

EFFECT OF UP TO DATE SKI TEACHING METHODOLOGIES ON PUPILS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SKIING

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Abstract

The author of the paper presents possible effect of innovative ski teaching methodologies on pupils' attitudes. The research was carried in ski courses for elementary schools. There were used two different teaching methodologies.

The research showed that short ski carving ski technique was proven more significant factor which had impact on pupils' attitudes towards skiing.

Keywords: teaching methodologies, ski teaching, short ski, attitudes, feelings

1 Introduction

In the 1990s the era of carving on short ski with distinct sidecut geometry started. Even ordinary skiers could execute a good technique, because of carved turn technique and also because with carving technique the skis turn almost by themselves. In this period the almost forgotten short ski teaching technique started to be used in Alpine and overseas countries. Today it is topical for its simplicity, fun and because it can teach pupils ski without stem turns. It means without the elements which are considered nowadays to cause slipping within carved turns [1].

“Practise, practise, and again practise“, is probably the basic teaching method to teach skiing chiefly by experience and work. Ski instructors need to adhere to basic didactic principles: from simpler to more complicated exercises and from well-known to unknown ones.

Downhill skiing is complex kinetic unit which consists of many interconnected partial elements. During training it is good to start always from simpler elements and after they are mastered, then continue with more complicated elements. Those pupils who go skiing for the first time have to get used to master much longer ski than 30 cm long sole of the foot. That is why first movements are turns on one place, walking, slow walking etc. [2].

It is well-known that person can learn skiing easier when kinetic movement units relate to well known movements. For example skating – teaching skiing using short skis.

During teaching skiing on short ski the pupils cannot get over-drilled. Both, illustrations and learnt technique should be practised without mistakes. Ski instructor should teach them how to move properly, the technique that is being learnt should be correct. The ski instructor needs to observe pupils and to tell them about important elements of movement and their possible mistakes [3].

Correction of mistakes is also very important whether on the slope or after every ride. Movie camera is an excellent helper, because pupils can see their mistakes and correct them. Footsteps in the snow are also very good helper to teach pupils carved, or sliding turns. It is good to tell pupils about reasons, not only consequences.



*Fig. 1 For the children it is important and effective to have fun while learning skiing
(Photos: author)*

To correct bad technique is important the following:

- Less corrections, more encouragement;
- Bad habits should be corrected,
- Corrections and aids should differ according to performance output of the pupils,
- Individual corrections [4].

After the ride, ski instructor should not talk to pupils only about movements, but also about their feelings.

In certain moments of teaching skiing stagnancy can occur. The most common reason is over-drill of a pupil who reacts with resistance or carelessness. For the reasons of overloading of co-ordination, physical overload, inner barriers, fear, nervousness and tiredness their technique cannot be mastered well. In such occasions it is good to change the character of activity or pause for a while [5].

It is efficient to end every lesson in a positive way. The easiest way is to offer every child to ski in the end of a day those techniques was s/he mastered well during the day. The feeling of satisfaction can compensate previous negative experience from less successful activities and elements. Positive ending of ski teaching can also motivate pupils to further activities and co-operation with ski-instructor and strengthens positive relationship between them.

Good and qualified teaching skiing which keeps the experience safe and positive is a strategy to positive feelings and attitude of children towards skiing. People are not born with such attitudes. Attitudes are not hereditary, but they are created during our life experience, beginning after they are three years old [6]. Value orientation creates in early childhood during primary socialisation of a child, in a time when s/he unties from the world of hereditary sensory values and starts to familiarise with the values of his/her social environment. Every individual creates his/her own system or structure of attitudes in him / her in direct co-operation with other people, society, institutions, and organisations.

According to Hartl [7] the attitude is assessed relationship which is expressed by inclination to react constantly to objects, persons, situations, subjects and own personality. Attitude is the relationship to something. Relatively stable tendencies positively or negatively react to certain inputs. The attitude determines our behaviour in various situations in advance while it includes emotional, assessing aspects, cognitive and conative constituents [8].

2 Methodology

Research goal is to compare influence of teaching models and methodologies on pupils' attitudes towards skiing during skiing using short ski (up to 100 cm), using gradually

lengthened ski (group A1, A2), and finally using ski 10 – 15 cm shorter than the height of figure (B1, B2).

Research was carried in 2006 (A1, B1) and in 2012 (A2, B2). Identical methodologies were used in both years, qualified ski instructors taught skiing and in both cases research was carried in ski courses which were organised by elementary school. 13 - 14 year old pupils took part in the research.

As a research method were used:

- structured questionnaires for pupils and teachers,
- observation and
- interview.

76 pupils took part in the research: 57 in 2006 and 19 pupils in 2012.

3 Research results

3.1 Pupils' opinions and their comparison

The following data were obtained from a questionnaire which was completed by all 76 respondents, at the same time 38 of them learned short ski techniques of skiing and 38 other students learned skiing using ski of the same length as was their height. The results are arranged in the tables, both kinds in one table. Pupils answered question 1 "What feelings do you have from learning skiing?" by its putting in two columns: positive and negative feelings. Pupils who learned short ski skiing (38 pupils) wrote altogether 90 feelings out of them 67 were positive and 13 negative ones. Pupils who learned skiing on long ski found altogether 89 feelings: 67 positive and 22 negative. See table 1 in percentage.

Table 1 Pupils' feelings during learning skiing (%)

Feelings	B1	B2	A1	A2
Positive	75	81	89	90
Negative	25	19	11	10

Positive feelings introduced by pupils:

Short ski – *enjoyment 37%, feeling of fast success 25%, feeling of a winner 14%, I can ski well 10%, good feeling from skiing in the nature 7%, others 7%.*

Long ski – *enjoyment 33%, feeling of fast success 22%, good feeling from skiing in the nature 19%, I can ski well 18%, others 8%.*

Negative feelings introduced by pupils:

Short ski – *fatigue 92%, weaken self-confidence 8%.*

Long ski – *fear and uncertainty 75%, fatigue 14%, weaken self-confidence 11%.*

From the facts we can see that from the overall number of feelings more positive feelings belong to pupils using short ski: 89 %; while long ski skiers could find 75 % of them. Pupils using short ski found 14 % more positive feelings than the ones who were using long ski. After repeated experiment in 2012 the results were similar, while the difference in the positive feelings was 9% again interpreted by pupils who were using short ski.

Answers to the question 2 "What are your prospects for future in skiing?" are in the table 2.

Table 2 Pupils' attitudes towards skiing (number of pupils / %)

Options	B1- 29	A1- 28	B2- 9	A2 -10
Never more	1-3,4%	0	0	0
Maybe sometimes	2-6,9%	0	1-11,1%	0
I like skiing	19- 65,5%	18-64,3%	4- 44,4%	3 -30%
I want to continue in skiing as a sportsman or ski racer	4 13,8%	6 21,4%	1-11,1%	1-10%
Others	2- skialpinism 6,9%	2- freeride 7,1%	3- freeride 33,3%	4- freeride 40%
	1- fun carving 3,4%	3- fun carving 10,7%	-	2 – new school 20%

Results in table 2 indicate that one pupil (short ski shorter than his height) refused to consider skiing as a sport which was interesting for him. However, we cannot say that this answer was the result of wrong methodology. It resulted from the interview that he went to ski school forced by parents. He never did any sporting activities before. This could be the reason that his interest in skiing was developed neither by group work nor by individual approach.

The further results indicate that those pupils with positive attitudes to skiing wanted to devote their life to sport skiing. In ski school they gained knowledge about the possibilities in downhill skiing and were interested in skialpinism, free-ride and fun carving, those pupils from the year 2012 were interested in a new ski school. Within 6 years we can see differences between two groups. In 2006 pupils were interested in fun carving, while in 2012 it was not fashion trend which would be interesting for them, thus they did not find it interesting for them. Nowadays, free style, new school, freeride are more popular with children and youth, what is obvious from their answers.

Answers to question 3, „What contributed to your biggest success as a skier?“ – were divided 100 % between teacher, skiing equipment and terrain. The results show the following data:

Table 3 Percentage – learning skiing (in %, Σ 100 %)

	B1	A1	B2	A2
Teacher	80	70	82	65
Skiing equipment	15	27	13	30
Terrain and environment	5	3	5	5

Pupils who were using both types of ski put highest evaluation for the ski instructor, then ski equipment and then terrain. Pupils using short ski considered ski equipment more important as pupils who were using long ski. It indicates that they positively valued ski exchange during ski lessons.

In table 4 there are introduced the problems set by pupils and teachers in the groups B1 and B2, it means those respondents who were skiing with plough and plough turns.

Table 4 Type of problem (number of pupils)

Yes	Type of problem	Number of pupils
Technical problem	Weight on upper ski	7
Fear and uncertainty	Fear and uncertainty	8
Others	Unnatural "x, v" position	6

The most frequent problem which occurred during this teaching methodology was pressure on the opposite ski in plough position and in plough turns. Pupils during plough turns made pressure on upper ski, consecutively they leaned toward the slope and unnaturally turned ribs aside.

The next occurring problem was fear and uncertainty during unnatural plough position and during the exchange of pressure on ski in plough turns. Unnatural plough position when tiptoes are oriented to triangle, heels diverge and knees are often pressed together, made skiing harder to 6 pupils. Fear and uncertainty occurred – 8 pupils perceived in connection with the other activities which finally led to these negative feelings. Fear and uncertainty were observed by teachers in all pupils who had problems with unnatural “x and v” position; and also in two pupils who had problem with weight of ski – pressed on upper ski.

3.2 Ski instructors' opinions and their comparison

In the answers to two last questions of questionnaires, ski instructors evaluated positives and negatives of used teaching methodologies.

Methodology of long ski teaching was evaluated by them as fast, simple, fun, with the advantage of self-control. As disadvantage was considered demanding organisation, frequent ski exchange, and need of perfect, technically and materially assigned ski course. Speaking about disadvantages, we have to mention that during the research we disposed with quantitatively and qualitatively sufficient material equipment. Considering demanding organisation and frequent ski exchange, teachers had to work with pupils individually and in small group.

Methodology of short ski teaching was evaluated by ski instructors as well elaborated, with plenty of textbooks, during which pupils do not need to exchange ski. Among advantages they placed majority of information materials and the possibility to learn skiing also in less convenient terrain. Here we want to mention that the textbooks praised by teachers relate chiefly to learning plough skiing and plough turns. Many accessible materials is connected with long tradition of this teaching methodology. If we teach in less proper terrain, the length of teaching is extending. Thus we taught skiing only in proper and adjusted terrain, and that is why in this point we cannot compare. In theoretical analysis during the description of both mentioned teaching methodologies it is recommended the same terrain for both teaching methodologies. During the research all pupils were learning in almost the same ideal conditions, exactly according to methodical recommendations. We assume that this teacher evaluation then results from the previous experience of ski instructors.

Teachers consider as disadvantage problems during learning plough skiing and the other problem mean more carved ski for them. Further they introduced frequent problem of pressure on upper ski during plough turns and also need of complete delete of stem elements during teaching carving turn.

It is necessary notice that disadvantages introduced in short ski teaching methodology concern mainly ski instructors. The disadvantage of the teaching methodology of ski and also the length of figure are concerning mainly pupils.

On the basis of this comparison we can say that teaching skiing on short ski was evaluated by teachers as the fastest way which is faster, simpler and more fun for pupil.

4 Conclusion

The aforementioned results refer to the fact that teaching short ski skiing is the most fun, fastest and simplest way for a pupil to master ski technique. When using innovative teaching methodology we did not find out any technical problems, pupils did not feel frightened and there did not occur problems connected with plough skiing. Pupils introduced this way of teaching skiing with the higher percentage of positive emotions. This technique influenced in a more positive way also attitudes of pupils to skiing, where the ambivalent answer "maybe some times" was made by pupils from the group B1 and B2. Several pupils from A1 and A2 wanted to devote their free time to race skiing. These opinions support theory about qualities of teaching skiing on short ski. We can also say that it has positive influence upon creating positive attitudes to create attitudes of pupils to skiing. The research is in the field of experiencing, feelings and attitudes to skiing only a diminutive research project. To map the problem really we would have to do it with bigger research group, or we could use it in other psychological research instruments.

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