



Ski Spectacular Instructor Academy

**Hosted by The Hartford Ski Spectacular
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Clinic Summary Notes

Clinic Topic: Small Group Lessons for Novice Riders with Cognitive or Mental Health Diagnoses
– Mike Ma

1. Group environments should be constructed to be additive to the learning environment. Said another way, these should not be made purely for logistical reasons, but because you believe that student A + student B will lead to greater outcomes than teaching them individually.
2. There is no such thing as “just an assistant volunteer,” you are all instructors and clearly communicating your plan with your team can ensure that a group environment will provide maximum learning.
3. Finding the most commonly accessible learning style (thinker, feeler, watcher, doer) and sensory style (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) and concentrating content mostly in one mode will provide the most leverage. You will still customize and adapt, but the more work you put in upfront to figure these out, the easier your lesson will be.
4. If possible, building team rapport and identity can be a tool you lean on during a lesson. For example, identifying a team name can be useful, if appropriate for your group.
5. Keep people moving! Using a series of upper end teaching styles such as problem solving and guided discovery can lead to things like games, group tasks so that everyone is sliding in a group lesson. The less “you go one at a time and I will watch,” the better!
6. Simplifying feedback to a single word, motion, or sound will provide more economy in your group lessons. For instance, you may build a word like “Scoot!” as a code for moving the center of mass from aft to fore for a backfoot rider.
7. Group lessons still mean individual feedback. Each student should feel they understand exactly what they accomplished and what’s next.
8. Celebrate group accomplishment - group high fives, team cheers, or other appropriate celebratory activities can help solidify the learning experience.
9. Sliding in a group environment also helps set the stage for future development including but limited to participating in other adaptive sports, Special Olympics, or even mainstreaming into Ski and ride Schools.