

Chapter 1

IASI's Mission, Philosophy and Concepts

Derek Tate

*"Learn the sport well, so that you fall in **love** with it and it becomes part of your life".*

Derek Tate



Learning objectives – at the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following:

- Understand IASI's mission.
- Understand IASI's underpinning philosophy.
- Understand how IASI has evolved and how The Four Key Concepts have emerged.

List of topics:

- Preamble.
- IASI's mission.
- IASI's technical skiing philosophy.
- IASI's 3L philosophy.
- Introduction to The Four Key Concepts.



Preamble

The Irish Association of Snowsports Instructors (IASI) was established in 1988 and in recent years, since 2011, has undergone tremendous growth. This new manual, the first official IASI manual, illustrates how the association has matured and how Ireland's participation at Interski Congresses and more generally within the snowsports international community has helped to shape the associations mission, philosophy and education system. This manual builds on the content of the 2007 book *Parallel Dreams Alpine Skiing* that has served as the association's unofficial manual since that date.

The principal author, Derek Tate, of the aforementioned text was assisted by a number of contributing authors: Robbie Fenlon, David Murrie, Shona Tate and Liam Williams, pulling together a comprehensive book covering a wide range of topics required for developing skiing performance. While this new manual includes some key topics from that book e.g. Core Skier Development (CSD) and Basic Principles (BP) this current opus builds and expands greatly on these topics. We will introduce "The Four Key Concepts" with each concept, in effect, shaping the main four sections of this manual. What is important, however, is to grasp and truly understand the associations mission and philosophy, as this is what underpins everything that we do. Whether you are a member of IASI, or part of the wider snowsports community, we wish you well in your snowsports journey and trust that you will find the contents of this manual helpful in assisting you on that voyage of learning and discovery.



Mission statement

The Irish Association of Snowsports Instructors (IASI) aims to deliver a modern and dynamic educational pathway for aspiring instructors as well as already qualified instructors. IASI's strategy has been to act as an information hub, for our members, pooling the best from the global instructional snowsport scene through building positive communication and relationships. Through this on-going strategy we are able to continually shape our philosophies and technical and teaching models adapting to the needs of the snowsport instructional world and future snowsport.

This forward thinking approach has led to considerable growth in IASI membership especially since the last Interski congress in Ushuaia 2015 where the Irish Interski team gathered, collated and reported much information and presented to the IASI membership and further afield via social media, video blogs and presentations. This approach to information sharing and communication continues to form the main pillar in the IASI growth strategy going forwards as we move closer to the Interski congress 2019 Pamporovo.



Technical skiing philosophy

To develop all mountain skiers who have the ability to use a blend of the skills in such a way that the skis can be steered accurately, dictating speed and direction, on a variety of terrain and in different snow conditions, using efficient and effective movement patterns that work in harmony with the bodies anatomy.

NB: This philosophy is explained in more detail in chapter 7 - The IASI Skills Model.



The 3L Philosophy – Learn it, Love it, Live it

The 3L philosophy of **Learn it, Love it, Live it** was first introduced at the Interski Congress 2015, in Ushuaia, Argentina where it was presented to other nations both as a small lecture and through the e-book of the same name (see references at the end of this chapter). This philosophy is what underpins the IASI education system. As a philosophy it works on multiple levels: it represents the aspirations of the association and how it educates snowsport instructors, it represents the aspirations of snowsport instructors themselves and it represents what many members of the skiing public aspire to by acquiring a great skill, deriving enjoyment (hedonic pleasure) and making the sport a part of their lives (eudiamonic meaning).

Learn it is all about being open to learning and developing a mindset that promotes such openness. The term 'growth mindset' has been coined by the psychologist Carol Dweck and is all about fostering a love of learning and being prepared to make mistakes and learn from them. Talent and ability are useful but it is passion, perseverance and practice that help you to achieve great things in life and athletes who have a growth mindset develop the mental and moral attributes of good character. Passion and perseverance in the pursuit of long term goals has been called 'grit' by another very prominent psychologist Angela Duckworth and there is no doubt that in order to work through the entire IASI education system students need this quality.

Part V of this manual will cover, in detail, 'how you learn' and introduce the Diamond Model of Skill Acquisition, cover the importance of mindfulness and mindful learning and why encouraging a flow state is such a desired outcome.

Love it is essentially about learning in an environment that is enjoyable and creates a desire to practice. Without sufficient practice there is little chance of becoming skillful. The old saying that 'practice makes perfect' is somewhat misleading in that what is required is *sufficient quality practice that leads to a proficient level of skills*. Much of the enjoyment in learning skills (and improvement) comes from being suitably challenged so that you become fully engaged and immersed in the task in hand while remaining present moment focused (see the chapters on mindfulness and flow for more on this). However, it should also be noted that, loving the sport also comes from a number of other factors including being in beautiful mountain resorts, being around positive people and socially interacting with others. In other words there are many reasons why people fall in love with snowsports.

Live it is about making the sport part of your life. As was highlighted earlier, this philosophy works on a number of levels hence the “becoming part of your life” and therefore living it can mean different things for different people. For some snowsport instructors this sport will become a career, perhaps even a ‘calling’ where one uses the sport as a vehicle to help others find enjoyment in life. For others it may simply be a part time job, or a hobby but something that excites them and adds purpose to their life.

However, equally important is that the general public should find joy and excitement in the sport so that they too will want to continue with the sport year on year. Snowsports is a fantastic sport for keeping families enjoying holidays together and it is a sport that you can participate in very late in life so it is incumbent on you, the snowsport instructor, to ensure that your guests have the best experience possible so that they will want to keep coming back for more. Safety, enjoyment, learning (SEL) may seem rather simplistic but it is one of the most important acronyms to remember and to practice day in day out as you teach this great sport.

Introduction to the Four Key Concepts

The Four Key Concepts pull together the IASI education system into one easy to understand model (see Figure 1 below). This model will be an integral part of Ireland’s presentation at the Interski Congress 2019 in Pamporovo, Bulgaria.

The Four Key Concepts



Figure 1

The Diamond Model of Skill Acquisition and the technical content derived from the book Parallel Dreams Alpine Skiing is © Parallel Dreams and used with permission



The Basic Principles (BP) are the fundamentals that we need and are derived from the book *Parallel Dreams Alpine Skiing*. Part II of the manual covers these principles and then continues with the subject of anatomy and biomechanics in snowsports. The final part of this section of the manual then addresses the significance of physical preparation for the sport, which undoubtedly is a fundamental of great importance.

Core Skier Development (CSD) and **Core Rider Development** (CRD) are the stages that the learner moves through from beginner to proficient skier/rider. CSD was again a vital part of the book *Parallel Dreams Alpine Skiing* with CRD being developed later to reflect the development of the snowboard-teaching strand. These two important stage models and their explanations are contained within part III of this manual.

The IASI Skills Model is what we teach e.g. pressure control, edging, rotation and timing and how they interact with movements and balance. This is, perhaps, the 'go to' part of the manual as it covers the practicalities of teaching these skills in all the environments found on the mountain: piste, variable terrain and bumps. Importantly, this part of the manual (part IV) concludes with chapters on 'Safety on and off piste' and 'The guest experience'.

The Diamond Model of Skill Acquisition (DMSA) is, conceivably, the most innovative and pioneering concept of the four. This model builds on previous skill acquisition theories, including the KMPF model presented in the *Irish Snowsports Teaching Methodology* (see references at the end of the chapter). Crucially, however, it weaves into its stages mindful learning, mindfulness and flow (optimal experience). Athlete *well-being*: social, emotional, mental and physical is at the heart of this model and the subsequent chapters, that make up part V of the manual, on mindfulness, flow and learning styles expand on this important aspect of our modern world.

Summary – key points from this chapter

- This is the first 'official' manual of the association.
- IASI delivers a modern and dynamic educational pathway.
- The 3L philosophy is made up of Learn it, Love it , Live it.
- The 3L philosophy was first introduced at the Interski Congress 2015.
- Learn it is about being open to learning and having a growth mindset.
- Love it is about learning in an environment that is enjoyable and creates a desire to practice.
- Live it is about making the sport part of your life.
- The Four Key Concepts are: The Basic Principles, Core Skier/Rider Development, The IASI Skills Model and the Diamond Model of Skill Acquisition.



Suggested reading and resources

This chapter has illustrated how IASI's philosophy and education have evolved. To appreciate how the manual, as a whole, has developed readers are encouraged to read the original book, *Parallel Dreams Alpine Skiing and the Irish Snowsports Teaching Methodology*. The website www.flowingwithmindfulness.com contains many of these resources and references noted below by Derek Tate.

References

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