A CASE STUDY EXAMINING THE HISTORICAL USE OF WAIST-TETHERS AND ASSOCIATED TRAINING PRACTICES AT EAGLE MOUNT

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"Recreation means a lot more than play-time; it is a chance for "re-creation" - restoring yourself by discovering new strength, confidence, freedom, and joy."
-Eagle Mount



Figure 1. Waist-tethers (Augst, 2022).

BACKGROUND

Eagle Mount, a nonprofit in Bozeman, Montana, has provided recreational opportunities for people with disabilities for the last 40 years. The ski program at Bridger Bowl was their first initiative, and it continues to thrive.
Historically, all new volunteers supporting participation in the ski program were trained to waist-tether participants. Program leaders are currently analyzing the use of waist-tethers in relation to participant autonomy, restructuring preseason training models, and focusing on the organization's approach to creating a student-centered environment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the historical use of waist-tethers, and why does Eagle Mount aim to shift the cultural dynamics associated with them?
- Do volunteer tenure, motivation, and training impact a student-centered ski experience?
- What dynamics were witnessed during lessons that contributed to participant autonomy?

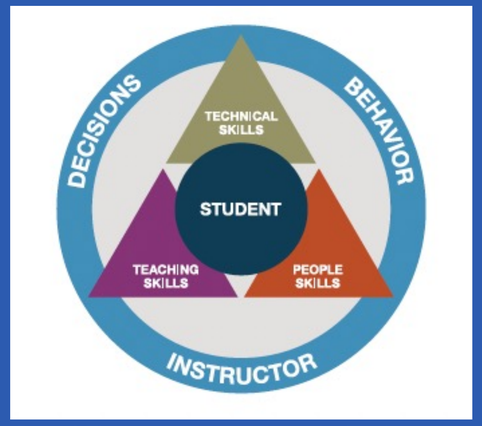


Figure 2. The learning connection model (Teaching Snowsports Manual, 2017, p. 14).

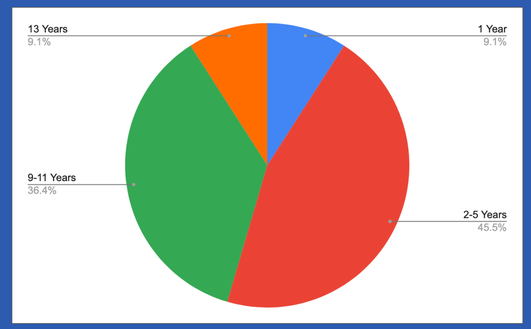


Figure 4. Tenure of the volunteers who completed the preseason survey (*N*=11).

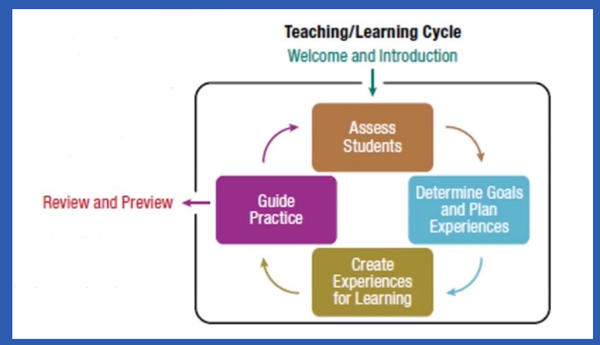


Figure 3. The teaching/ learning cycle (Teaching Snowsports Manual, 2017, p. 84).

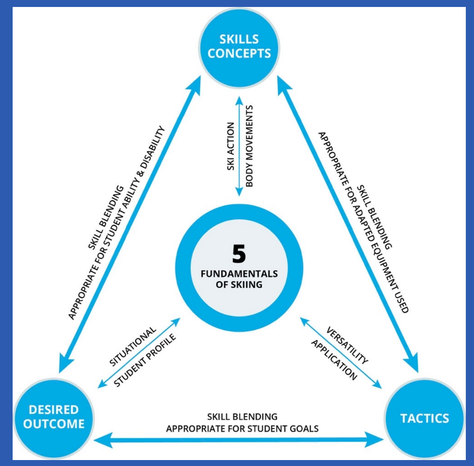


Figure 5. The five alpine skiing fundamentals developmental framework for adaptive alpine skiing (Adaptive Alpine Technical Manual, 2017, p. 12).

FOCUS GROUP

The case study looked at a subset of all 171 participants enrolled in the eight-week program at Bridger Bowl Ski Area in Bozeman, Montana. The focus group included three participants and three volunteers. Two participants were male, and one participant was female. The three participants were from the Bozeman High School Special Education Program. Participants came to Bridger Bowl to ski on six Tuesdays over eight weeks. The program began on January 18, 2022, and concluded on March 8, 2022.

OUTCOMES

- ✓Increased collaboration with participants and caregivers to identify goals and interests.
- ✓Training opportunities that focus on participant engagement.
- ✓Emphasis on games and activities.
- ✓Increased time playing on beginner terrain.
- ✓ Utilization of student-centered progressions.
- ✓Narrowing cultural gaps exist between new and returning volunteers.
- ✓Fewer participants used waist tethers.