

Teaching Surf Instructors to Teach



National Surf Schools and Instructors Association Instructors and Coaches Training Manual



Instructional Techniques – FlowRider

Provided exclusively for NSSIA certified instructors.

Other use prohibited by US Copyright

Effectiveness as a FlowRider Instructor

As described in other NSSIA instruction modules, the primary purpose of an instructor is to develop an understanding of learning principles in their students. The NSSIA is committed to training all types of surf and SUP instructors so that they develop insight into themselves; they can recognize and avoid the challenges of instructing; and once their technical and safety skills are developed, they will continue the training focused on improving the surf instructors' educational effectiveness.

Basic Guide for FlowRider Pool Surf Instruction

This section provides a basic guide for instructors to follow during their FlowRider wave pool lesson. It is sequenced to address each focus area of instruction as it would proceed at poolside. However, you don't need to follow the suggestions herein in the same order but you must keep focused to avoid injuring yourself or your student.



Boardsports such as surfing, snowboarding, skateboarding and Flow “Boarding” are skill-based activities that challenge riders to develop new tricks to emulate those they have seen other riders perform. Flowboarding on the Flow Rider is similar to many of the board riding sports, but unique in its own regard. A great way to approach the lesson plan is to find out the rider's goals for their lesson time in advance, and give them an outline of the steps

you will be taking with them, in addition to demonstrating specific skills for them which you have achieved yourself, on-wave during the lesson.

Safety

Student safety is always of a concern just like in traditional surfing lessons. Much of the Student's safety relates to the design of the pool itself. The FlowRider's waveform is a proprietary composite membrane ride surface that is designed to absorb the energy of impacts. The shorter and lighter 40" average boards are also safer than traditional boards since they have a soft rail design plus they do not have Skaggs that can hit a student. Flowboarders may wipe out, but if they will sit down with their feet facing uphill they will be safer and they can get back up again and again. Regardless, make sure you perform due diligence and have the student sign the waiver before you actually start the lesson.



Instructor Skills

Verbal Guidance and Feedback – Before anyone gets into the wave, or even steps onto the board, you should give the student all the guidance you believe they need to take their first steps. Be careful to give them **only** that much at any time, overload can happen all too easily if we give them too many steps at once.

Hand Guidance – Hand guidance is likely the first and possibly the most effective physical approach that you will use. Lifting or dropping the Rider's fists, or pushing or pulling them in the direction they should be adjusting their weight can turn their experience from an unsteady, nervous one, into a calm and balanced ride.

Pointing & Gesturing – Do not be afraid to look silly when you point, and gesture to the student what it is that you want them to do to in order to progress. It really helps students to relax and open up to the learning experience when the instructor does the same. Stay focused, and point to them exactly where to look, or gesture how to hold their stance. Make certain that they understand what it is you want, but be aware that the noise of the wave may need for you to give them more complex instructions once they have completed their ride.

Rope Guidance – This may be done most effectively for someone who is already comfortable loading into the wave, either with help, or on their own. You may find that students who have some previous experience with wakeboarding could be taught to load with the rope almost immediately. Typically, at least one or two attempts to load from the side should be done first. Rope handling is very similar to hand guidance, in that you are physically communicating through a link to the rider. Use this training tool very carefully, and realize that you **MUST** leave the rope clear of yourself, so that if the student falls and does not let go, you will not get wrapped, and trapped in the rope.

Personal Riding Demonstration – While not usually done in an ocean surfing lesson, this is very useful in a FlowRider lesson. Give it your best shot, realizing that you are an employee on the clock. Please attempt to give your best performance, while catering to the level of the student. A few tricks are great for promoting progression, but keep in mind that you want the student to learn these things. This lesson approach is used for a lesson with a few people or an individual as they may get tired before the hour is finished. If you have a full class, you should keep your demo to a minimum and get your students on the wave quickly.

Teaching Steps

Stance – Focus on the stance first but stay safe while loading. Begin with the feet placed a bit more than shoulder width apart, as comfortable. The back foot should be all the way to the tail of the board, as far as it will fit. Stand slightly "Duck Stance" which will have the toes pointing 5-10 degrees outwards as shown \ /.

Body position – The knees should be comfortably bent, almost like you were about to sit in a chair, waist facing forward while the head and



torso line up directly over the back foot. This will leave the back knee bent more, while the front leg is extended forward on the board. Shoulders should remain facing the blue pool barrier, along with the waist, but keep the head turned towards the front of the board, with the chin up, not looking down at the board, feet, or water.

Pushing out - Have the student keep their elbows locked against their ribs, pointing both arms towards you, making two fists. As they bounce straight up & down above the board (this will help take weight off so you can push them out) you will push against their fists, while placing one foot on the Flow board, in between their feet.

Once the student has made it far enough into the water to begin to float, make sure to remind them (as you've mentioned in advance) to stop bouncing. Make sure that they have a good idea how to stay balanced by communicating any changes necessary with them, either verbally or directly through weight & pressure changes on their fists.

Keeping the student from grabbing you is important so that you don't get dragged into the wave. We need you safe, in order to help them if they get hurt. Insist on the student making fists, and no gripping with the thumbs!



During the Ride

First tracks - Plenty of time may need to be spent on balance, particularly if the student does not naturally have this ability. Once balance is accomplished, the first achievement in board control can easily be taught by having the student climb to the top of the wave, and descend back to the bottom, by the nozzle cover.

To move up the wave, move body weight even further back to the tail of the board. Tell a skateboarder to manual. Further describe this by showing a board with the tail down, and the nose up high, as if out of the water.

Moving back down the wave is simply done by moving more body weight further towards middle of the board, and allowing the nose of the board to point further down, or closer to the water surface.

Similar to how you would steer a surfboard, rocking the board off the flat plane so that it is deeper in the water on the toe side will draw them forward across the wave, and their movement will be toward their backside when the board is deeper on the heel side. Begin left to right movements across the wave face by using the back foot to initiate turns. This is counter intuitive to snowboarders, but once you explain the change to the student, they may understand quickly. Once back & forth motion is achieved, move on to making an upside down "U" shape on the wave. This will incorporate rail to rail motion, and up and down motion to really have the student feeling comfortable, and in control on the wave.

Skills – From Flowrider

Verbal Guidance and Feedback – Before anyone gets into the wave, or even steps onto the board, you should give them all the guidance you believe they need to take their first steps. Be careful to give them only that much at any time, overload can happen all too easily if we give them too many steps at once.

Hand Guidance – Using your hands, this is likely the first and possibly the most effective physical approach that you will use. Lifting or dropping the Rider's fists, or pushing or pulling them in the direction they should be adjusting their weight can turn their experience from an unsteady, nervous one, into a calm and balanced ride.

Pointing & Gesturing – Do not be afraid to look silly when you point, and gesture to the guest what it is that you want them to do to, in order to progress. It really helps people to relax and open up to the learning experience, when you do the same. Stay focused, and point to them exactly where to look, or gesture how to hold their stance. Make certain that they understand what it is you want, but be aware that the noise of the wave may need for you to give them more complex instructions once they have completed their ride.

Rope Guidance – This may be done most effectively for someone who is already comfortable loading into the wave, either with help, or on their own. You may find that Riders who have some previous experience with wakeboarding could be taught to load with the rope almost immediately. Typically at least one or two attempts to load from the side should be done first. Rope handling is very similar to hand guidance, in that you are physically communicating through a link to the rider. Use this tool very carefully, and realize that you **MUST** leave the rope clear of yourself, so that if the guest falls and does not let go, you will not get wrapped, and trapped in the rope.

Personal Riding Demonstration – This is your chance to shine. Give it your best shot, realizing that you are an employee, on the clock. Please attempt to give your best performance, while catering to the level of the guest. A few tricks that are at the top of your game are great for promoting progression, but keep in mind that you want the Rider to feel successful, not as though they could never get to the level that you are showing them. This can be perfect for a lesson with only one or a few people, as they may get tired before the hour is finished. If you have a full class, you should keep demos to a minimal.

Conclusions

This type of wave is very conducive for learning. You will not be spending time teaching people how to read waves, or even catch them. Most of the opportunity for progression will take time, and this can help you to bring students back again and again.