Stepping Stones for Developing Parallel Skiers – No Wedge Here!

Kirsten Atkins, PSIA-RM Adaptive Ed Staff and Examiner

Sometimes a direct approach to parallel with the omission of the wedge allows for better short and/or long term success for skiers with physical or cognitive diagnoses. Practice this progression so that you will have it in your back pocket next time you choose to avoid teaching the wedge.

Why the parallel approach?
Discuss candidates
Equipment considerations
Terrain choices

Pre mountain activities – skis off
Flexing and extending movements
Tipping the feet and legs
Turning the feet and legs

One ski activities – examples
Scooter, gliding
Fulcrum turns

Two ski activities – on flat terrain – examples
Pushing forward
Skating
Sidestepping
Stepping in circles

Two ski activities – on an incline – examples
Straight run
Straight run with flexion/extension
Straight run stepping ski to ski
Traversing
Traversing with small steps uphill to a stop
Tipping garlands

Teaching the guided wedge before the chairlift
Turning skis vs pushing

First parallel turns without stepping – example activities
Shuffle feet
Rolling ankles into hill
Look where you want to stop

Linking turns – example activities
Start with ankle movement to release edges
Tipping feet, ankles, and lower legs to turn
Focus on rhythm and flow