NWANA ACADEMY

Nordic Walking Instructor Beginner Level Certification

Principles of the Training System

Instructor Field Reference

Study materials for Lesson 1.3, Principles of the Training System

North American Nordic Walking Association (NWANA)

1. Purpose of This Reference

This field reference carries the training system of Lesson 1.3 into your session folder. The lesson text in the Academy course is the primary carrier of the material; this document is the handout form, built for quick use before and during sessions.

The training system rests on six principles of training and three principles of the teaching environment:

- Training: natural movement first; step-by-step progression; from simple to complex; consistent repetition; clear and simple instructions; technique before intensity.
- Environment: safety first; a positive learning atmosphere; adaptation for different participants.

Each principle below gives its rule, the instructor actions that carry it, and the observation points that show it working.

2. Natural Movement First

Good natural walking is the foundation for good Nordic Walking. Before poles enter the session, the participant's own gait carries the learning.

Instructor actions

- Open technique work with walking without poles: natural gait, posture, arm and leg coordination.
- Watch the natural pattern first: heel landing, stride length, arm swing, posture line.
- Introduce poles only onto a gait that already moves naturally.

Observation points (from Lesson 3.1)

- Posture: tall, with a slight forward orientation from the ankles.
- Stride: natural length, smooth and controlled, heel landing softly.
- Pattern: opposite arm and leg, relaxed shoulders, even rhythm.

3. Step-by-Step Progression

Beginners learn best when the technique is divided into simple, logical steps. The progression of the training system has six steps:

Step	Content
1. Posture	Tall posture, relaxed shoulders, centered balance, orientation from the ankles.
2. Arm swing without poles	Natural opposite arm and leg swing at walking rhythm.
3. Pole positioning	Strap fit, grip, plant point next to or slightly

	behind the opposite foot, backward pole angle.
4. Basic push	Push traveling backward through the strap at the backward angle.
5. Release	The hand opening begins as the push finishes; the hand finishes fully open behind the body, the pole held by the strap.
6. Full technique rhythm	Plant, push, release, recovery joined in one continuous coordinated pattern.

The move from one step to the next is governed by stability: the previous element is reasonably stable before the next begins. A participant who feels overwhelmed returns to an earlier, stable step and rebuilds from there with structured repetition.

4. From Simple to Complex

Each new element adds to what the participant already understands. Two worked chains show the principle inside one technique line:

Chain A: the pole action

1. Basic pole plant at the foot line.
2. Active push backward through the strap.
3. Coordinated release, the hand finishing open behind the body.

Chain B: the rhythm

4. Slow rhythm at an easy pace, short segments.
5. Moderate rhythm across full segments.
6. Continuous flow across the whole route.

Challenge is dosed inside the current step: an optional variation, a longer loop, or an added technical focus keeps a fast learner engaged while the group completes the standard version.

5. Consistent, Structured Repetition

Repetition builds rhythm, confidence, stability, and movement control. In the training system, repetition is structured and supervised:

- Each repetition has a named focus: one element, one cue.
- Blocks are short and timed, with regrouping points where the instructor observes and gives feedback.
- The instructor watches every block; practice under observation is what turns repetition into learning.

- A drill ends when the focused element holds at the current step, and the record of the session notes what held and what comes next.

6. Clear and Simple Instructions

Teaching points travel in short, simple phrases, one correction at a time. Complex explanations reduce learning efficiency; the cue carries the action.

The Lesson 1.3 cue bank

Cue	What it sets
Tall posture	The posture line of step 1 of the progression.
Relax your shoulders	Tension leaves the shoulders; the swing stays free.
Open the hand on the push	The release of step 5, timed with the push.
Opposite arm and leg	The coordination pattern of natural gait.
Angle backward	The pole angle at the plant and through the push.

Cue craft: one cue at a time, phrased as the action to perform, given close and calmly, followed by practice and a recheck.

7. Technique Before Intensity

Correct movement comes before distance, speed, and training load. The ordering rule produces one instructor decision at every load question: the element holds cleanly at the current load, then the load grows.

- Distance grows after the technique holds across the current route.
- Speed grows after the plant, the push, and the release hold at moderate pace.
- Load grows inside the session structure of Lesson 5.2, with the talk test as the intensity guide.

8. Progression and Load in the Training System

Across sessions, challenge grows along three lines, always inside beginner scope:

- Technique line: the six steps of the progression, one stable step at a time (Lessons 4.2 and 4.3).
- Session line: the main phase grows inside its template blocks, from 31 to 42 minutes within a 60 to 75 minute session (Lesson 5.2).
- Independence line: the participant needs fewer cues per element as the element stabilizes, and self-checks replace instructor prompts.

A session plan names, for each participant group, the current step, the session focus, and the load decision. The plan is the training system written for one day.

9. Safety First

Safety is part of the training system itself. The environment principles give it three working forms:

- Terrain: stable and appropriate for the group's current step.
- Spacing: safe distances between participants, with regrouping points on every route.
- Awareness: the instructor scans surroundings, weather, and light, and adapts the session from what the scan shows (Lesson 7.1).

10. Positive Learning Atmosphere

Beginners learn faster in an atmosphere where mistakes are corrected respectfully, instructions are supportive, and progress is acknowledged. Encouragement directly improves coordination and learning.

- Feedback follows the Positive, Correction, Positive method of Lesson 5.5.
- Corrections are private in tone, one at a time, and always followed by practice.
- Progress is named specifically: the element that improved, in the session where it improved.

11. Adaptation for Different Participants

Training adjusts for age, mobility level, experience, confidence, and physical limitations. The adaptation toolkit of the course (Lesson 6.3) applies the principle inside the group:

- Terrain, pace, drill, and cue decisions per limitation, integrated in the shared session.
- Loops, out-and-back segments, and regrouping points differentiate distance at one safe group pace.
- Two-level drills give every participant the version of the task that fits the current step.

12. One-Page Summary Checklist

Carry this page in the session folder.

- Gait first: natural walking observed before poles enter the session.
- Progression step named for the group and for each participant who differs.
- One focus element and one cue per drill block.
- Repetition structured: timed blocks, regrouping points, observation, feedback.
- Cues short, single, phrased as the action to perform.
- Technique holds at the current load before distance, speed, or load grows.
- Terrain stable, spacing safe, surroundings scanned.
- Feedback Positive, Correction, Positive; progress named specifically.
- Adaptations integrated in the group: terrain, pace, drill, cue.
- Session record written: what held, the load decision, the next step.