

# **IRISH ASSOCIATION OF SNOWSPORTS INSTRUCTORS**



# **Alpine Level 1 Race Coach Pre Course Reading and Information**

## **Student Workbook**

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## **1.0 Information and Resources:**

- **10 FIS Rules of Conduct for skiers & boarders** [http://www.fis-ski.com/mm/Document/documentlibrary/Administrative/02/04/30/10FISRulesofConduct-English-A4\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.fis-ski.com/mm/Document/documentlibrary/Administrative/02/04/30/10FISRulesofConduct-English-A4_Neutral.pdf)
- **Parallel Dreams Alpine Skiing**, 2007 available from Amazon [http://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=parallel+dreams+alpine+skiing](http://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=parallel+dreams+alpine+skiing) *Please note that the course organiser supplies this particular text.*
- **Ski Instructors Assistant** by Derek Tate, 2014 available as a free download from Apple iBooks <https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/ski-instructors-assistant/id916145002?ls=1&mt=11>
- **FIS Competition Rules** - <https://www.fis-ski.com/en/inside-fis/document-library/alpine-documents>
- **CSCF Drills Book** - <https://mhrccoach.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/cscf-drill-handbook-and-course-setting-info.pdf>

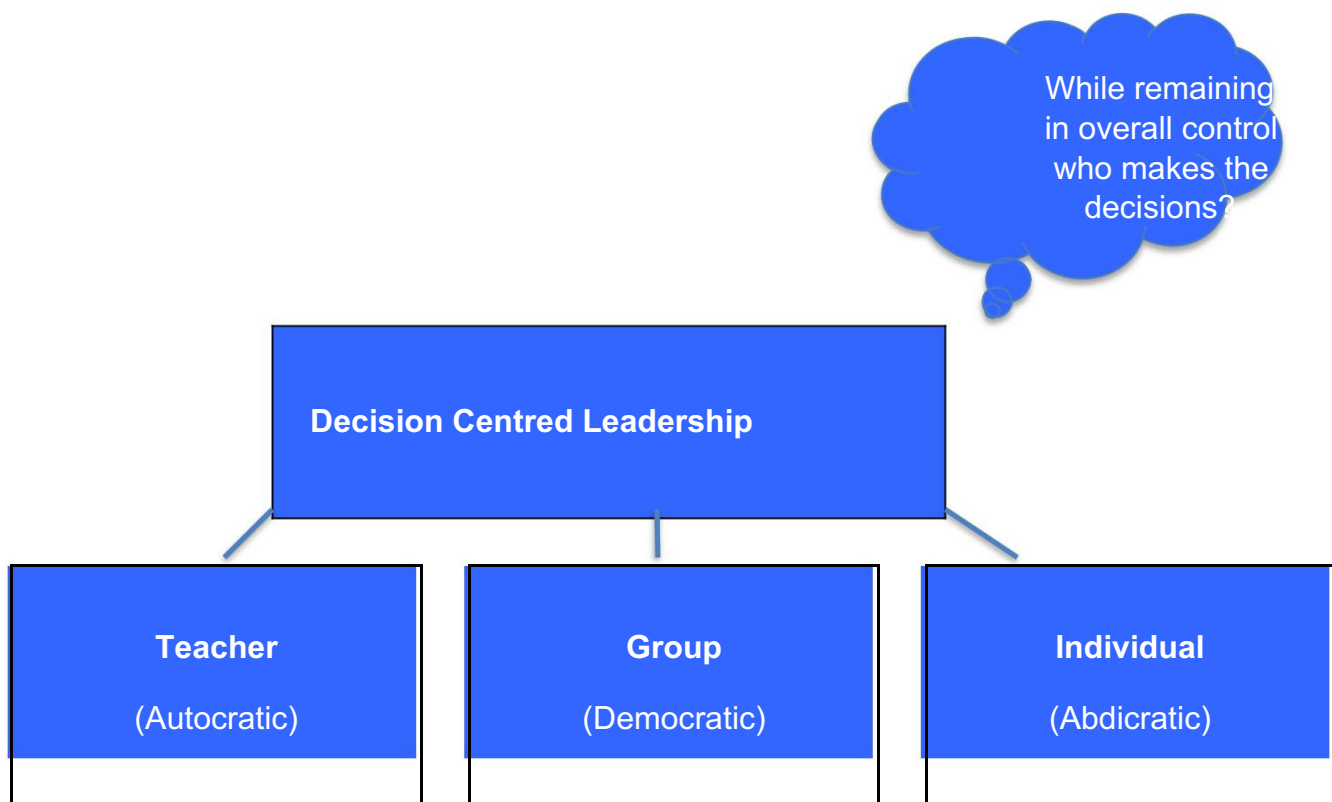
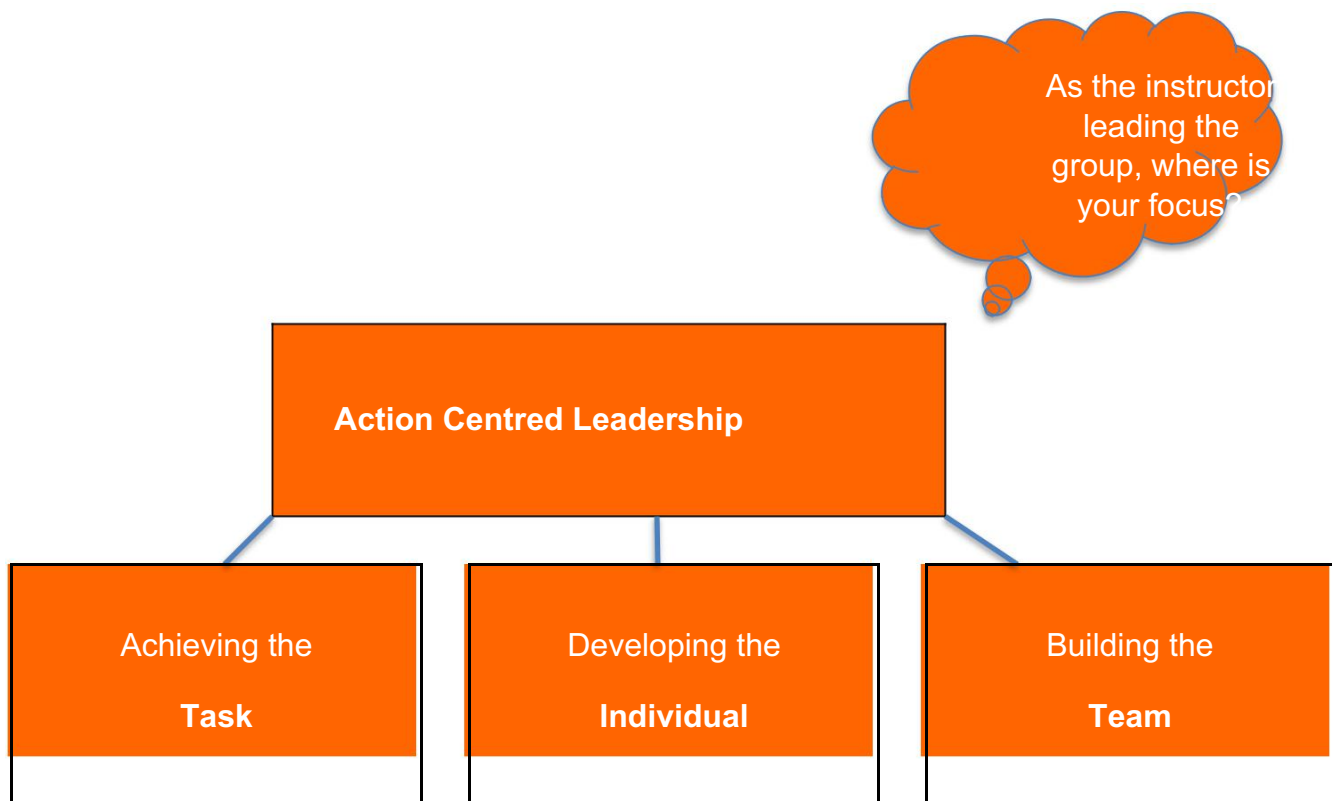
## 2.0 Key decision making factors Of a Training Session

### Factors of a Training Session

Look at the diagram below and tick off the factors you had considered when planning your session



### 3.0 Leadership Models

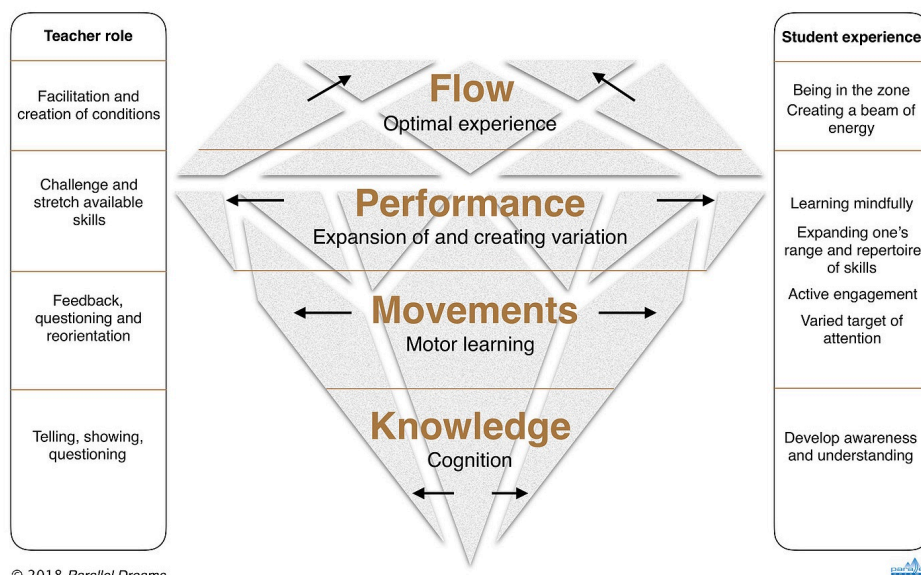


## 4.0 Skill Acquisition

*This model has been developed by Derek Tate  
and is © Parallel Dreams 2018*

**FwM**

### Diamond Model of Skill Acquisition



### Developing your skill with mindfulness and flow

Learning new skills is one of life's greatest joys. This new integrated model of skill acquisition that draws upon the work of Ellen Langer (1998, 2000) and her approach to mindfulness and mindful learning and also the work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975, 1990, 1997) and his construct of flow or optimal experience. These ideas are combined with Fitts and Posner's (1967) original stages of skill acquisition to provide an innovative approach to acquiring skill that will lead to enhanced learning and enjoyment. The **Diamond Model of Skill Acquisition** (DMSA; see the model above) is noteworthy because it places importance on fostering the student's well-being alongside the acquisition of skill.

This model is an update on the KMPF model previously developed by Derek Tate and adopted by the Irish Association of Snowsports Instructors (IASI) as part of its overall teaching philosophy; Irish Snowsports Teaching Methodology (ISTM).

The significance of the diamond shape is an important step in the development of this conceptual model which emphasises that as the learner moves through the first three stages of skill acquisition there is an increase in mental and physical abilities in relation to knowledge, movements and performance. During the third stage performance is honed and if conditions are optimal then the performer may enter the flow state and hence narrow their focus towards the desired goal. By using a mindful learning approach throughout a retraining of the learner's attention takes place allowing for better focus on the task in hand.



**Knowledge:** This is the cognitive learning phase of skill acquisition. The brain begins to acquire knowledge and the breadth and depth of that understanding gradually expands. The mechanisms for learning here are through reading, seeing and hearing. It is vital, therefore, that the learner sees visual demonstrations (showing) and receives clear explanations (telling) in order to build up a mental picture and assist with early attempts. In effect, the brain is being warmed up to new activity in preparation for learning new movement patterns.

**Movements:** During the second stage, the learner develops a range and repertoire of movement patterns, that gradually become more complex, allowing the required skills to be executed both efficiently and effectively. This is where **motor learning** takes place requiring exploration, repetition and practice of the movements needed to perform (see the article Purposeful Practice; Tate, 2017b). In the original Fitts and Posner model this is called the **associative phase** however, the mindful learning approach suggests that the learner should keep their mind actively involved in the present noticing new and novel distinctions as they practice. This will promote greater adaptability of the skill, which, for sports that take place in an open environment is an essential quality for coping with the ever changing conditions.

**Performance:** This is the stage where the skills become autonomous and thinking becomes more effortless. The brain, at this stage, could be said to be quieter or less busy than the previous stage. The training focus now moves to creating variation in the execution of the skills. As in the previous stage, from a mindful learning perspective, it is important for the learner to remain present moment focused, noticing new and novel distinctions as they perform. A more external focus is beneficial in terms of the activities chosen by the teacher and this is the stage where the learner can be challenged in order to make the performance more robust and set up the likelihood of moving into the next phase of achieving optimal experience (see the article Challenge Yourself; Tate, 2017c).

**Flow:** Optimal experience is the more accurate terminology for the 'mental state' that performers enter when some or all of the nine dimensions are met (see the section on; What is flow? for more info on each of these dimensions). Flow has become a more popular, mainstream, name for this experience. One of the most important dimensions of flow is the ability, of the learner, to focus attention **effortlessly** so that there is full engagement on the task or performance in hand. Csikszentmihalyi describes attention as being a kind of 'psychic energy' that helps bring order to consciousness. The concept of this model is that as the learner enters the flow state their attention flows in the direction of the intended goal **narrowing** towards that target. One question that is often asked is; does flow = **peak performance**? The answer is; maybe and in many cases yes. However, **optimal experience** is a pleasurable experience, both during and after the activity, and leads to greater enjoyment of the overall learning process thus it is a desirable state in its own right in that it can lead to greater well being of the individual concerned.



The **student experience** helps clarify what should actually be happening, for the learner, at each stage of the model. During the first stage; **knowledge**, the learner is engaged in developing awareness and beginning to execute and understand how a skill is to be performed. When learning a new skill this means starting from zero or unconscious incompetence. In the second stage; **movements**, the learner's brain is busy. Engagement should be active and full while remaining present moment focused. Attention should be focused in such a way that it is not 'fixed' on the stimulus but rather a varied target of attention so that the learner notices every detail. This is what Langer describes as mindful learning. In stage three; **performance**, the learner should experience the opportunity to expand their repertoire of skills while retaining the mindful learning approach of the previous stage. During the final stage; **flow**, the learner may experience a number of things (as described in the section on, What is flow?) but one of the most common expressions relating to this stage is "being in the zone". Attention is so focused, yet effortless, it is like a beam of energy.

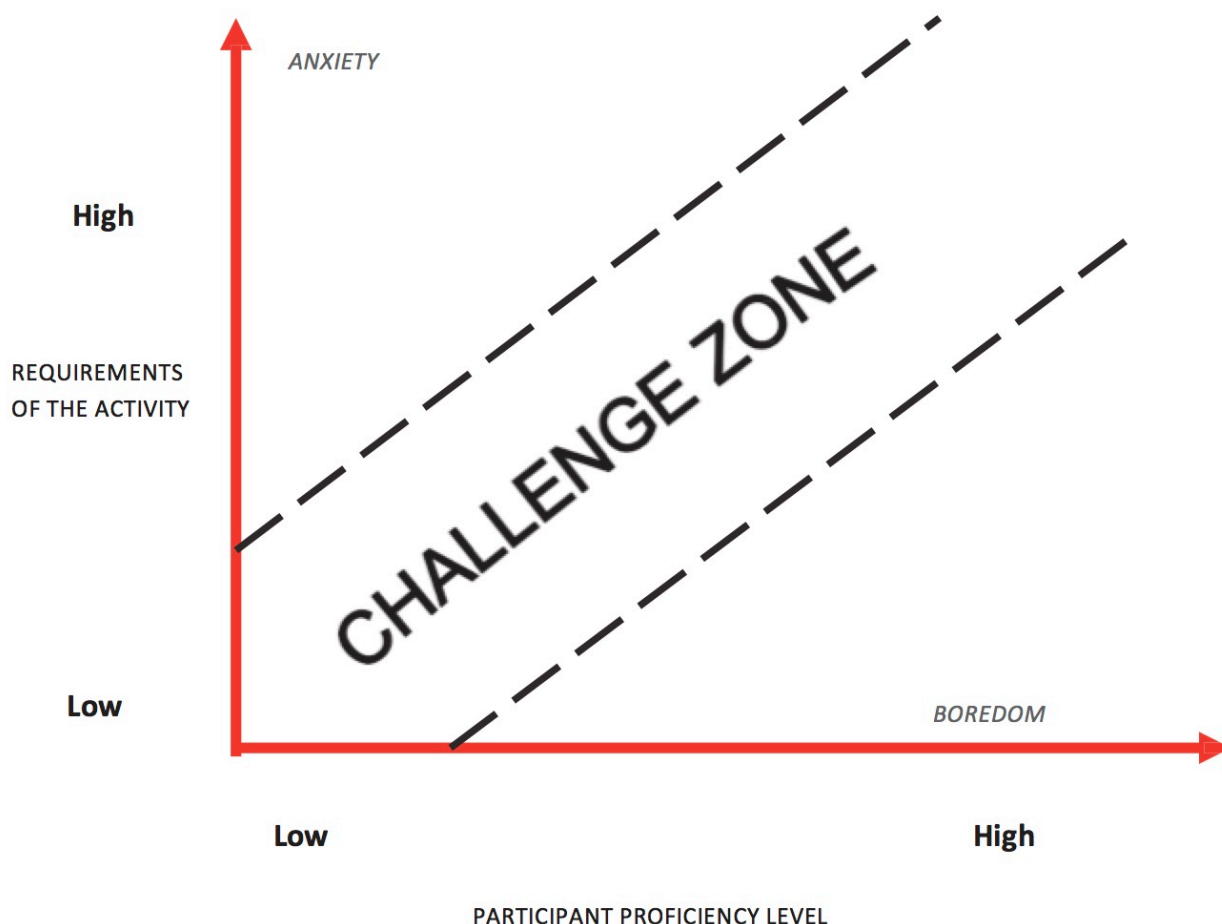
Understanding the **role of the teacher** is crucial for helping students to progress through this model when learning and acquiring skill. During the **knowledge** stage the learner needs to gather and process information as they attempt the task, hence the teacher needs to use a good mix of showing, telling and questioning. The latter is vital for checking understanding, while depending on the student's learning style, the mix of explanation and demonstration may need to vary. The **movement** stage is all about doing, from the learners perspective, but the teacher needs to ensure that the learner receives sufficient feedback through a variety of sources aided by the use of different teaching styles (Mosston & Ashworth, 2002). Questioning is again an important part of the process and an integral part of successfully using teaching styles such as reciprocal, self check and the discovery styles. If the practice goes 'off course' at this point then the teacher needs to reorientate the learner to the desired movement pattern. The teachers main task, during the **performance** stage, is to provide sufficient challenge for the learner so as to really consolidate their learning while also getting them to use their available skills. This is referred to as the challenge/skills balance within the flow construct and leads nicely to the final stage. It is not possible to teach someone to experience **flow** or for a learner to experience it at will but if the right conditions are created, or facilitated, by the teacher, then the chances of the learner experiencing it go up considerably.

## 5.0 The 'CHALLENGE' Zone

### Matching activity complexity with athlete skill level

When the complexity or difficulty of an activity is too high for an athlete's ability level, they may demonstrate anxiety or nervousness and resultantly have difficulty learning. However should a task not be sufficiently challenging, the athlete may quickly lose interest or show signs of boredom. There is therefore a level of task complexity that could be considered optimal for motivating an athlete to rise to the challenge of succeeding in accomplishing the task set. By rising to a challenge, it would be expected that the athlete would not achieve the task first time out. In this situation activities can become great motivators to encouraging young athletes to learn if the challenge level is at an appropriate level.

As a general rule, where an athletes' success rate is around 2 out of 3 attempts, then the activity represents a suitable challenge.



## **6.0 LTAD – Long Term Athlete Development**

LTAD is a model created by Dr. Istvan Balyi to guide the athletic development process from pre-puberty through retirement. An LTAD approach emphasizes age-appropriate skill acquisition to maximize the athlete's potential and builds progressively throughout an athlete's career moving to more detailed instruction as he reaches the next level. Children progress through different developmental stages; the LTAD model reconciles athletic development with natural development.

As a Coach you are in charge of developing and improving your athletes. You will need to consider what to develop. For young athletes it is important that specific skills are developed at certain times as they grow in order to achieve full potential later in life.

Discuss in groups and list below what you consider to be the fundamentals of skiing/riding for young athletes. Can you add any from other sports that might be appropriate?

## **7.0 Emergency Action Plan**

### **What is an Emergency Action Plan?**

The first thing to understand about an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is that it is not about treating injuries from a 'First Aid Kit' nor is it a substitute for holding a First Aid qualification.

**You or your Club should have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for all venues you regularly train on.**

An important distinction to make is that an Emergency Action Plan IS NOT about giving First Aid, rather it is the steps you will take to both make sure you can efficiently assist any injured athlete whilst making sure you can still ensure the safety of your other athletes.

To be issued a licence you will be expected to attend a separate 2-day First Aid course in addition to this course.

An EAP is a plan designed by Coaches in order to assist them in responding to emergency situations often under stressful conditions.

Having such a plan prepared in advance will help the Coach respond in a logical and efficient manner when the situation on the ground may make it difficult to think clearly.

The EAP should designate in advance who is in charge in the event of an emergency.

The person in charge may find that they are on a different run or different part of the mountain when the situation starts so having the means to communicate with other Coaches is important.

Have a radio or mobile phone with you so you can notify your other Coach colleagues of any situation that may have arisen in case you need them to assist with managing the situation.

Have a mobile phone with you, with the Ski Patrol's number pre-dialled into the phone. If this is not possible you will need to send someone to a ski lift to call the Ski Patrol.

Make sure the batteries of both are fully charged.

Have contact numbers for the parents or guardians of the athlete.

It is considered best practice to have a medical profile for each athlete available, so that this information can be provided to emergency medical personnel.

Ideally include in this profile a signed consent form from the parent/guardian to authorise medical treatment in an emergency.

## **IASI COURSE WORKBOOKS**

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[www.iasisnowsports.ie](http://www.iasisnowsports.ie)

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Author

Phil Brown, IASI Education Team

The Technical content of this workbook is taken from the book “Parallel Dreams Alpine Skiing” and includes the Skier Performance Analysis model (SPAM), CSD model and BP model which are all copyright © Parallel Dreams and used with permission of Parallel Dreams Coaching.

The Teaching Styles referred to in this publication are those developed by Muska Mosston and later Sara Ashworth. See

[www.spectrumofteachingstyles.org](http://www.spectrumofteachingstyles.org)

