand the Skills Framework in all terrain conditions, turn shapes and types and applications.

Implementation: (ex. training trainers/ evaluation/ member engagement)

Observations and outcomes?

- The main point he wanted to make was that steering skills and versatility are necessary at all levels and abilities. High speed drifted turns are a necessary skill set, in his opinion.

Similarities to related CSIA concept(s):

Skills Framework

Differences to related CSIA concept(s):

Investigation potential for evolution of CSIA concepts:

- To remember that the skillsets we impose when we get too granular and create absolutes in techniques, we limit our students. We, as an organization, need to maintain that if it is a choice to apply skills in application for outcomes and objectives rather and to also evaluate skillfulness rather than a technique.



country: Finland

Facilitator: Teo Jeskanen

Brief Bio:

Session Topic: (Indoor) Safety as a Pedagogical Tool (Physical, Phycological, and Social Safety)

Purpose/ philosophy/justification for inclusion in system:

- To create a safe learning environment for all students and how to teach it in courses as a pedagogical point.
- Understanding that there are different types of safety in snow sports. Physical safety is observable, but Phycological and Social safety are not always as apparent.
- The Finland system created 2 tools to help instructors understand this:
  - They use a diagram that has 4 safety zones. (Comfort zone, challenge zone 1, challenge zone 2, Danger zone). To learn you need to float between challenge zone 1 and 2 to be in the growth zone. Try not to be in the danger zone (panic and self-preservation, reptilian brain/fight or flight)
  - The second tool for instructors is pertaining to Social and Phycological safety. The instructor asks a question to understand social or psychological challenges that are apparent in the group. Then the whole group closes their eyes and puts their thumbs up if ok, thumb sideways if at unease, and thumbs down to say no go. This then creates an unbiased awareness of where the students are at without social pressures or anxiety to go with the group's decision. The instructor then mitigates the risks or asks questions to create an awareness of how to create a better learning environment for all without singling one person out.
- These basic fundamentals of safety are evaluated in all their levels. In the level 1 program these examples are used as a tool and understanding of these points and in

higher levels they require an understanding (P.P.S. safety) and adapt their lesson accordingly for their students.

Implementation: (ex. training trainers/ evaluation/ member engagement):

- This could be easily adapted in our system and could be used as a “Tips” suggestion in the Course Conductor Manual in the Level 1 to use as a discussion point of “know your learner”.

Observations and outcomes?

- Creating safety as a priority in all levels and tools will help instructors build confidence with their clients.
- Ski resort operations are always wanting to help mitigate risks and the more training we have in the CSIA the better relations we have with the industry.

Challenges? Successes?

- Building this into our pathway and curriculum. To train Course Conductors of this for future courses.

Similarities to related CSIA concept(s):

- CTA (know your learner and building task designs that are appropriate for the level of your students (IACRCV).

Differences to related CSIA concept(s):

- No differences just another layer deeper of our core concepts with evidence and background science based teaching.

Investigation potential for evolution of CSIA concepts:

- Look up the specifics in each “ZONE”.



Country: USA

Facilitator: Anne Schorling

Brief Bio: Master’s thesis gender equity in snow sports

Session Topic: Increasing Gender Equity in Snow Sports Instruction

Purpose/ philosophy/justification for inclusion in system:

- The understating of what gender bias is and educating how Snow Schools and scheduling can affect the progressions of women in snow sports.
- Mentoring, advocating for women in snow sports.
- Women in leadership roles

- The Science of what happens when a minority is threatened.
- Gender equity in all courses and within a snow school.
- Education scheduling staff and desk staff to question skill sets rather than having a gender bias.
- Educating clients how to talk about skill sets they want for the instructor rather than gender.
- Having women only groups can lead to inequity in skill level because “if” the pool you’re pulling from isn’t large enough.

Implementation: (ex. training trainers/ evaluation/ member engagement)

Educate the membership of the science and the facts behind minority biases and how it can create inequity in Snowsports. Factual information and science-based knowledge of examples to help give a clear understanding and picture of what it is and how we can move forward.

Observations and outcomes?

Strengthening equity in our system.

Challenges? Successes?

There are a lot of minority groups and the education of science behind being in a minority group is beneficial information for all instructors and staff. If we focus on just women in snow sports (which is also an area to be discussed) is missing the point and can lead to more us and them rather than inclusion.

Similarities to related CSIA concept(s):

WIS

Differences to related CSIA concept(s):

Education all members not just women

Investigation potential for evolution of CSIA concepts:

This is a hot topic and constantly educating our membership and partners (Snow Schools) is only going to make us stronger. Inviting Anne to our indoor CCT or as a guest speaker at events will be a good way to move forward.



Country: NZ indoor

Facilitator: Daniel Bogue, Claire Dooney

Brief Bio: GM of the NZSIA

Session Topic: Our People, Our Future, and the Guest Experience

Purpose/ philosophy/justification for inclusion in system:

Investing in our people and stakeholders' engagement has defined our place within the wider industry, enhancing the guest experience.

- Closer relationships with industry partners have created a lot of value and headway stemming from covid crisis.
- The crisis for NZ was the lack of international workers. NZ had to draw on local market to staff the resorts.
- NZSIA created a lot of price incentives to help Ski Schools and Ski Areas:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> year 50% off for (NZ instructors/ staff)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> year 50% off for Level 1-3
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> year 50 % off resort staff
  - 4<sup>th</sup> year fixed sum vouchers given to Ski Areas SSD to use as they wish. Given out by volume of Ski Area guest percentages. Ski area can use vouchers throughout the season or use at the end of the season as a refund / achievement bonus.
- Other areas the NZ has changed:
  - Curriculum freestyle out of pathway curriculum but as an individual module but a necessary component for the L3 / full certification (level seemed unachievable and a barrier for higher levels because the trick based rather than skill based).
  - Eblast and e-learning tools
  - APP
  - Women in skiing initiatives (women's days clinics and discounts)

Implementation:

- Get the National and Regional Boards to watch this presentation. It gave a lot of information on how to work more closely with industry partners and the understanding of success when we all work together.

Observations and outcomes?

- How funding (creating discounts) in different areas to support our industry partners can result in a stronger relationship.

Challenges? Successes?

- It needed the crisis to create this environment and collaboration in NZ.

Similarities to related CSIA concept(s):

- We have the boards and funding model and philosophy in place but an action plan with proof and evidence of how it works is beneficial.

Differences to related CSIA concept(s):

- Smaller country with less stakeholders to work with. Although each region would be like the NZ country.

Investigation potential for evolution of CSIA concepts:

- Get a hold of the presentation and invite NZSIA to speak at Board meetings to talk over implementation plans.





Country: Croatia  
Facilitator: Indoor Session  
Session Topic: More Feel Less Drill

Purpose/ philosophy/ justification for inclusion in system:

- The reason the Croatians are going down this path is because their belief that the end user (students in Ski Schools) does not need as much of the theoretical knowledge. They want fun engaging lessons that develop students fast and efficient with more progression-based learning that the student learns intuitively through their 7 pillars.
- Simplicity, Logic, Open Form, Natural Progress, Efficacy in Biomechanics, Focus, Feedback

Implementation: (ex. training trainers/ evaluation/ member engagement)

- Training and Evaluations systems to help identify the need to simplify.

Observations and outcomes?

- The goal is to simplify teaching for students and teachers to not overcomplicate skiing with technique but to develop a simple way to allow the student's progress. Trying to make task designs to allow students to learn naturally. Outcome based teaching with more objective style teaching.

Challenges? Successes?

- Challenges are that they are figuring out how to evaluate this. The successes they are finding, children are learning well, and they are more natural and fun lesson experiences.

Similarities to related CSIA concept(s):

- Teaching Children Module
- It is defined in different terms "create an experience" and "assess experience" with goals and outcomes of when and where to use different styles of task design and evaluation of progress.
- This can fit into our system as to how the CTA is used just using clearly defined targets and application of use of to create outcomes for students at different stages of learning (IACRCV)

Differences to related CSIA concept(s):

- Very Progression based system.

Investigation potential for evolution of CSIA concepts:

How to evaluate and to develop a way that values the simplicity of a lesson in an examination process rather than always rewarding instructors that create more complexities in an examination process.

Putting a heavier weight in courses that reward external cues, goals and activities that develop skill in the task design rather than just the debriefs. Unconscious competencies rather than always conscious competencies.



Country: USA

Facilitator: Ben Potts

Brief Bio: Freestyle Specialist and Demo Team Member

Session Topic: Freestyle and the Learning Connection

Purpose/ philosophy/justification for inclusion in system:

Freestyle not only increases an instructor's breadth of skills in relation to the learning connection model, but also the depth of knowledge in technical, teaching and people skills. These skill sets with freestyle, instructors can provide more engaging and enriching experience across all mountain environments.

- There are some skills that come intrinsically to freestyle instructors because of the demands that the park environment creates.
  - Safety Skills and understanding (terrain awareness and use, instructor student skill/trick/feature matching physical and Psychological skills).
  - People skills (risk management) building trust.
  - Progressive teaching philosophies.
  - Whole Part whole teaching methodologies.
  - Fun engagement because of skills matching and appropriate challenges and achievements.
  - Etc.

Implementation: (ex. training trainers/ evaluation/ member engagement)

- Develop the understanding with the Course Conductor community how these skills are learnt quicker by the environments that freestyle and big mountain provide.
- Add components into the core curriculum of our system and use the observations and "pedagogical" points be around the evidence of skill development.

Observations and outcomes?

- Fun

Challenges? Successes?

- Buy in by the membership.
- Stronger and more intuitive instructors that create growth of their own skill and the skills of their students quicker and in a more engaging way.

Similarities to related CSIA concept(s):

- Snow Park Course

Differences to related CSIA concept(s):

- Pedagogical back up and proofs in our system

Investigation potential for evolution of CSIA concepts:

- How to incorporate these concepts into our core curriculum.

OTHER Interski notes:



The USA has stages of every trick. (Inrun, jump, air, land, outrun) we can adopt this (like phases of the turn).



Post Interski project

Goal:

Developing a *best practices* guideline for freestyle freeride skills, so all countries can build or enhance a snow park program. How each country can adapt and implement freestyle/freeride aspects in their system specific to their needs.

Who:

- Canada: Kyle Armstrong, JS Forget
- USA: Ben Potts, Ryan Christoferson
- Sweeden: Fredric Ericsson, Erik Boden
- BASI: Sega Fairweather
- NZSIA: Campbell Mason

How:

- Have regular scheduled Zoom calls and WhatsApp communication with all above mentioned groups. Produce research projects to find evidence of inherent park skills and how it produces stronger instructors that are creating more value for guests.
- Understand all nation's baseline (each program's similarities and differences) of freestyle education and the need to enhance it.

Why:

- To strengthen instructors' skill sets quicker with more relevance to the skiing community. Creating more lesson sales for Snow Schools.

#### Proofs and evidence research:

- Produce research projects to find evidence of inherent park skills and how it produces stronger instructors that are creating more value for guests.
- Evidence why:
  - Ski Schools and clients are wanting park skilled instructors.
  - Ben Pots: “Personal skills in park teaching skills and personal risk management go hand in hand.”
  - Safety skills are higher.
  - Understanding of risk management
  - Depth of understanding of cause and effect of ski to snow
  - Binary objectives
  - Client engagements
  - Diversity of task designs
  - Growth opportunities in your organization
  - Poll Ski Schools’ interests and needs (what free ride, free style, free skiing, free tactic skills are you looking for as a Ski School, and the needs for your instructors and guests).
  - What percentage of clients ask for a freestyle lesson? (Private groups and multi day programs)
  - What is the potential push back and push forward from your stakeholders.

#### Challenges/ barriers:

- Keeping the project a high-level overview rather than getting into the nitty gritty.
- Keep focus on skills attributes rather than trick focused (Theory: when snow park becomes trick centric, the members get fearful, but when it is skill building Freestyle, it is less intimidating and more inclusive).
- Skills required and how to sell it to all “generations” of ski instructors with varying skill levels / abilities.

#### Implementation:

- Create a *best practice* manual and menu that you can adapt and adopt into its own stand-alone freestyle program or implement into each country’s core curriculum.
  - Course Conductors’ skills (having the training and pool necessary to teach x program developing cc skills).
  - Teaching skills/ personal skills/ skiing skills.

Connect with Andy from Austria about similar job work.

Focused sessions are great. Organic conversations and scheduled time to do so is good.