

THE WORD

Winter 23' -24' | Issue 17 | Feb. 02, 2024



The Groundhog has spoken....

While the weather may be giving us quite the hint, Punxsutawney Phil has declared that we are in line for an early spring.

Did you know: Phil has been in the job since 1887. In that time, Phil has recorded an accuracy rate of ~39%. If we just look at the last decade, that rate is 30%. The more you know!

Certification Season is Here!

Don't forget to let us know when/if you receive a new certification or accreditation!

Please email spschoolstaff@vailresorts.com to update us on your exciting achievement! This way we can make sure to celebrate you appropriately and, we want to update your status and pay.

In addition, don't forget that some certs are eligible for reimbursement. For this, you will also need to email us a copy of your payment/receipt.

For full details on qualifications and, what needs to be submitted, please read the requirements located on the bottom of [this linked page](#).

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions!

EPICPROMISE SCHOLARS: DEADLINE EXTENDED

The deadline for EpicPromise Scholars applications has been extended to Friday, February 16, 11:59 pm MST.

EpicPromise Scholars, a multi-year scholarship of up to US\$10,000, is available for dependents of U.S. and Canadian-based Vail Resorts employees pursuing an undergraduate degree. High school seniors or those already enrolled in an undergraduate program may be eligible.

Encourage your dependents to apply before the extended deadline. To access the application and learn more about EpicPromise Scholars, click [here](#).

Thank you for being part of the Vail Resorts family. We look forward to supporting the educational aspirations of our community members.

RAISE YOUR EXPECTATIONS - Increase Student Skill Exponentially.

Alpine instructor Jerry Leitch was assigned our most high-level class on Friday nights that year. Following a grouping philosophy that favored sorting group by ability rather than age, Jerry's class included a handful of 13, 14, and 15-year-olds...and a 6-year-old. When he saw his class card he was certain the group couldn't work. Jerry came to talk to me about his assignment right away, very concerned. "A 6-year-old can't function in lessons with these older kids. Even if they can skill well enough (which I doubt,) even if they can keep up and not make everyone else stand around waiting, they will never be able to comprehend the content of my lessons at the level I can speak with the other students."

Jerry was correct according to the C.A.P. model, but I asked him to just give the class a try for one night and report back. After class Jerry came in and explained he was right. Jerry shared the "little" was as skilled if not more skilled than the other students, and was able to keep up without making the group wait. "But, the 6-year-old could not keep pace with the technical information and conversation."

I asked Jerry how he knew that. In his class that night Jerry had taught a lesson on flexion and extension movements, and as was his style (engineer) he used adult, technical language with the class. That was his "proof" the young student couldn't keep up.

I grabbed a copy of Ski Magazine and Jerry and we headed-out to meet the kiddo. I showed Jerry's young student a photo of a skier. I asked "Which leg is extended?" The young student pointed to the correct leg. "Which leg is flexed?" Again the student pointed to the correct leg. I next asked the youngster "What is flexion and extension?" The student bounced up and down to show me. While Jerry stood with his mouth open I went in for the final question. "Why do we worry about flexion and extension when we ski?" His answer..."Jerry said it helps pressure."

Jerry laughed, grabbed the kiddo in a shoulder hug, and said "Welcome to the class Carson."

As you read this story I imagine thoughts are going through your head. "That kid wasn't the average kid." "That kid must have had some magic DNA," "Jerry must have been a great instructor."

Here's the thought I would like you to include in your reflections. The C.A.P model, our class levels, the PSIA-AASI ability levels are based ON AN AVERAGE. The thing about averages is, they don't ALWAYS APPLY...some will fall below, some will come-in above, and some will sit in the middle or average position. If we TEACH to the expected average, we are missing lots of folks. We are doing a disservice to everyone just higher than the point of mathematical average. All those folks...kids and adults, could be expected to achieve more than the average expectation.

Please don't decide what your students are capable of. Don't blindly follow the C.A.P Model or any other resource (including this article.) Believe that each student may be the above average student, the one who can develop skill above the average.

Teach to excellence and give everyone a chance to achieve it. Then adjust as necessary to individualize the lesson. If we don't teach to excellence, we may leave "skill" on the table. We can always adjust "down." It's nearly impossible to adjust "up" once we have set the bar too low because students think that is all that is possible.

Truth is, humans can always do a bit more than they think is possible. Don't let your limited beliefs be the hurdle to your student's excellence. Raise your expectations and increase your student's skill exponentially.

With Respect. Tami Lyon

