

Effective Training Tips

Training instructors how to use new movements, to ride better, is relatively easy as we are simply teaching an educated audience. Likewise, training instructors how to teach can be relatively straight forwards as we show them a great example, and then give feedback on their performance. However, training instructors on abstract concepts, or instructional theory can be very challenging. We may know the theory very well ourselves, but the trick is to be able to present the information to instructors in a manner that is interesting while effective. The easiest way to share this type of information in a clinic situation is the “Talk and Ride”. In this type of clinic you stop with your group, talk at them for several minutes sharing the information, then ride to another point and continue the lecture. Unfortunately this style of presenting is rarely effective, and you would probably be better off lecturing the group inside for half an hour, and then riding non stop for the rest of the clinic. All of us will have to resort to this method from time to time, but the challenge is to use it as little as possible. Here are some tips to conducting effective clinics while avoiding the “Talk and Ride”

Use the group.

Everybody in your clinic group will have experiences and ideas that they can contribute to the clinic. Make an effort to include everybody in the group by asking questions rather than just lecturing at them. You might be surprised how much you can draw out of your group, and a concept that they figure out for themselves will be a lesson better learned than if you simply told them.

- Pose questions for chairlift rides
- Break the clinic into small groups to figure problems out
- Become proficient at “Question Progressions”. Asking questions to progressively lead people to the answer

The “Hook”

Demonstrate a theory or concept by leading the group through a lesson, and at the end describe the way in which you used the theory or concept. In this clinic the members get two things. They learn something from the lesson, and also learn something from the example you set.

For example, you could lead the clinic in a lesson on active foot steering, which could improve all of their riding, and at the end have them notice how you used the teaching model, and how it added to their learning experience.

- Teach something that will improve their riding
- Exaggerate the theory or concept that you are really trying to demonstrate, but do not over do it
- Pull the rabbit out of the hat right at the end so the clinic group’s last impression is “wow”

Be Prepared

Prepare information beforehand in the form of handouts or notes. This gives you a chance to cover the nitty gritty in detail, without boring the pants off the group on the hill. Remember that we all have different learning styles, and some of your clinic group may benefit from written information regardless of the topic. Having printed material allows you to highlight an issue on the hill, and then provide the back up information to avoid getting bogged down in a long lecture when you could be riding.

- Written documents are more effective when they use color and pictures
- Provide further references for those who may be interested in investigating further

Stay inside

Indoor clinics can be another great way of covering complicated theoretical topics. If there really is not a way to incorporate the topic into an on-hill clinic, then don't! You might be more effective at getting your point across if you do not have the distractions of the mountain around you. This does NOT mean that it is a good idea to stand and lecture for hours. This type of clinic should still be animated.

- Keep the group interested by ensuring they are interacting in the clinic
- Use pictures and colors as much as possible, videos can be great for keeping attention
- Keep them short, if it feels too much like school you might scare people away!

Show and Tell

Set homework and have your clinic group do some research, or come up with some ideas and answers of their own. Then have them present the information to the rest of the group in a brief mini clinic.

The more involved the group is in the learning process the more they are likely to learn.

- Keep the homework simple
- Keep the presentations short
- Do not make them do **all** the work, but enough to be involved

The more clinics you prepare and give the more comfortable you will become. Some clinics, like our most common lessons, will become almost automatic to you with time. However, always challenge yourself to find better, more effective ways to present your information. Finally, always try to eliminate the “talk and ride” altogether!