

**PATHWAYS TO SUPERIOR SNOWBOARD LESSONS
THE “TINY BUBBLES” APPROACH**

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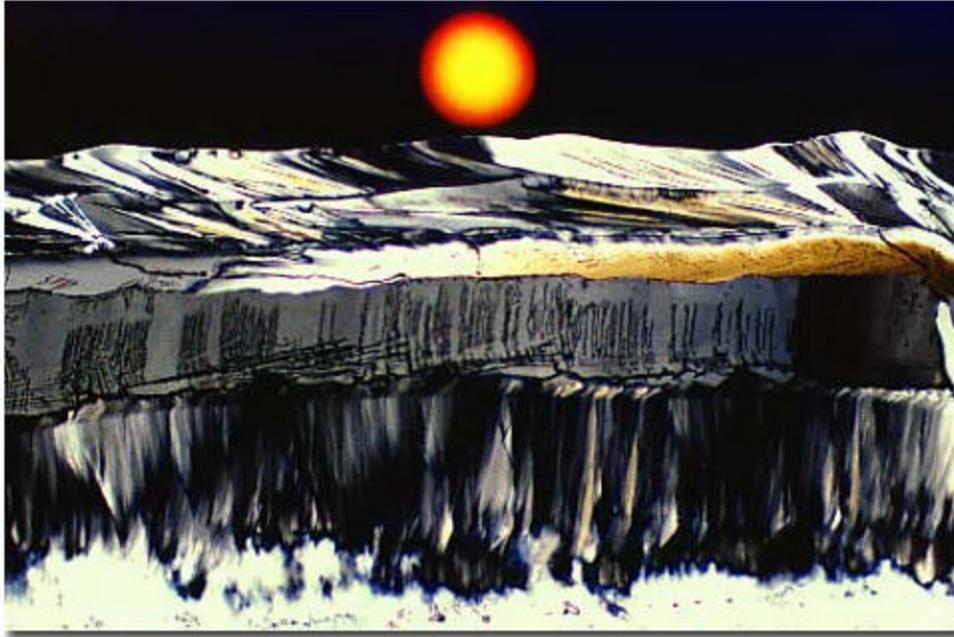


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INTRODUCTION

An expert in any field has a deep understanding of its intricacies that goes far beyond simply memorizing facts. For example, a wine expert may recognize a wine from a specific region, even if it's from a vineyard or vintage that he or she hasn't tasted before. The same type of understanding is gained by snowsports instructors as they encounter different students and different sets of conditions. While a new instructor may memorize a few basic lesson plans that apply broadly, an experienced instructor is able to quickly discern the subtleties of each student's progress and impediments and to adapt the lesson plan "on the fly" – even when the instructor hasn't encountered the specific situation previously. Developing and building on this skill is what sets really good instructors apart. And if this skill comes only from experience, how can it be reduced to a few simple rules? IT CAN'T! That's why teaching someone how to teach is so difficult and consists instead of providing a few basic tools for building individual expertise.

The basic tools we give to snowsports instructors are called "progressions." These are generally perceived as linear paths, each with a starting point and ending point and consisting of steps set by trainers, terrain, and timing. In reality, however, students seldom learn or progress linearly. Each student is unique and vital in the development of a lesson. Your student's progress both allows and requires you to adjust the daily plan accordingly—in other words, to exercise your own creativity.

The purpose of *"Tiny Bubbles"* is to help snowboard instructors create road maps to success for individual students, realizing that these are only suggestions. Real success comes from your own experience, observation, and insight.

Why the name, *Tiny Bubbles*? For two reasons:

- First, this teaching tool builds upon the general concepts laid out in the AASI *Snowboard Manual*, which uses a martini glass as its basis. The martini glass represents the upward route of learning from a solid base, through the stem, and then to the ever-widening opportunities for individual goals and achievement. So, one reason was to retain the idea of a glass holding a liquid.
- Second, and more important, *Tiny Bubbles* is meant to conjure up the image of champagne, or mineral water, or a lemon-lime soda poured into the martini glass. From all around the glass,

uncountable numbers of tiny bubbles begin to rise. They don't all start from the bottom — many begin their journey more than halfway up on the sloping sides of the glass. Regardless of where they start, they have this in common: each has a unique path and rate of ascent, and each makes it to the top.

Other PSIA/AASI teaching tools discuss “stepping stones,” like paths across a stream. While each member of a group of hikers crossing a stream may traverse the stepping stones differently, the opportunities for divergence are limited: there are only so many stones. In reality — as emphasized throughout the PSIA/AASI publications — stepping stones are only a start to help you on your way. As experience grows, so too do the number of routes available for the instructor to use in leading hikers across a stream. So, snowboard instruction is less like crossing a stream than it is like climbing a boulder-strewn mountain slope. Different hikers may ascend along different routes depending on their specific skills, limitations, and goals. While some may go straight up, others follow a zig-zag course or stop, rest awhile, and reassess their goals. The options are limitless.

That's the idea behind *Tiny Bubbles*: that infinite possibilities exist from Day One. Don't be alarmed. The infinite possibilities make your job easier, not harder. It's just that you need a tool box from which to select the right tool for the task. Hopefully, *Tiny Bubbles* will get you started by showing you a few basics. But remember that, like any artist or master craftsman, your tool box will need to expand as you encounter situations that existing tools don't quite meet, and you'll eventually create your own tools.

You can do it if you trust yourself, really listen to your students, and really watch what their efforts show you. In other words, you become a student yourself, seeing each situation as an opportunity to observe, experiment, and learn. And yes, some learning will come through trial and error. Fear not. There's no such thing as failure, except the failure to grow in your profession. Good instructors — great instructors — improve with every student and lesson. Has your thirst been whetted? If so, you're ready for *Tiny Bubbles*!

“Progressions”

Progressions are often misunderstood as comprising lists of drills that, if followed step by step, will teach students to ride. But remember, no two students progress alike, and each student has needs that change during a series of lessons and sometimes within a single lesson. Too often, snowboard instructors follow a set progression as if doing so were a rule. **THIS IS SNOWBOARDING; THERE ARE NO RULES!** Instead of following a set path, you continually reassess your student's skills, needs, and wants. You then

use that information to adjust your lesson to fit the student's development path. You gradually build your own tool box or "bag of tricks" (better described as a bag of options). These options consist of drills, exercises, and activities. The more options you have, the more you can customize the lesson to the student, the class, or the conditions.

A few examples of options from among myriad for beginners include: walking with toe-heel roll, balancing on one foot, flexing/extending from the ankles/knees/hips, rolling toe to heel with equal weight on both feet, rolling toe to heel one foot at a time, skating foot on toe side, skating foot on heel side, skate and glide foot on deck, straight glide, straight glide with flexion/extension, one-footed traverse toe and heel, straight glide with veer, straight glide with turn, straight glide with turn to stop, sidestepping uphill, straight glide with neither foot buckled in, stepping from one side to the other, toe-drag stop, heel-drag stop, straight glide varying weight front to back, stand up from toe side, stand up from heel side, buckling front foot in, jumping and landing softly, hopping while gliding, skating in circle toe/heel, pivoting on rear foot toe and heel, pivoting on front foot toe and heel.

Of course there are more, and that's before you buckle both feet in!

Four Levels of Development (level of effort: basic => simple => complex => ride)

Just as traditional progressions build on skills and movements, using the four levels of development allows more ways to structure the lesson. The concept of the four levels is that dividing the movements into groups based on level of effort and complexity for a particular student provides natural skill development. It's important to remember that what is complex to a first-day rider (starting from the bottom of the glass) may be basic to a second-year rider (starting part-way up the glass). Compare a student who wants to perfect a frontside air two feet over the deck to one who wants to learn a frontside 540 in the same pipe. For the first student, nailing the frontside air while looking down at the deck is awesome—he's riding! For the second student, a plan incorporating the four levels of development might use that same frontside air as a basic movement. The idea is that you allow your student to develop skill by breaking the movements down into ever more basic movements.

You can look at **Basic** from the view of the fundamental movements, that is, that our joints have a limited number of options: flexion/extension, rotation, or some combination. If you were to teach snowboarding by describing and then practicing the movement of each joint independently, you would have mastered the concept. Of course, you would never get out of the base area. That's why you need to assess your student — to find out what's basic for him or her.

Progressing from Basic to **Simple** requires only adding a force or complexity. If *basic* involved standing on the deck, *simple* might add a traverse or straight glide (adding movement). If *basic* were skidded turns, *simple* might add a gentle edge set at the finish of each turn (adding tilt). *Simple* has the largest number of possibilities and therefore the greatest opportunity for trial and error. Remember, errors are not always bad, and much can be learned from tipping over. Adding a move like the edge set in the example above could cause your student to end up on the ground, wondering what happened. If so, it may be time to switch gears and try something else — not necessarily an easier move, just a different one, such as a subtle settle through the control portion of the turn (adding flexion). Again, once you feel that your student understands and can use the necessary movements, it's time to move on.

Complex results from adding moves together. It's close to riding and, in fact, your students will feel as though they've got it. That's the idea. You've created an environment that allows them to perform all the required movements, consisting of different combinations of *basic* and *simple* components.

Now, what was the point? Oh yeah, to **Ride**. Pretty simple here — have fun! This may require nothing more than exploring new terrain and searching out differing snow conditions. Think of what you do with your friends: ride the mountain, enjoy the day, usually not thinking about anything else. Remember, your student is on vacation; you're the one at work.

A few examples:

Balanced Straight Glide

- Basic – Stand on your board with your back foot next to the rear binding.
- Simple – Slide down a gentle hump (with a large flat area or small incline to stop the student) while standing on your deck.
- Complex – Slide down a gentle hump while smoothly flexing/extending at the ankles and hips – slide down gentle hump softly balancing as the board glides on the snow.
- Ride – It's a straight glide.

HEELSIDE Falling Leaf (using twist)

- Basic – Sideslip heelside.
- Simple – While sitting on the ground, twist the board by flexing and extending your ankles in opposition – traverse left foot forward – traverse right foot forward.

- Complex – On heelside sideslip, slowly lift both front toes (slow down) then relax and continue sideslip – on heelside sideslip, slowly lift front toes then relax and lift rear toes so that the board changes direction.
- Ride – Play with terrain while going from side to side at your own pace.

You may find that, as you build a progression, you need several exercises at one level of effort or a mix of exercises from different levels.

360

- Basic – While standing on a flat area, jump as high as you can.
- Basic – While jumping, flex at the hip and knee to suck the board as high as possible off the ground.
- Basic – While landing, absorb with ankles knees and hips.
- Basic – Stand and jump; pivot the board 180, backside, while in the air.
- Simple – While jumping and sucking the deck up, perform a full-body rotation frontside 180.
- Simple – While landing your frontside 180, ensure that your shoulders are close to fundamental alignment.
- Complex – Jump and spin 180; after completing the frontside 180 but before landing, pivot your legs 180 backside, completing the 360 – while traversing, toeside jump and spin 360.
- Ride – while riding, use small bumps or humps to jump and spin 360.

Creating Drills

Building a game or drill is much easier than most instructors try to make it. Unfortunately, no magic pill works in every situation, and you have a vast number of games and drills to choose from. Some are the same across the country, while others are more regional, and every area has a few specific to its own terrain, clientele, and history. So, how do you come up with a few of your own? The fact that each student is unique creates endless opportunities to build new activities that lead along the path to becoming a snowboarder. Still, don't lose sight of the movement and performance concepts that are the building blocks of the drills.

Whether you combine a few movements or isolate a few, choose a specific path or turn shape, or—you name it—and you've got a drill. If you can make it a challenge or a race, it becomes a game (fun!). Oddly, most people think that using games is for kids. WHO DECIDED THAT ADULTS WERE NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE FUN?

The fundamentals of drill creation are:

- Movement Concepts – rotation, flexion/extension
- Performance Concepts – tilt (edge angle), twist (torsion), rotation (pivot), and pressure distribution (bending)

Teaching is simply getting your students to make moves that affect the board in a desired way.

Look at some classic drills:

- Straight Glide – uses flexion/extension, trains to limit rotation, results in pressure distribution
- Sideslip – uses flexion/extension, trains to limit rotation, results in tilt and pressure distribution
- 360s – uses rotation and flexion/extension, results in twist, pivot, and pressure distribution
- Garland Turns (focusing on feeling the front and back foot edge) – uses rotation and flexion/extension, results in tilt, twist, and pressure distribution with minimal pivot

If those seem a little too regimented, with creativity somehow lost, think of it this way: You know what movements you want your students to make and how movements affect the board. So, it's up to you to come up with simple and fun moves to demonstrate and teach the desired outcome.

Energy Level

You may ride every day. At a minimum, skating through the lift line is probably not what you'd call a workout. Your students spend their days keeping the dust off chairs. It's not that all students are out of shape, just that they don't get paid to snowboard; YOU DO. It's important to structure your lesson so that the student can last the whole day, and maybe even have enough energy left to enjoy a little of that Après Ride fun. For that reason, as you look at the exercises/drills/activities you plan to ask of your students, take note of how much energy they're going to use.

You have to pace things. Just as your lesson needs a variety of movements, it also needs to vary the amount of exertion. This keeps athletic students from getting bored while not wearing out the desk jockeys. Each drill or activity will need to be examined in relation to the student, terrain, snow conditions, and time of day. This lets you structure the lesson from the onset but with enough flexibility to change things when needed to keep the student moving and happy. Assessing a student's athleticism and stamina allows you to find the right pacing of drills and activities.

Focus within the Drill

As students practice movements through drills, you can change the focus. This allows you to use a single activity to anchor the feeling in different joints, muscles, or parts of the body. Why is it that sometimes a drill works like a charm but is a flop the next time? You told them to make the same movements, the terrain is the same, and you even told the same joke in the demo, but these guys just don't get it. Could it be that their focus was somehow different? They needed to focus on the ankle but instead watched your shoulder. They didn't notice that your weight stayed centered through the turn (after all, the guy in the shop told them to lean forward and kick their leg back)¹. Think about the different points of focus. For example:

<u>Fundamental Movements</u>	<u>T.I.D.</u>	<u>Reference Alignments</u>	<u>Snowboard Performance</u>
Joints:	- Timing	- Front Foot	- Pivot
- Flexion/Extension	- Intensity	- Board/Terrain	- Tilt
- Rotation	- Duration	- Center of Mass	- Twist
Muscles:			- Bend
- Flexion/Extension			

Obviously, these are not the only points of focus, just a starting point for your imagination. All of the concepts above should be familiar as ways to check your students' progress. Are they aligned with the terrain? Is their timing allow for success? Are they extending when they should? Are they initiating by twisting or pivoting? The information you get by focusing helps you to know how the students are catching on. Maybe they could benefit from that same information. Hmmmm....

Focusing a student's attention on the thing you're looking for may accelerate the learning curve. As you teach a toeside traverse, imagine how many different focuses there could be: front-foot edge angle, rear-foot edge angle, hip alignment to the board, shoulder alignment to the hill, pressure to the edge, ankle flexion, etc. Now, don't overdo it; the idea is focus! Give the student a single drill and a single focus. Allow time to feel, notice, become aware of what is happening, when it's happening, and (hopefully) why it's happening.

For example, when teaching toe-to-toe turns, you might try the following:

- Traverse toeside, creating a platform with an edge set.
 - Focus on the edge set while your ankles are flexed and ready to spring.

¹ No disrespect to shop guys; just getting back at them for getting to spend all that time in the park while we rip it up in the beginner area.

- Focus on your center of mass over the balls of your feet to create a balanced/stable platform.
- Focus on your alignment to the board so that weight is centered.
- Focus on a low, powerful stance from which to spring (remember that a static stance is less effective when you're ready to pop).
- Focus on ... (YOU DECIDE)
- Spin frontside 180.
 - Focus on your knees and hips to ensure an aligned position as you jump and spin.
 - Focus on spinning from the hips.
 - Focus on initiating the spin by rotating your trailing hip/shoulder uphill.
 - Focus on a spin that is smooth, allowing the carve to continue on landing.
 - Focus on your upper body leading or spinning with the deck.
 - Focus on spinning in a position that allows for balance, not fully extended.
 - Focus on all the spin happening from the pop, not a counter in the air.
 - Focus on ... (YOUR TURN AGAIN)
- Land on your toeside edge.
 - Focus on an aligned position, with knees and hips over the turning edge.
 - Focus on landing equally weighted.
 - Focus on maintaining the carve.
 - Focus on landing on the edge, not a flat base.
 - Focus on ... (BE CREATIVE)
- Repeat steps switch.
 - Combine.

By simply changing the focus, you allow the student to ponder different variables that will help achieve the goal. There's a lot of power in that word, focus.

The Base of the Martini Glass

It all starts with the urge to ride. Beyond that, some options for you to use (after the interview, lesson intro, and equipment intro) include: straight glide – veers – skating – garlands – hop in a 360 – get up – traverse – falling leaf – rolling over – turn to stop – 360 spins – getting on the lift – getting off the lift – point the finger turns (PLEASE, NO!) – hands on your head, point your elbows turns – hands on your hips turns – back foot pivot – rocking toe to heel – rocking tip to tail – sideslip – glide with bounce – switch turns – passive sidecut turns – active sidecut turns – patience turns – turn to stop – edge change

turn to stop – edge change turn to sit – twisting board while sitting – full body rotation turns – turn from the knee turns ... and there are lots, lots more.

Possible ways to put some of these together may include:

Basic: heel/toe walking – straight glide – heel/toe one foot – sidestep – skating foot positioning – glide with movement – glide with turn – sideslip – traverse

Simple: lift drills – toe drag stop – turn to stop – traverse to stop – straight glide with edge changes – getting on the lift – getting off the lift – rolling over – getting up – sideslip – traverse – garlands – turn to stop

Complex: turn with edge change – edge change turn with stop – falling leaf – patience turns – 360 spins – controlled turning – passive sidecut use – active sidecut use – turns with shape – turns with rhythm – switch turns – small jumps (hops)

Ride: explore terrain – follow your friend's tracks – see how many turns you can make – do 360s between turns – PLAY!

Hopefully, almost all of you could find your mountain's beginner progression in the above examples. By far the easiest progressions to construct are those for the beginner. The literally millions of beginner lessons given and taken over the years have provided a pretty good test of what works. That said, the only limit to the number of options is your imagination. However, just because you can think of an exercise doesn't mean that you need to subject every student to it. The 300-yard toeside sideslip is a good workout, but it's not really necessary. That's the beauty of having more possibilities than you need. You can weave your way around the options to find what works (and sometimes what doesn't) to keep your student interested and moving and to anchor the movements needed to become a better rider.

As you can imagine, there is no way to list every possible drill, primarily because each new instructor will have new and creative ideas that add to the ever-growing options. From the list of your ideas, along with those of your friends and mentors, you should be able to develop a bank account of options. Deposit new ideas into the account, and withdraw them as appropriate for the terrain, the timing of the lesson, and your personal preferences.

As students move up the glass, the movements become more complex. The movements at the base of each section are basic for a rider that would realistically have a goal in that section. For example;

if a rider's goal is to carve short-radius turns, a basic movement would be short-radius skidded turns. As you get to complex movements, it may be necessary to break that move into smaller steps.

An example of breaking down a move or “popping a bubble” to look at its components is easily seen in the realm of freestyle. If a rider is going to perform a frontside 360 on the ground, a basic move would be to twist the deck with a quick move of the front foot, sharply engaging the heel edge under the front foot for an instant—this will provide enough turning force to swiftly spin the rider through a 360. That may not seem basic to every student, or it may be that your student needs a little refresher on that particular skill. You could POP THE 360 BUBBLE to reveal the movements that lead to 360s using torsion or twist.

Our student can ride and turn. She or he has passed through basic turns and now is smack dab in the stem of the Y model. It may become tough to keep the student on course. You'll have students that ask to leave your lesson to join friends in the park. Or, the glades and powder stashes could be calling to them. Regardless of your opinion, most of your students now “know” how to snowboard. What more could there possibly be? They want to carve, jump, or impress someone cute. Hanging with you is not part of the plan. They need mileage and exploration, the challenge of slight changes in terrain, and reinforcement of the skills they've acquired. They need to coordinate their newly discovered movements. Remember, we all snowboard for fun.

The Stem of the Glass

Students can stay in the stem — the place where skills grow but not to the point of major stylistic divergence — for quite some time. This is the stage when we lose the largest percentage of our students, because they're at the point where the pace of improvement is not as great. It's like that with any sport or other skill, of course: rapid improvement, then a plateau, and finally, for the tenacious, a breakthrough. Getting through the stem could take a day, a week, or a season. This is where your role is so vital: Look for ways to get that bubble to rise faster. One way mentioned above is to break a bubble into tinier bubbles, or exercises, until you find the steps that work for your student

Dynamic Turns – The Top of the Stem

Think back. Somewhere between your first turn and dynamic turns, you discovered the difference between merely getting down the hill and really riding the board. You found your balance and discovered the mystery of edge change. It's here you learned to use *your* movements to influence the *board's* movements. That was a critical breakthrough for you, and it happened when you realized that it was not only possible turn when you wanted but also to manipulate the board to cause a desired effect.

Some options (of course, the actual list has no end) include: flexing down to initiate – extending up to initiate – short/medium/long radius turns with flexion/extension – turn to stop with board twist – ollie – 360s using rotary and twist – short radius turns focusing on a stable lower body—ollie from turn to turn – twist board to hold edge at completion of turn – use varying terrain to practice stability – spray snow at completion of turn – spray consistently through turn – edge change leaving overlap of edge track – edge change with short gap in edge track – active counter-rotation in short/medium/long radius turns – full body rotation in short/medium/long radius turns...and (well, you get the idea).

A few ways to put these together to help your students make their own discovery might include:

Basic: long-radius turns – 360s using rotary and twist – initiate turn with vertical motion – initiate turn with board twist – turn to stop

Simple: continuous turns – spray snow at end of turn – moving down into turn – turn using flexion/extension to release, decamber, and engage

Complex: edge change with short gap in edge engagement – short-radius turns with quiet upper body – turn using upper body/lower body separation

Ride: small jumps with smooth landing – fun terrain – terrain that varies – snow conditions that vary

Once your student has gotten the feel of making dynamic turns, the bubble has the entire upper part of the glass in which to rise to the top—i.e., to success. From that point on, it's up to the student to continue to practice, experiment, and gain experience in all of the wonderful challenges that lie ahead. If you're part of the mix, then you also should allow the bubble to rise along its own individual path, gently guiding it toward the student's goals and keeping it in line with the student's progress. But before we turn you and your student entirely loose to revel in the top of the glass, here are a couple of tools that may help in mastering dynamic turns and escaping the confines of the stem of the glass.

Pop a Bubble – Try Moving Down into the Turn

Okay, so a bubble is rising, but it's having trouble getting out of the stem. Let's pop the bubble to get a smaller, more focused bubble. Think of it as breaking a bubble into tinier and tinier components, like splitting an atom into its component parts, to find the source of a problem, and then create drills to build it back up. One way is by moving down into the turn to provide a lower, more stable stance. This also adds power to the use of sidecut and flex pattern in making the board perform.

Some options include: quick down (flexion) move without deck – quick move down on deck – garland using flexion/extension/rotation – twist at finish to create edge pressure – move down from ankle to engage toe edge – move down from knee to engage heel edge – pull toe up to engage heel edge – move weight forward at initiation of turn – coordinate flexion/extension with turn duration – stop by crunching down – build pressure by moving front heel to front toe – ollie – nollie – rocking tip to tail by flexing/extending one leg at a time – drive front hip down and into the turn – drive knees down and into the turn – finish turn on edge platform – use power downward turn to exaggerate board bend – garland using flexion/rotation...and loads more (give it a try).

Ways to put these together might include:

Basic: Feel hip/ankle flexion/rotation while moving down – build pressure by moving front heel to front toe – rocking and flexing – hopping with the deck – hopping without the deck.

Simple: Turn using flexion/rotation – turn to stop using flexion/rotation – garland using flexion/extension/rotation – move weight forward to initiate – stop by crunching down (lower body).

Complex: Coordinate downward movement with twist through turn – twist at finish to create extension/pressure – move down to initiate – finish with edge platform - Use power downward to exaggerate board bend – use flexion/rotation of ankle/knee/hip to coordinate downward movement with turn duration.

Ride: See how quickly you can change edges – how long you can hold a turn – try new terrain – play in different snow conditions.

Pop Another Bubble – Twist at Finish to Create Edge Platform (Pressure)

Maybe that worked, and maybe it didn't quite get you there. Try twisting at the completion or finish of a turn can provide a platform to gain stability, reduce speed, and provide a springboard to other movements.

Some options include: finish turn with new edge already engaged – use rear foot to hold edge through completion – achieve maximum twist at completion – use garland turns focusing on rear foot edge pressure – use hip rotation to twist deck – use ankle/knee flexion/extension to twist the deck – twist deck using front foot – twist deck using rear foot – use each foot independently to twist deck – 360s using twisting – traverse ollie toe and heel...yep, more of these, too.

Possibilities for combining these might include:

Basic: Make garland turns focusing on front AND back foot edge feeling – twist deck using feet independently, NOT inversely – twist board using back foot

Simple: Use rear foot edge set to create a platform at end of turn – use edge set at end of turn to create platform.

Complex: Actively twist board from middle of turn to finish so that maximum twist occurs at transition – feel for maximum twist through turn – use hip rotation and ankle flexion/extension to twist deck

Ride: Finish turn already initiating next turn – finish turn with solid/stable edge feel under rear foot

Pop Yet Another Bubble – Use Edge Set to Create a Platform

You should be able to see by now that there is no end to the number of times you can blow up bubbles to achieve a more focused effect. This is merely one more example from among an infinite number.

Some options include: edge set at completion of end of turn – pop off edge into each new turn – settle onto edge before initiation – basic turn using tip roll – traverse with hops – sideslip using solid edge set stop/start – basic turn from traverse – traverse 360s – linked toeside turns – traverse while alternating between carve and skid...DON'T STOP NOW.

Possible ways to combine these might include:

Basic: Balance on high edge angle while standing still – balance on edge while traversing – roll from edge to edge using ankles and knees – basic turn using body alignment.

Simple: Make garland turns with strong edge set to allow tip to fall – basic turn from short traverse – sideslip with solid edge-set starts and stops.

Complex: Hop rear foot toe to rear foot heel with tip on ground – “edge check” at end of each turn – settle onto edge before each initiation.

Ride: Make linked toeside turns – linked heelside turns – how much power can you come out of the turns with?

Carving – The Right Side of the Glass

Carving was once considered by many instructors to be the be-all and end-all of riding: Strap on the plates, tip the deck on edge and leave trenches that small kids might get lost in. Looking at the Y-model now, it's obvious that carving is simply a skill on the path to riding the whole mountain with style. Yet, it's still what riding is all about for some, and you have to admit that not much on snow looks as graceful as a rider tipping the deck to 90 degrees and riding an arc that appears effortless. Oh yeah, there's racing too.

Some options for helping your student gain carving skills include: long radius single edge ride – straight run to carve out – dynamic skid with early edge engagement – dynamic turn with gentle edge engagement from the ankle/knee/hip – twist deck to initiate – ride the edge around – drive hard on the tip without losing the edge – subtle edge engagement then follow sidecut – see how high you can balance on an edge – twist deck so edges on both sides of the board are in the snow – holding hands, tip to edge – feel for stable position on edged traverse – you don't turn, the board does...you're just getting started.

Some ways to put these together might include:

Basic: Straight glide rolling toe edge to heel edge, feeling for the edge set between the feet – twist deck so that front foot toe edge and rear foot heel edge are on the snow – standing still, see how high an edge angle you can balance on toe and heel side.

Simple: While traversing, engage new edge by twisting, ride edge to complete turn (no skid) – dynamic turn with gentle edge engagement from the ankle/knee/hip – subtle edge engagement, then follow the sidecut.

Compound: Allow the tail to follow the tip through a round turn with no skid roll and to the new edge – twisting the deck to initiate, be solidly on the new edge before the fall line.

Ride: Tip it up and let the board turn – see how high can you get that edge at the top/middle/bottom of the turn – drive hard toward the tip to continually tighten the turn – cross under/cross over.

Now It's Your Turn

Okay, now try it on your own....

Name your bubble _____.

List exercises/drills/activities that you could use.

Divide your list into the four levels of development.

Be aware of the physical exertion required for each drill.

Pick a starting point.

Now teach, and don't forget to continually assess the student, the conditions, and the plan.

Move up through the list of options, changing paths as needed.

If you've hit a dead-end, "pop the bubble" to focus on a component.

After you've popped the bubble....

Name the smaller bubble _____.

List exercises/drills/activities that you could use.

Divide your list into the four levels of development.

Be aware of the physical exertion required for each drill.

Pick a starting point.

Now teach, and don't forget to continually assess the student, the conditions, and the options.

Move up through the list of options, changing paths as needed.

If you've hit a dead-end, "pop the bubble" again to focus on a different or even smaller component.

And so forth, until the student is back on course.

Remember, every instructor's mind works differently from every other instructor's. You may feel comfortable with the concept of multiple options, allowing the lesson to unfold as your student gains understanding and skill. Or, you may prefer to have more of a plan. If so, simply organizing your options into a lesson plan will let *Tiny Bubbles* work for you. However you choose to use this tool, the

key to success is constant assessment and adjustment, but without sacrificing the most important goal of all – FUN.