Lesson Coordinator Handbook for

Fun and Effective Instruction

Swimming Ideas, LLC

A complementary book to
Teaching Swimming:
Fun and Effective Instruction

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Parent Tot

Ages: 6months - 3 years

Testable Skills:

Age.

Is the swimmer old enough to stand in chest deep water alone without support on a bench?

Almost entirely requires age 3.

Skills for Guppies:

- Old enough: 2

- Do they follow directions without parent?

Quick test:

Is the swimmer at least 6 months old and under 3?

Pool location for classes:

Shallow end or a comfortable depth for all participants to stand.

This class is for Parents and their infant/ toddler children to experience swimming in a safe and fun class.

Instructors should know:

The best thing for an instructor to know about Parent Tot is confidence and nuance behind WHY we do the activities and games.

- Understanding of why we hold children the way we do.

- Understand the nuance of progressions.

- How to talk to adults; we know information they do not. Be confident in that.

- What different toys are good for infants and toddlers and the difference between them.

- How to sing and be engaging / entertaining.

- How to work a TV and internet connection.

- Ability to explain how to hold a child or demonstrate it with confidence.

Supervisors look for:

Pay attention to staff that are outgoing, loud, and confident. They will be the first to jump at an opportunity to work with adults.

Most swim instructors that are younger (15-20) can be intimidated by working with adults and their children.

REMEMBER

People are signing up for a Parent Tot class for 2 reasons:

- They want to spend time in the water having fun with their child.

- They want to learn how to start teaching child to swim; or teach the child to swim.

They are coming to our program to LEARN what they do not, or DO what they cannot do alone.

It is our responsibility to give them the information (how to hold, what to do, what progressions to follow), and provide opportunities for the parent and child to bond in a safe welcoming environment.

Games, Songs, Education

Repeat everything always

Beyond repeating instructions and scripts for how to hold for front and back glides, repeat your activities and songs.

Infants and younger children love repetition because they know what is happening next.

Blues Clues played the same episode every day of the week. Kids love it. They'll love the predictability of the same songs, and the same flow at Parent Tot lessons.

Make the activities interesting and vertical.

Variations in progressions

Vertical activities are the skill variations available in each one: different support holds for front glides as example.

Each activity should have an option for a:
- Beginner infant 6mos.
- Beginner 1-2 yo.
- Experienced parent tot participant
- Advanced 2-3yo looking to explore the water.

The games and songs are all very individually based, instructors should be giving specific tailored feedback and instruction to parents on HOW to teach to their child's level of comfort.
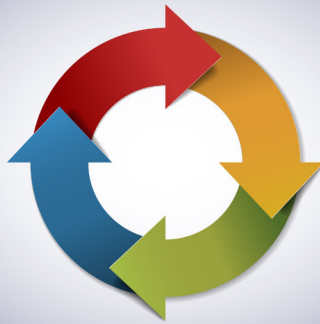
Avoid lazy, uninterested, stale

When the activities and songs/games are always the same it is natural for instructors to fall into a rut.

Signs your Parent Tot class is dull:

- Instructor doesn't get in the water.
- Instructor doesn't sing or dance to songs.
- Parents do their own things; not the group activities and songs but play independently.
- Instructor stands in one spot for more than a few minutes.
- Infants and toddlers are not excited about doing the songs or games.

Cure: Be active! Be engaged! Talk to parents!

Do

Activity 1: Bubbles and Bobs	Activity 2: Walk around the pool
Ask everyone their age. Do that number of bobs with bubbles.	Push benches together, or in a space they can stand, walk in a square or circle.
If swimmer does not want to go completely underwater, offer alternative following underwater progression:	Keep swimmers moving. Each time they get to a corner, kiss the water.
Shoulders, Chin, Lips, Nose, etc.	

Activity 3: Walk around the pool with bubbles	Activity 4: Introduce supported front glides with instructor.
Continue walking in the same square space or across two benches.	Begin close, and support swimmer so that they do not go underwater.
Kiss the water in the corners, but when passing from one bench to the other must put lips in and blow bubbles.	Encourage chin in water.

Do

- Put your [face] in the water
- Push off to/with me

Have swimmer put hands on shoulders, hand, or initiate alone.

Hands on shoulders
- Instructor starts near swimmer.
- Instructor stands "just" out of reach, swimmer must reach for support.

Stand immediately in front of swimmer, within arm reach.
Replace "reach in front of you" to "put your hands on my shoulders."
Support hips or belly to keep at the surface. Swimmer straight arms. Encourage face in water. Encourage constant kick.

Hands on Hands
- Instructor supports swimmer by holding their "streamlined" hands (one on top of the other).
- Instructor uses other hand to support belly.

Start immediately in front of swimmer "just" outside of arm reach.
Instructor holds out hand, palm up, with shoulders in the water. Use script to encourage a horizontal glides. Jump, to instructor's hand. If comfortable, back up and allow a short glide before grasping hand.

Hands on fingertips
- Instructor puts fingertips under swimmer's "streamlined" hands.

Support is largely mental. Fingertips are a reminder of instructor support; trust.
Instructor is there but not actively lifting or holding swimmer at the surface.

Beginner

Moderate

Advanced

Avoid

Avoid

Parent Tot Skills

Water comfort

The primary goal of a parent tot class is to increase the comfort and familiarity of the swimming pool and water to an infant.

We start lessons early to establish healthy, fun, memories of swimming.

The more comfortable a parent is in the water with their child, the more comfortable the child will be swimming for the long term.

Go slow. Build confidence. Earn trust, and look for happy babies.

Supported front glides

Parent skill:
- Football hold
- Palms up hold on belly
- Knowledge of scooping and face in water with kisses.

Swimmer skills:
- relaxed comfort with face in water, breath held, and arms straight.
- Joyful smiles when held by parent moving through water with ease.

Supported back glides

Parent skill:
- Head on shoulder
- Head in hand
- Fingertips under neck.

Swimmer skills:
- Comfortable laying on back with ears in water.
- Relaxed body, legs straight, body floating.

Scooping

Parent Skill:
- Football hold grip in front float.
- Consistent cue like "1, 2, 3!"
- Backwards step and scoop pushing water over the child's face.
- Smile and embrace.

Swimmer skills:
- Expectation of scoop and going under with comfort.
- Closed eyes, breath held, relaxed recovery.

Games, songs, splashing

Do the parent and swimmer join in the games songs and activities?

Parents and swimmers should have fun! The point of the class is to build confidence in the water together sharing in relaxed playful activities.

Do the parents and the swimmer look like they're having fun?

Are they laughing, playing, and exploring the pool?

Teach the parent

The parents are taking a Parent Tot class to learn how to swim; how to work with their child, and how to get their new child ready for the water.

They WANT to know what to do. We have more experience and mastery over progressions then they do.

Be bold. Explain why we play games, why we hold children certain ways, and what the benefits are.

Approach the parent frequently and have a conversation.

What are their goals? How can you help them with those goals?

Increase difficulty

Each parent tot skill has vertical difficulty; front floats can be done with hesitant swimmers and advanced 3 year olds.

You can do the same activity and have many different skill variations within the activity.

Make sure that while you're following a predicable pattern to your lessons you're also providing growth opportunities.

Follow up with a parent and show them the next step in the front float progression or the next advanced hold for supported back glides.

Make things harder as they master each step.

Guppies

Ages: 2-4

Testable skills:

- Alligator Walk

- Lay flat on your back in zero-depth water with ears underwater

- Follow instructions and play a three step game like "Treasure Hunt."

- Be a part of a group activity like Bake a Cake

- Independent water exploration in chest deep water with supervision

Quick test:

Is swimmer ready to participate safely in a group using benches or deeper water?

Does swimmer follow directions?

Pool location for classes:

Spray-grounds, splash-pads, zero-depth pools.

This class should be in the shallowest of shallow ends at your facility.

Generally should not be offered in traditional 3 foot deep pools.

Instructors be familiar with:

- Game: Treasure Hunt

- Game: Bake a Cake

- Game: Pirates or Cruise ship to move around lesson space.

- Use command language

- Play imaginative games and be a part of them.

- Encourage swimmers to participate by making class fun and exciting.

- Alligator walks

- Underwater progression

- Front and Back floats supported and unsupported.

- How to handle kids that cry and won't leave their parents (offer opportunities, demonstrate fun, laugh often, be nice).

- Playing with the class

Supervisors look for:

- Low energy instructors

- Instructors with dry hair, shoulders above water, or standing without getting swimsuit wet.

- Wild kids not part of the game running around unattended.

- Parents intervening in class. Request parents stay away from pool unless emergency.

- Swimmers and Instructors doing different things.

- No games or challenges.

- Silent instructors. They should speak and talk animatedly often.

- Confusion and stumbling language. Provide games, toys, equipment and opportunity to learn new games or challenges through training to instructors.

- No laughter. This class should be FUN!

Games, Fun, Exploration

Alligator walks

Bread and butter skill. Do alligator walks frequently to move around the shallow water, to encourage putting face in the water, and have fun.

Introduce challenges while moving like, "you can only "walk" with one hand. The other must push against the water only."

Ask swimmers to "kiss the water" frequently.

Lay flat, use feet to kick.

Walk on hands or elbows. Stay low to the surface of the water.

Playing games

Games that build an imaginary world with consistent rules are best.

Pretend a kick-board is a cruise ship. Stack some toys on it and have swimmers all hold on to the cruise ship. Move around your shallow end or zero-depth. Stop at different locations and play with the toys. If a toy falls off a swimmer must rescue it by kissing the water, or putting their whole face in water.

Encourage staff to invent their own games or reference the Swimming Ideas game list on the website.

Dry instructor = boring class

This is the most crucial class for a swim instructor to lay down in the water, get their head wet, and play.

If you see an instructor towering over their students they're not "on their level" playing games and joining in the fun.

The whole purpose of this class is FUN!

Stairs might be an appealing alternative to zero-depth or super shallow, but they can be cramped, restrict movement, and lose the ability for swimmers to play without fear of falling into deep water.

Zero-depth best
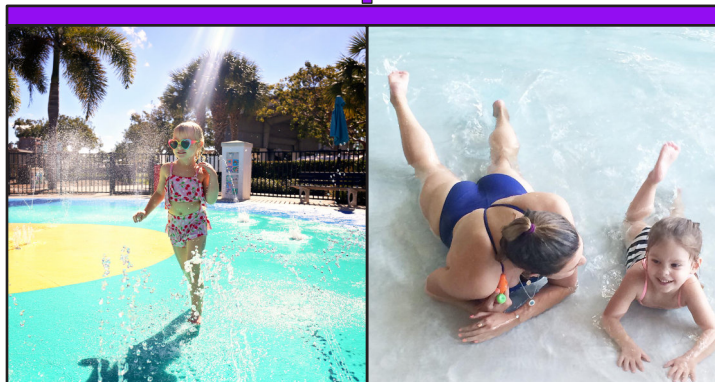
Laugh, smile, PLAY!

Avoid shoulders out

Avoid stairs and stagnation

Guppies Skills

Alligator walks

Body flat, legs extended behind the body, arms in water, chin near surface, comfortable moving through water using hands and feet.

Relaxed body and happy or joyful when face falls in water.

Able to move through arm deep water.

Feet kick when moving.

Lay flat on back with ears submerged

Done in shallow water, about 3-6 inches deep.

Body relaxed with head resting peacefully on the ground. Water should flow over the ears without discomfort or distraction.

Start in super shallow portions and move to deeper water; add support when needed. Can allow swimmers to put their head in instructor's hands to help support.
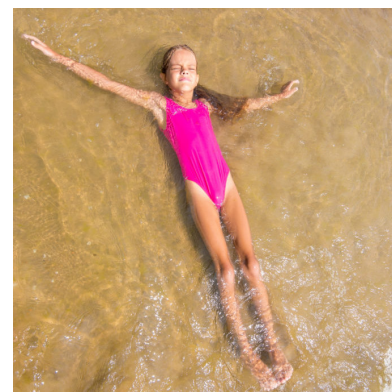
Follow instructions and play a three step game like "Treasure Hunt"

Does the swimmer stay engaged throughout the game?

Does the swimmer anticipate the next step in your game (because you've played it before)?

Swimmer should do the tasks in the game at each stage; put their face in, kiss the water when picking up a toy, make big splashes and little splashes.

Be part of a group activity like "Bake a Cake"

Does the swimmer play along with others and the instructor.

Similar to following multi-step instructions but this is more can the swimmer play with others.

Is the swimmer respectful of other kids; not hitting or splashing when unwanted. Can the swimmer behave in a group setting?
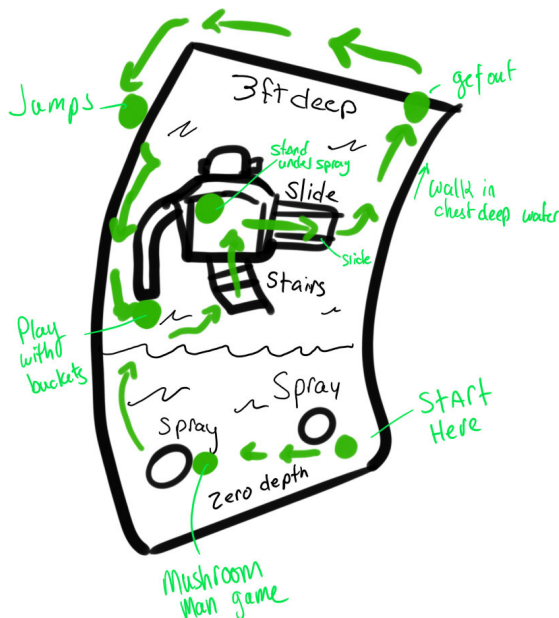
Independent water exploration in chest deep water with supervision

Walk freely through chest deep water controlling body and recovering when falling over.

Move without fear through shallow end.

Listens to instructions and returns to instructor and group when asked.

Bold movement through the water without help.

Move and maximize space

Use the entire splashpad or shallow end for your class.

Start in the dry portion and play with the spray features. Challenge participants to get specific body parts wet without getting others wet.

Move to water slowly, alligator walking or playing with toys.

Use slides and structures as part of games and challenges.

Do jumps into the water with instructor support.

Promote independent movement.

Failing instructors loom above

Can the instructor to the left properly do a supported front glide in this position?

No.

While Guppies is a game focused class using group activities and challenges to promote water comfort and confidence, it can also teach basic level 1 skills.

If you see swim instructors looming over their swimmers, not kneeling in the water eye to eye, then your instructor is failing.

Correct it quickly. The instructors need to be in the water too.

Level 1

Ages:

Testable Skills:

- Go underwater unassisted

- Go underwater, then recover to standing on own.

- Supported front float with face in water

- Supported back float with ears in water

Instructors should know:

- Incremental underwater progression

- Supported front glide progression

- Supported back glide progression

- Command language

- Removing "ok" from sentences

- Game: Bake a Cake

- Game: Buckethead (or variation of water pouring principles)

- How to hold hands when supporting jumps

- Rotation method

- Challenges for going underwater

- How to keep moving

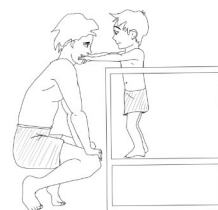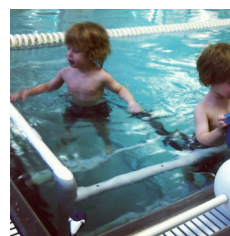- Activities for swimmers waiting for their turns

Quick test:

Does the swimmer go underwater unassisted?

Pool location for classes:

Level 1 classes should be in shallow water.

Chest deep for 3-4 years old is ideal; zero-depth sides of pools, or standing on platforms in pools that begin at 3.5 feet deep.

Supervisors look for:

Tears and hesitation. Keep on the lookout for scared swimmers as they initially leave their parents.

Provide smiles, reassurance, and confidence. If absolutely necessary, let parents walk swimmer to the edge of the pool and then exit quickly to viewing area. Let instructors acknowledge fears and tears, but not drop everything to focus only on tearful child. Invite to join, then move on.

Silent teachers. Watch for swimmers that do not participate fully and instructors that are not engaging their swimmers. Ensure that instructors are constantly encouraging swimmers to push into the next step in a progression. Doing supported front glides hands on shoulders, instructor should be asking swimmer to kick and put face in the water with the appropriate underwater progression step (chin, lips, nose, eyes).

Excessive downtime. We should strive to have swimmers actively engaged in some activity for the majority of the time they are in the lesson. Avoid having long periods of waiting doing nothing.

Going Underwater & Support

Movement and Support

Swim instructors should balance keeping the swimmers moving using the rotation method and providing one-on-one support.

If you have multiple benches in the water aim them together and have swimmers walk or jump from one to the other.

If you have 1 bench, aim it at the wall and use the wall as a pseudo second bench.

Giving one-on-one support for front and back glides is vital for the success of Level 1.

Mix 1-on-1 with group activities/challenges.

Games to go under

Instructors should play games with enthusiasm and excitement.

Instructors should also be frequently going underwater to encourage swimmers to do it too.

Our goal is to ask each swimmer in a lesson around 50 times (30 minutes) to go underwater at their comfort level on the underwater progression.

Watch for instructors that have dry hair, shoulders above water, and quiet.

Aggressively quash wrong hold

It is harder to forget a bad habit than it is to learn how to do it right from the beginning.

Enforce correct holding for supported front and back glides aggressively.
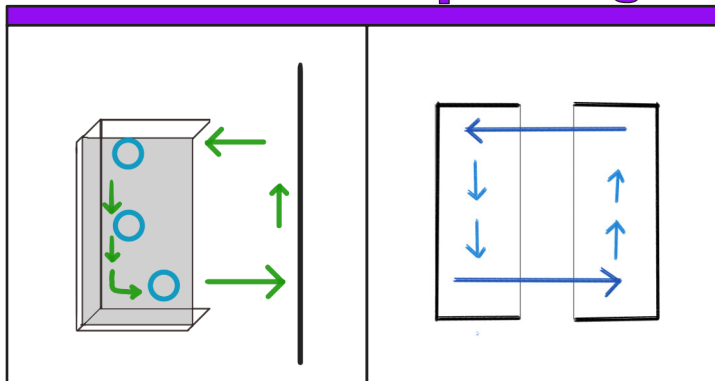
Quash wrong holding the moment you see it.

Be aggressive to remove poor support technique.

Reference Teaching Swimming workbook for specific examples and SwimSheets on Front and Back glides.

One-on-one support

Rotate and keep moving

**Avoid dry hair and shoulders**

Wrong holding is bad!

Level 1 skills

Go underwater unassisted

Swimmer should go underwater without instructor support frequently.

Frequent, enthusiastic, playful underwater should happen throughout the lesson; not a single time.

Once going underwater loses its scariness swimmers will joyfully go underwater and start exploring more on their own with bold glides, jumps and dips.
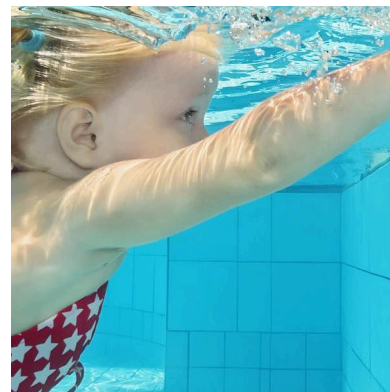
Go underwater unassisted, lift feet off ground and recover to standing on own

Swimmer should lift their feet off the ground while underwater, float or suspend in water, then recover to standing (finding their footing) without assistance.

Finding footing after going underwater is a learned skill.

Joyful exploration of buoyancy.

Supported front float with face in water

Arms supported by holding shoulders or the instructor's hands.

Face should be neutral, aimed down at bottom of pool (same direction as belly button).

Relaxed body posture. Relaxed muscles. Comfortable with face submerged.
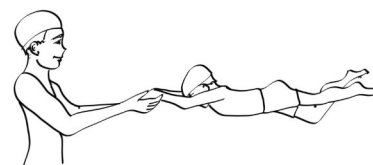
Supported back float with ears in water

Body and neck supported by instructor's hand or fingers on neck.

Face should be neutral, aimed up at sky/ceiling (same direction as belly button).

Relaxed body posture. Relaxed muscles. Comfortable with ears submerged.

Belly near the surface and legs kicking or supported by water.

QUICK TEST TIP!

You can generally assume most new swimmers that are 3, 4, or 5 will fall into level 1.

Everyone has to start somewhere and if you have a program without Guppies then the majority of your youngest swimmers will be in Level 1.

If swimmers are afraid, skittish, or have never been in lessons before start them in Level 1.

- ⚫ = Structure
- 🔵 = Swimmers
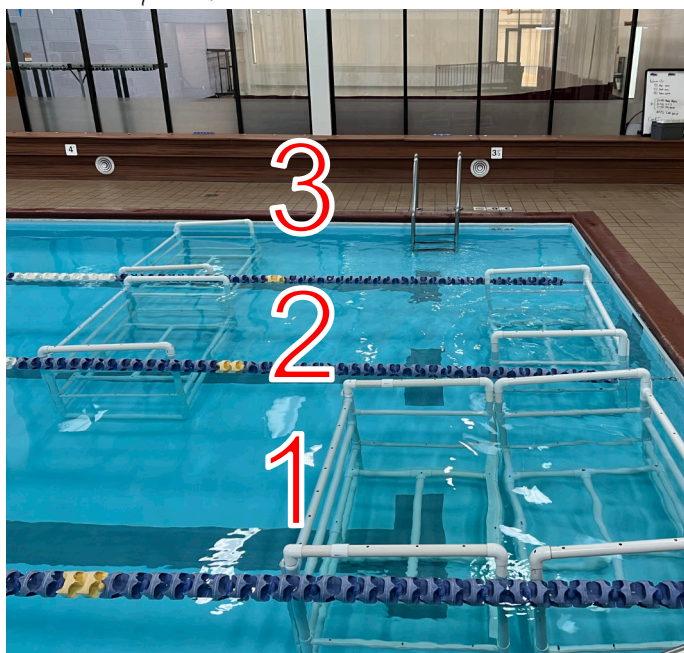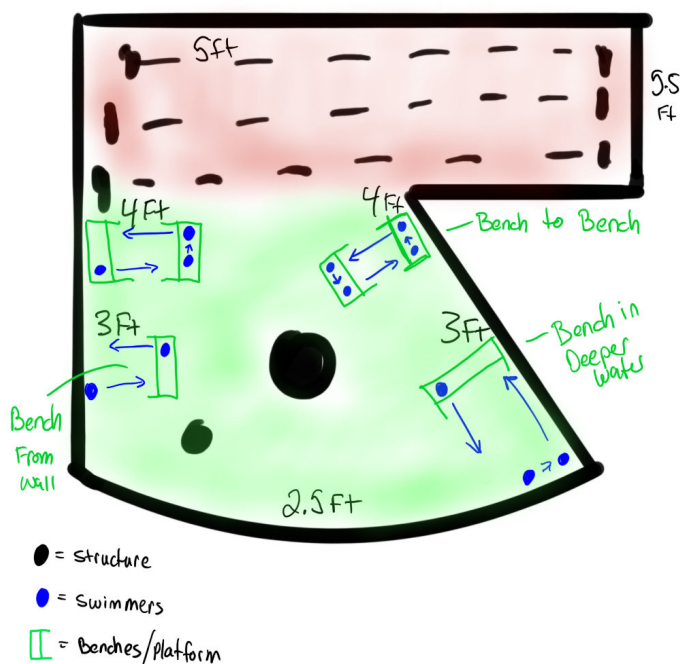- ⫿ = Benches/platform

Leverage shallow water

Put your classes in the green zone to the left.

Adjust benches/platforms for the depth your class is in. If a class is in deeper water give them 2 benches so they can always be standing.

For shallower water, 0-3ft then most swimmers 3 and up will be able to stand. Use 1 bench or none.

Shallow water makes exploration independent. It is safer; swimmers can stand up.

Shallow water for beginners removes a lot of anxiety and fear about being in a large swimming pool.

Bench/platform setup

Strategically use platforms and benches to your advantage for level 1.

1. Face to Face; touching:
Put the open ends of the platform together to form a large square, or private pen. Great for true beginners.

2. Face to Face; distance:
Bench's open end facing each other. Adjust the distance for swimmer comfort. Gradually build up to glides between benches over time.

3. Open side facing wall:
Good for swimmers that can stand near wall, but not further out. Glide to bench and return to wall.

15

Level 2

Ages: 3+

Testable Skills:

- Streamline 3 body lengths on both front and back (back in soldier)

- Streamline and then front crawl arms for 5 body lengths (total)

- Streamline or soldier on back and then back crawl arms for 5 body lengths (total)

- Introduced to fly kick

Quick test:

Swim front crawl independently?

Face in water with a glide then arm circles.

If "yes," likely level 3

Pool location for classes:

Shallow end next to level 1.

Can go deeper based on the age of swimmers and height.

Still use benches as they're learning independent gliding.

Instructors should know:

- Streamline and three key steps to an excellent streamline: lock your thumb, squeeze ears, look down.

- Streamline and swimming are two distinct separate events where the streamline comes first.

- SL = streamline

- Soldier position, lazy puppet, position 11 and the three things to work on for position 11.

- Arm circles and over water recovery. No fancy hands.

- Pushing the water and no fancy S curves.

- Rotation method, waves, and constant motion between benches or from wall to bench.

- Hips drive the fly kick motion. Demonstrate.

- Challenges that are more than games and songs.

Supervisors look for:

Lack of feedback:

Level 2 should be filled with horizontal motion.

Instructors will often go silent and watch, sometimes giving non-feedback words like "Good job," or "good."

Make sure instructors are giving specific feedback as often as possible, and progressively based on effectiveness of feedback.

Attempt 1: "Well done on kicking, remember to look down too."
Attempt 2: "You kept kicking well, and you looked down, but now you forgot to lock your thumb."
Attempt 3: "Well done on all 3 Johnny!"

Poor explanation or no demonstration:

Instructors should be underwater to the shoulders throughout the lesson. Their hair should get wet because they've demonstrated streamline, front crawl, back crawl, soldier, and streamline on back.

Level 2 introduces more complex movements and requires demonstration and clear language to describe what swimmers will do.

Streamlines & the Crawls

Body posture before arms

A long or tall spine with raised arms is essential to gliding through the water.

Spend significant time on streamlines, glides, position 11, and holding a long, tight, body posture.

Once swimmers have mastered a wonderful long line from fingers to toes, then begin adding kicks, then arms.

Arms are good, but not at the expense of a sloppy hanging belly, a drooping hip, or flailing legs.

Movement, glides, confidence

Keep the swimmers moving with the rotation method. Help, assist when needed, and make gliding FUN!

Do over 30 glides each lesson for Level 2.

Repetition, repetition, repetition will build confidence, grow trust, and demonstrate how swimmers can cross gaps without standing.

Focus on body position, kicking in streamline, and then, only when they are great, start introducing arm strokes.

Break up the streamlines with challenges!

Silent lessons fail

Ensure that your staff is giving targeted and specific feedback. Along with level 1, level 2 should be full of performance, language, and feedback on swimmer's streamline and glide performance.

Doing 30 front glides can get boring if the instructor isn't engaged in the lesson or their swimmer's progress.

No feedback will also lead to bad habits like lifting the head up.

Avoid support once a swimmer can SL alone. Pull on the head on BK glides, and hold the hands on SL or front glides.

Tall spine, long arms
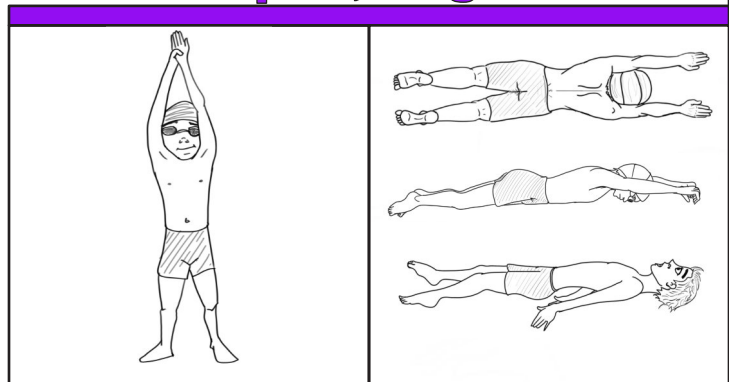
Glide, move, zoom!

Avoid not looking

Avoid wrong support

Level 2 skills
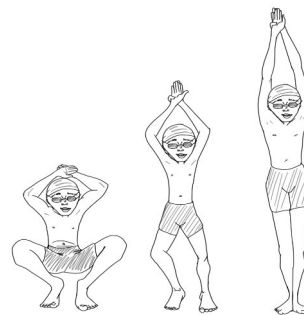
Streamline 3 body lengths on front and back

Streamline for three body lengths with or without kicking. Body posture of utmost importance.

For backstroke streamline, can be done in soldier position.

Focus on all three things:
- Locked Thumb
- Squeezed ears
- Looking down / up

Streamline and then front crawl arms 5 body lengths

`Streamline should be short ~2/3 body lengths. Arms should carry swimmer forward.

Head should remain down, in water, perpendicular to bottom.

Body should remain flat and straight, narrow, long.

Kicking is encouraged! Catch-up stroke is good too.

Streamline and then back crawl arms 5 body lengths

Streamline on back is the ultimate goal; BUT it is extremely difficult for younger swimmers. Allow soldier position first, then back crawl arms.

Body should remain near surface. Kicks should have knees low in water and not bending too much.

Arms should be straight up to ceiling, and pushing water naturally without straining shoulders.
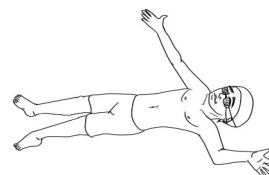
Introduced to fly kick

Demonstrate fly kick with hands at sides.

Sprinkle fly kick with face in the water between benches throughout lessons as a breath mint to cleanse pallet.

Focus on wiggling the hips and driving the motion.

Use fins for a quick exaggeration of the fly kick movement. Add free arms to fly kick for an interesting drill!
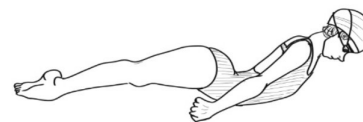
QUICK TEST TIPS!

If a swimmer knows streamline and does it well with their head in the water and is kicking they're ready for level 3.

Check back floats and glides in soldier on back. If swimmer is unable to do even a basic back glide then they should remain in level 2 regardless of their front streamline ability.

The swimmer needs to build trust and confidence to keep the body position on their back in a safe environment instead of struggling in 3.
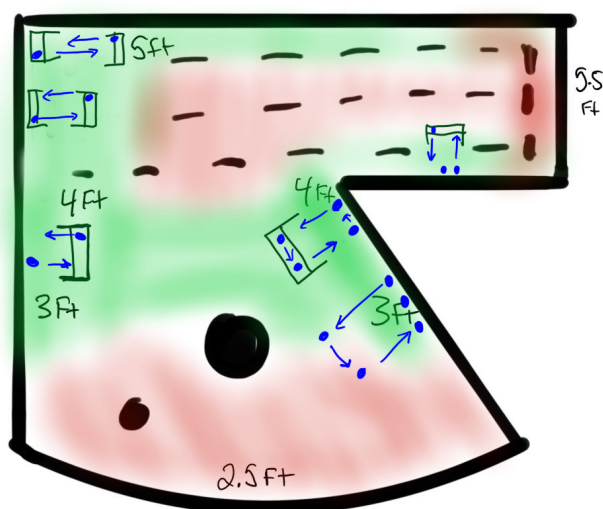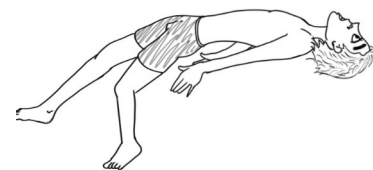

Heavy bench use still

Set up level 2 in the green sections to the left.

Still rely on benches/platforms for best results. Swimmers are just beginning to explore the water without assistance and we want them to remain confident, safe, and brave.

Remove fear and anxiety by providing ample support and using walls and benches.

Deeper water is generally okay if the instructors can physically support swimmers, and if there are enough benches.

Gliding from bench to bench is ideal.

● = Structure
● = Swimmers
[= Benches/Platform
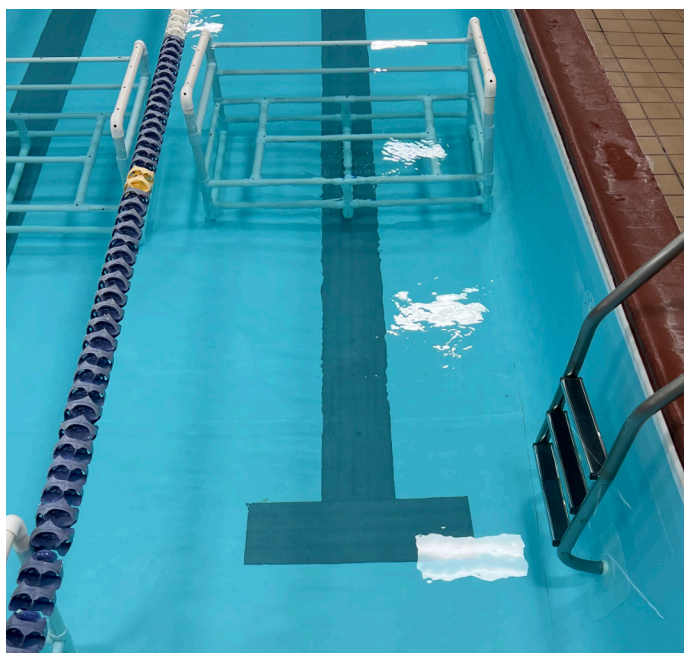
Leverage lanes, walls, benches

Streamlines and glides over short distances are the most crucial step in Level 2.

Do thousands of streamlines. Hundreds of front glides in position 11.

Use fins, kick boards, barbells, floats, noodles, anything to build confidence and practice pushing off the wall and kicking to move.

Level 2 is about horizontal progress.

Push off the wall to the bench, push off the bench back to the wall.

Level 3

Ages: 3+, often 5 and over

Testable Skills:

- Front crawl with breathing 8 meters

- Back crawl with body at surface 8 meters

- Demonstrate "11, Eat, 11" on deck, and in water during front float

- Demonstrate breaststroke kick sitting on edge of water

- Demonstrate butterfly arms while on deck, and in water during front float

Quick test:

Can the swimmer do freestyle with side breathing?

Are they able to keep their head down when breathing to the side?

Can the swimmer do backstroke without sinking?

Pool location for classes:

Shallow enough to stand, medium depth with benches, deep end with areas to stand, be supported, or hang on wall.

Instructors should know:

- Front crawl arms and over water recovery

- Position 11

- Streamline with all 3 things

- Side breathing techniques and how to remove lifting head, fear, and side to side thrashing

- Breaststroke kick: flex, circle, squeeze, and the correct direction of the kick

- Butterfly arms: 11, push down to hips, thumbs forward, travel through airplane, return to 11.

- Rotation method and short distance repetition.

- 4 x SL + [something] formula and format

- Bench positioning for best results (moving closer or further apart according to swimmer's comfort).

- Giving feedback effectively

Supervisors look for:

Lack of Feedback:
Instructors will often go silent and watch, sometimes giving generic feedback like "good job," or "good."

Make sure instructors are giving specific feedback as often as possible with number of swimmers they have. Progressive feedback where they reference swimmer's changes and previous feedback is best.

Sloppy free arms or lazy SL and Position 11:
When feedback is lackluster, when direction is lacking, swimmers will get sloppy and do things wrong.

SL, Position 11, even Freestyle, requires deliberate arm motions and specific movements to do correctly and well.

When instructors are silent, bad habits form. Fix them immediately and with direct specific language.

Allow long distance swims:
Use support tools like fins, kick boards, and barbells to help, but allow time for swimming the length of the pool under supervision.

Breathing, Breaststroke, & Fly

Excellent SL & position 11

In Level 3 all swimmers need to be doing streamline correctly.
Locked Thumb, Squeezed Ears, Face down.

Start pushing off the wall on the surface, build up to pushing off the wall in streamline underwater.

Position 11 is a crucial habit building skills. Spend significant time teaching it with excellent straight arms.

Do SL + Position 11 for 5 kicks, do 1 free arm stroke keeping other hand in position 11, 5 more kicks in 11, other arm.

Kick on the side, and demo FLY

BR kick is about pushing the water with the inside of the foot.

Many instructors will teach the kick backwards, where the "pushing" happens with the top of the foot, or moving in the wrong circle direction.

Pay attention to swim instructors that are teaching BR wrong, and correct them with videos or visual demos.

FLY arms can be daunting, but make it easier: remove the kicking, push off in SL and do 1 butterfly arm motion.

Side breathing and movement

Freestyle and side breathing will be the bulk of level 3.

Avoid letting swimmers lift their heads.

If you see swim instructors not giving feedback on lifting head, they're ignoring the problem.
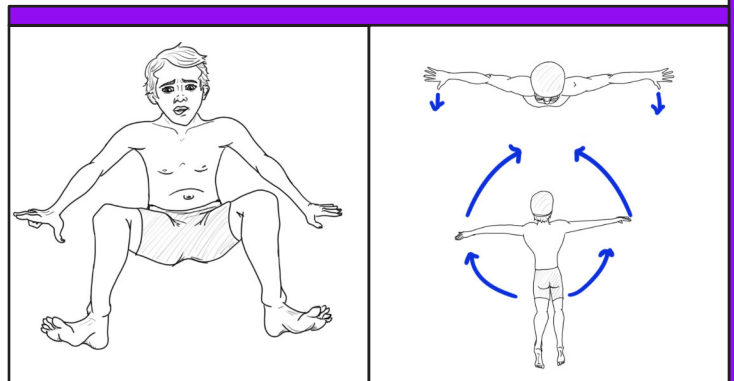
Every time a swimmer picks their head up vertically on streamline and freestyle they're learning a bad habit.

Discuss feedback for swimmers that lift, discuss alternative actions, and approach problem sideways: encourage swimmer to look at bottom and give actions to get desired result.
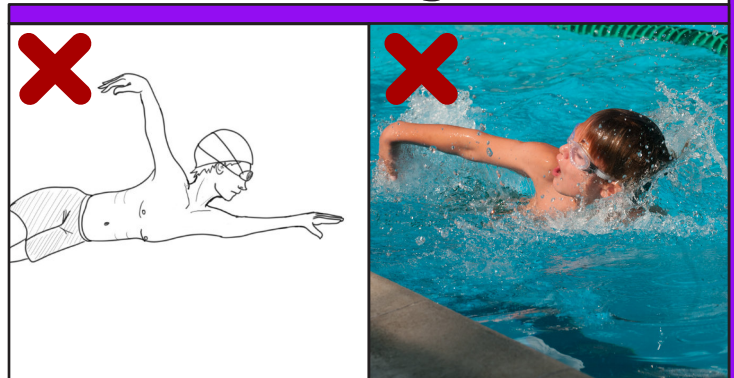
Perfect SL + 11
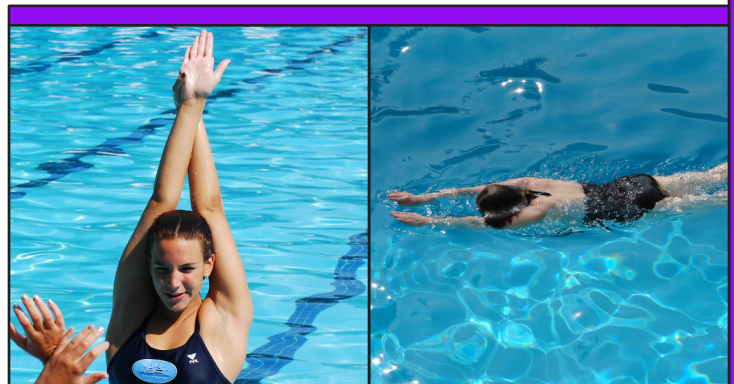
Deliberate movements

Avoid lifting head

Sloppy arms & struggle

Level 3 skills
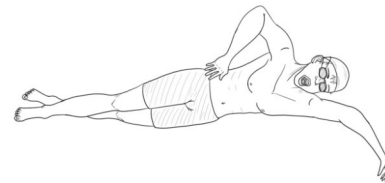
Front crawl with side breathing 8 meters

Strong kick. Long reaching arms returning to position 11 with each stroke.

Head remains down when not breathing, turns only to the side when breathing.

Spine straight. Streamline first underwater that turns into FR at surface.

Breath during arm stroke and done by recovery.

Back craw with body at surface 8 meters

Strong kick. Long reaching arms that go through "thumb," "hi," "pinky," push.

Head neutral and slightly chin tucked. Knees mostly underwater. Belly flat. Body rotates no more than 45 degrees to surface. Spine remains straight and long.

Stomach doesn't sink, hips remain up, feet are narrow and tight, floppy, pointed toes.
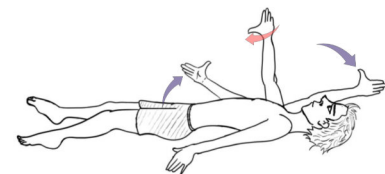
Demo: 11, eat, 11 on deck and in water

Slow deliberate movements on deck and in water during a front float.

Start in streamline, then position 11, move to "eat," and return to position 11.

Not swimming. This is a choreography of the arm movements. Pushing and pulling water comes later.

Can swimmer follow basic dance move for BR arms?
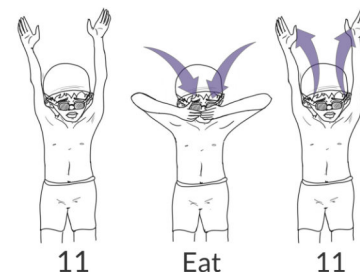
Demo: BR kick sitting on edge and in water

BR kick starts with legs straight, bend knees, flex feet, swing around and push together again.

Pushing with inside of foot. Water moves from feet snapping or whipping together.

Flex feet and toes outwards from each other.

Does not push water with top of foot.

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Demo: fly arms on deck and in water

Arms move without stopping.

Aim thumbs down on recovery; going back to position 11.

Start in position 11, push water under the body to hips.
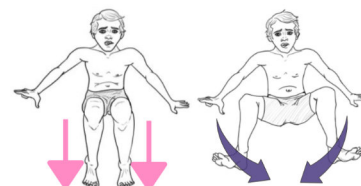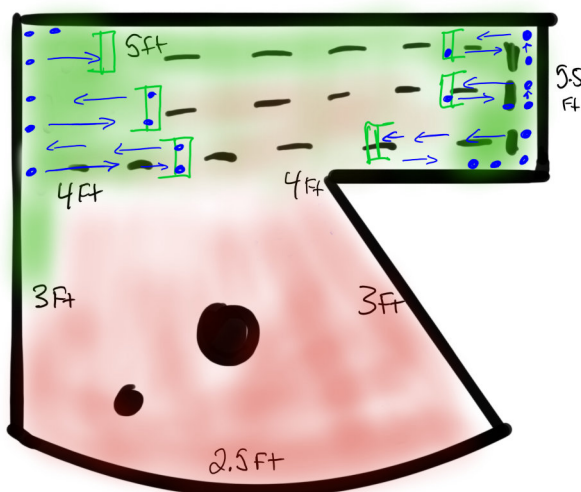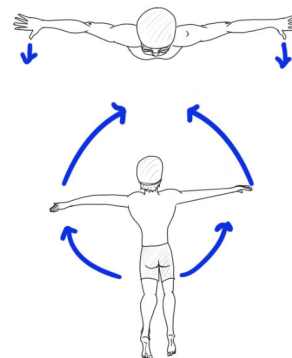
Elbows are straight on recovery over water back to position 11.

Clap the hands above the head. Focus on motion, not swimming.

- ● = Structure
- ● = Swimmers
- ⊏⊐ = Benches/platform

Deeper water, but use benches

You can put level 3 swimmers in deeper water as generally they can move independently, swim somewhat, and may be older.

Still use benches. Place them away from the wall; far enough away that swimmer can do a long streamline and 2 or 3 free strokes to get there.

Adjust the distance of the bench to accommodate different ability levels or skill targets.

Leave shallow ends to lower levels.

Have the whole pool? Use shallow where swimmers can stand and optionally use benches if they can stand after 5 free strokes.

Start swimming like swim team

Activity flow/layout:

Long distance circle swim

We're starting circle swimming.

The rotation method is circle swimming but with shorter distances.

Without a bench, the count of attempts changes to only when the swimmer pushes off the wall.

When the swimmer returns to the wall in line they do not have to do the skill and it doesn't count to their attempts.

Keep swimmers moving! Don't let instructors deviate from the format. Standard lesson format makes switching groups and instructors easier.
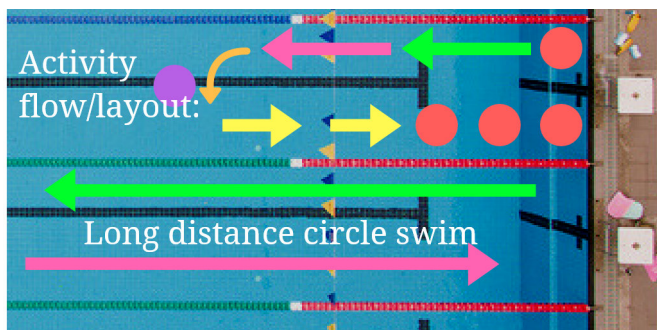
Level 4

Ages: 3+, often 6+

Testable Skills:

- Front crawl 20 meters with bilateral breaths

- Back crawl 20 meters with body in soldier

- 3 times, streamline with no kick and do 1x (11, eat, 11) then, 1x (BR kick in position 11)

- Streamline + 2 strokes FLY w/ breath on #2

- Swim 50 meters Front of Back craw

Quick test:

Can swimmer breathe to the side on front crawl, look down without looking forward, and continue swimming while maintaining long, straight body line.

Pool location for classes:

Lanes in a pool with lane lines are idea.

Deep end is acceptable provided swimmers have areas to rest and recover.

Use lap swim pools, shallow ends so swimmers can stand, and focus on distance, skill work, and drills.

Instructors should know:

- Front crawl bilateral (both sides) breathing, hip rotation, head position, early catch, elbows higher than hands on recovery, returning to position 11

- Back crawl body position and underwater pull motion: not "S" curve, not straight arm

- BR arms and how to move from 11, Eat, 11 into swimming

- Breaststroke kick nuances and which part of the foot pushes water (inside).

- BR arms and Kick as 2 separate events and not occurring at the same time.

- Fly arms; how to move them, recover, pull, and when to breathe.

- Fly kick

- Fly swim; putting it all together and using short distances

- Drills and combinations of swims to make a "practice" like 4 x 25: 2 strokes FLY + Free rest of each 25.

Supervisors look for:

Distracted Instructors:

With kicking and swimming longer distances instructors in Level 4 tend to space out and play with their phones, talk to other instructors, or ignore swimmers.

Pay attention, give feedback, be engaged with class.

Remember short distances for maximum learning:

Even though swimmers "can" swim longer distances avoid only doing long swims. Continue using short distance skill training like 3 x SL + 5 Free + 1 breath + flip.

Get in the water:

Just because instructors can benefit from being out of the water and watching doesn't mean they MUST remain dry. Instructors should get in the water when necessary to help teach important swim skills.

Experienced instructors are best:
Avoid putting novice instructors in Level 4.

Distance, Competitive, IM

Distance swimming well

Provide ample distance swimming with appropriate breaks.

Building endurance and confidence over longer swimming is important for swimmers to learn.

Do distance with a purpose.

1. Build up skills with short distance 3x [skill] format. Exp: 3 x SL + 3 HLBwR

2. Swim longer distance using the skills you just practiced. Exp: HLBwR works on hip rotation, swim 4 x 25 odds FR even BK and focus on rotating hips 45° to surface.

Short distance for skills

Swimmers can always improve on their skills. Removing distance, removing breathing, and removing movement allows for better focus and skill acquisition.

It is better to learn excellent BR technique where you do a SL, UBP, and then 2 strokes of breaststroke than if you were to do a 25.

Why?

Because you can put total focus and energy into 2 strokes and get immediate feedback from the coach/instructor!

Lazy feedback, poor form

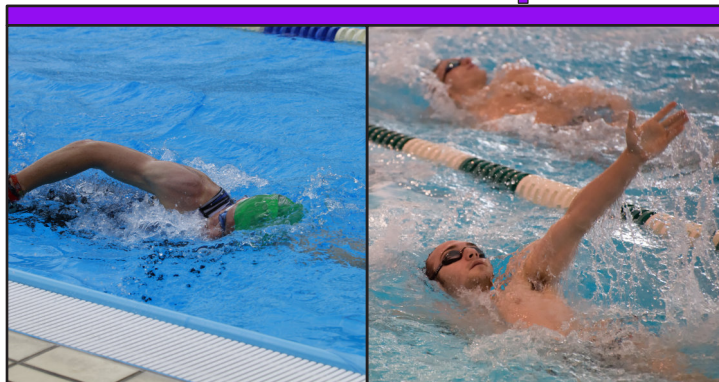Our cycle of learning hinges on feedback.

Instructors and staff should provide excellent feedback specific to the participant's actions.

Lazy feedback leads to poor form.

Have you ever watched an elite 8-13 years swim team practice? Pay attention to the coaches and swimmers.
Excellent swim teams say "Streamline" and hold swimmers accountable every single time.

Poor swim teams ignore streamline, their swimmers skip it, and coaches complain that their swimmers are lazy for not streamlining.

Focus on technique

1 -3 strokes only
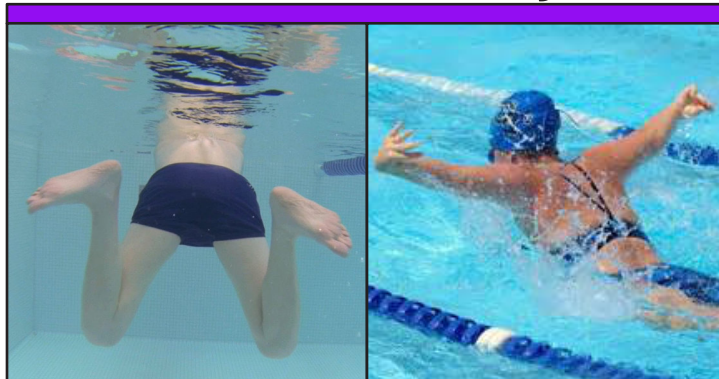
Avoid distraction & lazy words

Ok. You did it.
Great job.
Well done.
Nice.
Wow.
What did you just do?
What do you want to do next?
How much time is left?
Do it again.
Who are you?

Avoid head up, arms X'd

Level 4 skills

Front crawl 20 meters w/ bilateral breathing

Head down when not breathing. Head turns to side during arm stroke. No interruption of arms and kick when breathing.

Kick remains steady, rumble kick continues through arms and breaths.
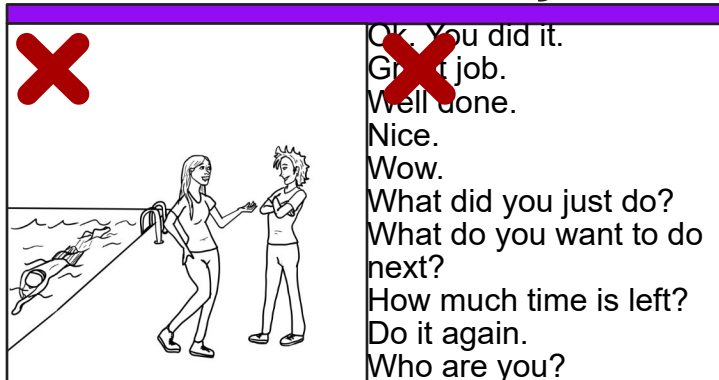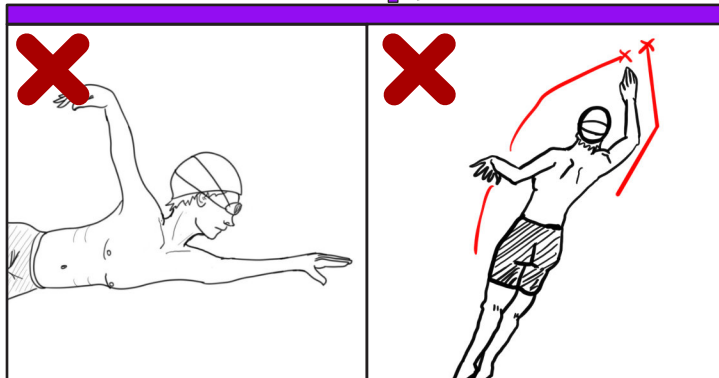
Body rotates with arm strokes no more than 45°. Hips swing with arm stroke to pull water using torso.

Arms return to position 11, not X. Hands catch water early.

Back crawl 20 meters w/ body in soldier

Head remains still, chin slightly tucked. Eyes above body targeting over the toes.

Kick remains steady, rumble kick continues through arms and drives movement and tempo.

Body rotates with arm strokes no more than 45°. Hips swing with arm stroke to pull water using torso.
Arms pull underwater with bent elbow finishing at thighs.
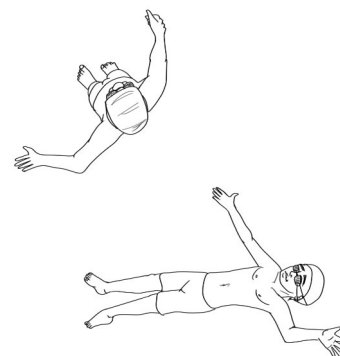
3x (SL w/ no k, + 1x(11,Y,11) + 1x BR K

Go three times with breaststroke streamline, then at surface do 1 BR arm motion (11, Eat, 11). When back in position 11 do a single breaststroke kick.

Streamline excellent without kicking. Arms move without elbows doing chicken wing, or hands pulling under body.

Kick whips around and pushes with inside of feet. Arms move simultaneous. Feet move simultaneous (to other foot).
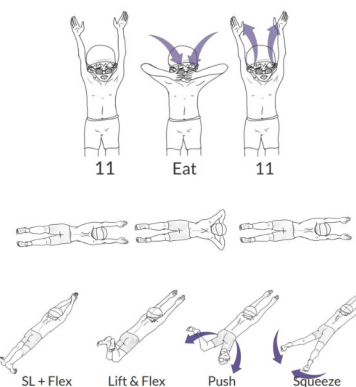
Streamline + 2 FLY w/ breath on #2

Streamline with fly kick. Arms start when at surface. Breath occurs on second stroke.

Breath happens at beginning of stroke.

Arms move under body and water, then out and around with straight elbows.

Hands in 11, hips up. Hands pulling water, hips down.

Swim 50 meters front and back crawl

Swim continuous front and back crawl for 50 minutes.

Can do all freestyle. Can do all backstroke.

Must be good technique without stopping, pausing, holding wall or lanes lines.

Long body lines, long reaching arms, streamlines off walls, strong kick, arm strokes that push water.
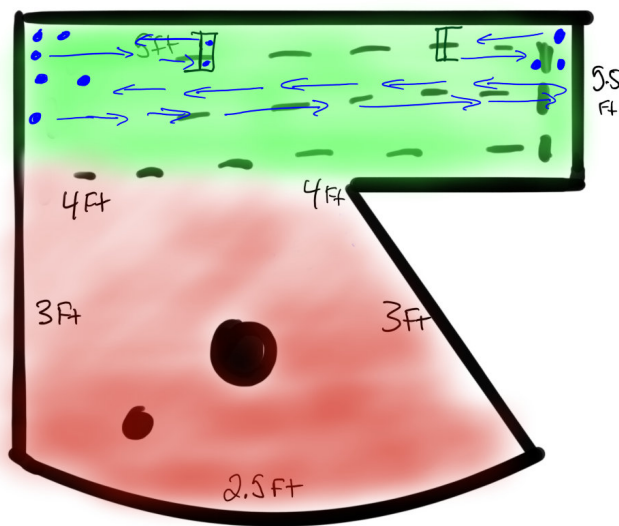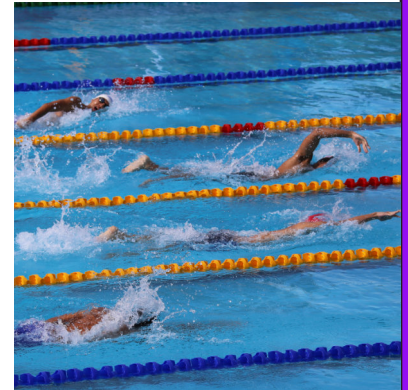
● = Structure
● = Swimmers
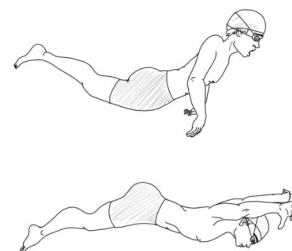[[= Benches/platform

Lanes, diving wells, distance

Level 4s should setup in lanes with or without benches based on the height and ages of your swimmers.

Use benches still! Yes! They are still effective, but not required.

Remove benches to swim whole lengths.

Work in drills, fins, kick boards, pull buoys etc.

Instructors can walk along side of the lane outside pool or remain in the water provided they have the best vantage point to see swimmers as they move in the water.

Use swim team sets

Example:

1 x 50 FLY Kick
2 x 25 Position 11
Question of the day: What are all 3 things to SL?
4 x { 1 x 100 FR w/ FINS
    { 2 x 50 BK Kick no board no fins
    { 2 x 25 FLY 2 strokes FREE rest of each 25

____

5 x SL + 2 BR strokes
5 x SL + 5 FR + 1 breath + flip

____

4 x 100: ODD FREE EVEN: BACK

Training

The pink / red section is designed to walk a Lesson Coordinator, or Leader, through an in-person training for new and returning Swim Instructors.

Pages will follow a consistent format.

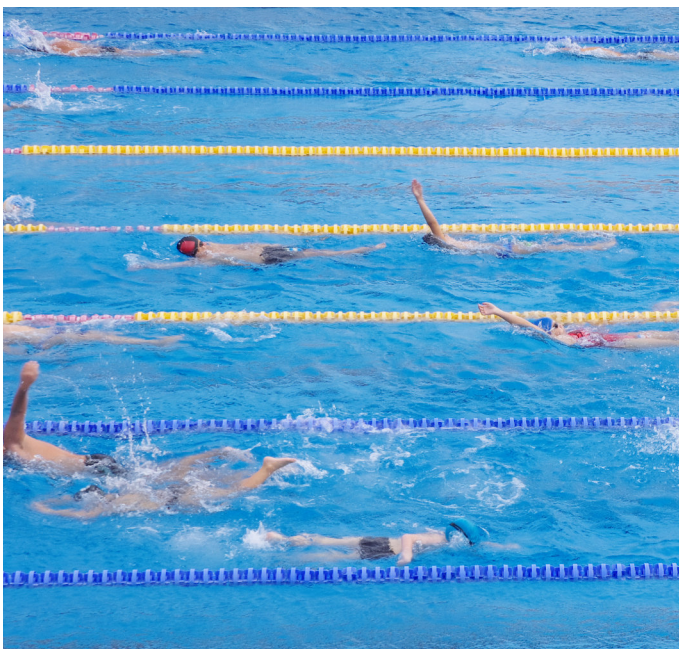This book is for Lesson Coordinators, Leaders, managers, administration, and Aquatic Professionals.

It is intended as a guide for you to lead your training.

Left side page: Lesson Coordinator

Right side page: Activities for your training to be read/done with your trainees/participants.

1: Prepare in advance

Read the preparation side of the training before you begin.

While there is some relevant information for participants, the language is for you, to prepare your training in advance.

2: Bold red colors and text is for you!

The dark lines in red are intended to draw your eye. If you are skimming this page, look at the red bars and large text first.

Use the supplemental text as a guide for more context.

3: ½ training & challenge; ½ guidance

The right side page has a stack of Training Activity 1, Training Activity 2, and Challenge.

Text and instructions are written to be read aloud.

Again, we see pictures and bold red colors for YOU.

The left page is for you, the Lesson Coordinator.

Your objectives. Your goals, and participant goals.

This side is to prepare.

1. Setting Expectations

Timeline: 45 minutes
- 5 minutes: Greet participants as they enter training area. Direct to where to put items.
- 2 minutes: Begin training by getting everyone's attention. Introduce self.
- 3 minutes: Describe objective of training.
- 5 minutes: Describe outline and provide expectations. What will happen throughout the day, when, and what participants will need to do.
- 30 minutes: Activities 1 & 2, challenge

Leadership Actions:

1: Prepare space

Have your training space clearly defined before you begin.

Know where you will do group activities on land and in water.

Know times you have access to each.

2: Establish tone & tempo

Greet everyone that enters and tell them where to go.

Leadership defines the tone of a training.

Be professional, clear, mature, to ensure similar respect during the training.

3: Speak loud, clear, concise

Give simple direct commands and speak in simple sentences.

Be loud enough for all to hear.

Be confident in your delivery. "ummm"

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Objective:
- Provide participants with a clear understanding of what they are going to do, how long your training will take, and what the training will be like.
- Introduce leadership, prepare participants for success.

Instructor Goals:
- Give participants clear expectations for the training; what is going to happen, when will it happen, and for how long.
- Establish tone and professionalism. Define what behavior should be like by your actions. Be loud, clear, respectful and you'll receive it in return. Avoid gossip, bullying, joking (inappropriately), and avoid distraction.
- Communicate clear timeline. When will you start and end.
- Make clear when you'll be on land, and when you'll be in the water.

Participant should learn:
- When they will be finished with the day
- When breaks will be
- When they will be in the water
- What they need to demonstrate
- What they will learn
- How training will run (what format will be used)
- Leadership's names and experience
- Where they can put their stuff, where the exits are, and where pool is

Icebreakers

Training Activity 1:
Icebreaker activity:

Using the following format say your "name," "years worked with agency," and "food you refuse to eat."

Example:

"Jeff Napolski, 10, eggplant."

After everyone has gone Leader should attempt to name everyone, OR name everyone's food they won't eat.

Allow others to attempt to recall all names, or all foods.

Training Activity 2
Question exchange:

1. Distribute small pieces of paper.

Each person writes a question they'd like answered related to swimming or work, or relevant to their lives.

2. Everyone finds 1 other person. Ask and answer each others questions.

3. Exchange questions. Person A takes Person B's question.

4. Find another person, answer questions with exchanging questions again.

Challenge
Name everyone at training.

Name everyone's food they won't eat.

Match the top two best questions from Question Exchange to the person who wrote it.

===
Challenge: Find your folk

In less than 30 seconds everyone in the room must separate into 3 groups without speaking:
1. Have food allergies, 2. Cat owners, 3. Left handed

Do not define where they go or how identified.

Go first. Speak clearly

Let veterans go first

Prepare materials

Encourage talking

Go first: set the tone

See what happens!

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How to Use This Section

What we are trying to convey:

Training is subjective, variable, and extremely dependent on your location and time. This is a framework for you to use verbatim at first, then iterate on as you grow more comfortable building your own training.

Time expectations are general. Some things move faster or slower.

Objectives: Define the purpose of the training section.

Leader Goals: Things you, the LC, should do.

Participant goals: Things the participants, the lesson instructors, should accomplish in the section.

What you will learn:

How to run a training session in person.

The framework Activity Activity, Challenge works beyond the water and is a cornerstone to our learning and training.

Follow the formula, follow the guides and your training can run well.

Read your stuff first

Know what you're doing before you begin.

Don't read the training guide during the training for the first time.

Be prepared.

Modules

Combine each section into one long training day, or split them apart into a broken training where each one is a separate module.

Iterate!

Take the framework and intent from the Activities and Challenges and make them your own.

Inject fun into your training! Be silly! Be joyous! Celebrate success and funny.

Facility specific notes:

1. Setting Expectations

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  Avoid gossip, bullying, joking (inappropriately), and avoid distraction.

- Communicate clear timeline. When will you start and end.

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- When they will be in the water

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- What they will learn

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- Leadership's names and experience

- Where they can put their stuff, where the exits are, and where pool is

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Allow others to attempt to recall all names, or all foods.

Training Activity 2

Question exchange:

Distribute small pieces of paper.

1. Each person writes a question they'd like answered related to swimming or work, or relevant to their lives.

2. Everyone finds 1 other person. Ask and answer each others questions.

3. Exchange questions. Person A takes Person B's question, etc.

4. Find new people to answer questions with exchanging questions as you go.

Challenge

Name everyone at training.

Name everyone's food they won't eat.

Match the top two best questions from Question Exchange to the person who wrote it.

==
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In less than 30 seconds everyone in the room must separate into 3 groups without speaking:
1. Have food allergies,   2. Cat owners,   3. Left handed

Do not define where they go or how identified.

Go first. Speak clearly

Let veterans go first

Prepare materials

Encourage talking

Go first; set the tone

See what happens!

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2. Skills Review

Timeline: 90 minutes

- 5 minutes: Deliver instructions to group. Break into smaller groups if necessary. Goal is 5-6 people per group leader.

- 30 minutes: Review specific skills from the "blue section" of the Teaching Swimming workbook.

- 30 minutes: Activities 1 & 2, challenge

- 25 minutes: Spot discussion / large group lecture on common skill needs.

   Optionally watch videos of specific skills or use website for references.

Leadership Actions:

1: Assign small groups

Break up into random small groups by counting off to the number of groups you want.

Need 4 groups, count 1, 2, 3, 4 until everyone has a number.
Assign trusted veterans as group leaders.

2: Keep groups on task

Lead groups, but pay attention to others.

If a group is straying or doing nothing step in and realign to task.

If a group is going too fast change leader to promote more discussion.

3: Have fun with review

Instructors *should* know the skills already from the online course.

Have fun demonstrating knowledge and use this time to refine confusion into competence.

Objective:

- Participants should have finished "Teaching Swimming" & "Level Structure" online courses.

- Provide explanation as necessary for any skills that need more explanation: BR arms, BR kick, fly progression, rotation method.

Leader Goals:

- Build skill competence in instructor candidates.

- Highlight specific skills that most new staff get wrong, don't teach well, or need more assistance learning about.

- Discover participant deficiencies. What do they NOT know?

- Move quickly. Avoid reading the workbook word for word. Hand out copies of the Teaching Swimming workbook and use it as a reference guide, not a script for the Leader.

- Keep the discussion moving. Use physical examples if possible. Demonstrate on land how to do BR arms and BR kick, or position 11.

- Provide context to skills and questions.

Participant should learn:

- Comfort in all the essential swim skills; know what they are.

- Gain clarity on each swim skill and be able to demonstrate it on land, if not in water.

- Nuances of highlighted skills important to your swim school.

- What a good streamline looks like, what large arms are and pretty arms are for Front Crawl.

- Have opportunity to ask questions about what they're confused on.

Training Activity 1

3 Skill Progression:

Participants should pair up. Each pair should come up with a 3-skill-progression; three essential swim skills that share a related physical skill.

Present their three skill progression to the group; briefly, quick, saying the three skills and what connects them.

Example:

"Bobs, elevator down activity, and streamline that begins underwater. Connector: going underwater."

Training Activity 2

Skill Parade:

All participants should walk in a single file line acting out on land a specific swim skill. Walk in a large square (if you're using a large open space lines on the floor are helpful).

Stop, and direct participants to rearrange themselves so that beginner skills are first in line, and higher level skills are last.

Walk around the square again, with skills acted in order.

"Going underwater" should be first, whereas "Fly kick" should be in the middle for Level 2. Fly swim would be last in Level 4.

Challenge

Random Skill Test:

Break into small groups of no more than 6 participants.

One person in the group uses the Teaching Swimming workbook. Flip to a random blue skill.

Other person has to say 2 key elements to the skill AND physically demonstrate what it looks like.

Rotate so that all skills are demonstrated or all people have gone 2x.

Have fun with the demonstrations; front float laying on floor; backstroke swimming on back on floor, etc.

Skills Review Continued

Focus on the following:

1: Going Underwater

Adhere to the underwater progression.

Stick to the step by step progression and avoid skipping steps or startling swimmers with abrupt "dunks."

Scoop, don't dunk.

2: Streamline

Show good streamline.

Highlight the three things to a great SL:

- Lock your thumb
- Squeeze your ears (behind)
- Look down

3: Supported Front Floats

Review the progression from full support to limited support.

- Hands on shoulders
- Hands in hands
- Brief glide alone, then hands in hands.

4: Supported Back Floats

Review the progression from full support to limited support.

- Seated back to chest
- Head on shoulder
- Head in hand
- Fingertips on neck

5: Activity, Activity, Challenge

Reiterate the formula for lessons and training.

Activities building on each other; they're connected and the relevant challenge cleanses the pallet for better learning.
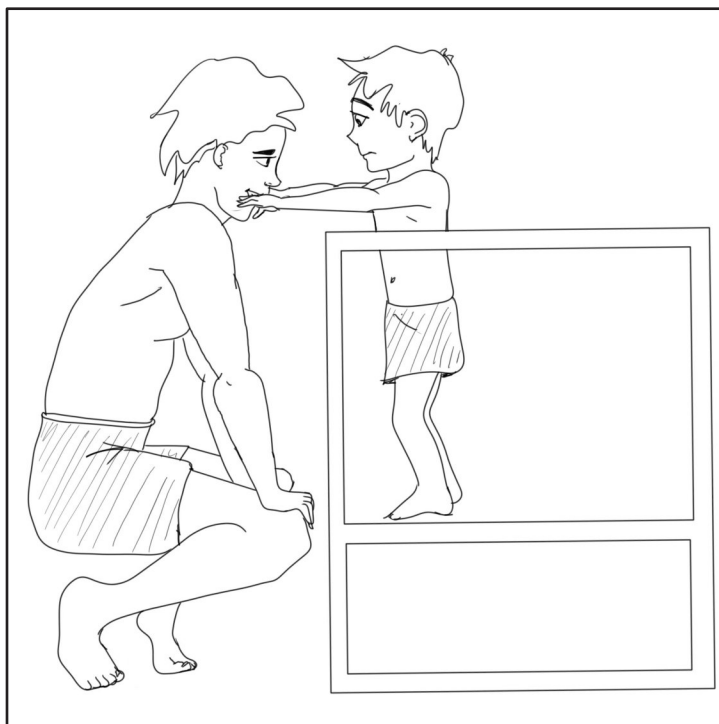
Scripts work

The front glide script and the back glide script are wonderful. Use them. Practice saying them aloud and repeating them frequently.

They should be spoken every lesson to every swimmer.
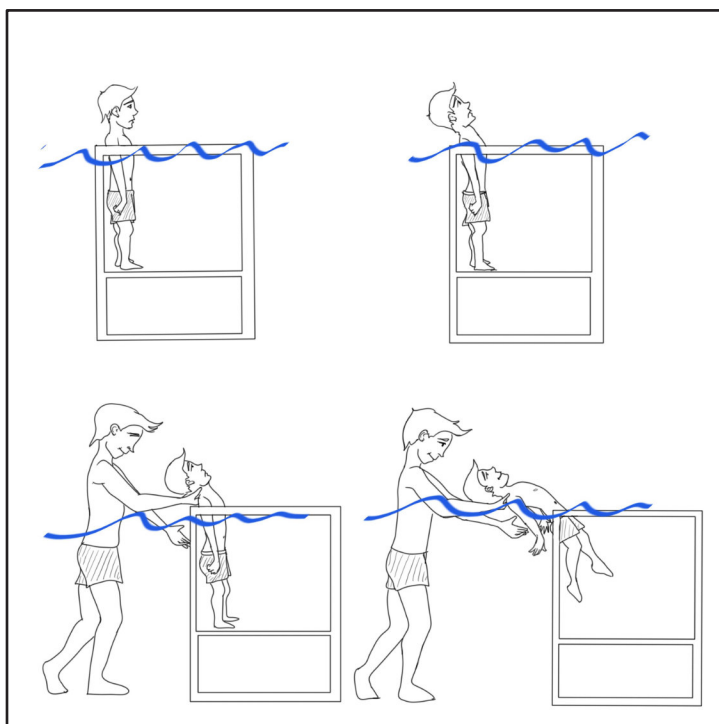
Info dump

Use the Teaching Swimming & Level Structure online classes to supplement your training.

Participants can use their phones or printed copies of the training workbook.

Discussion Questions:

- What skills are in Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4?

- What skills are in Parent Tot?

- What skills are in Guppies?

- Do you need to memorize every swim skill in order from beginner to advanced?

- What do we mean by "info dump?"

- What resources can you use to remember what skills are required in each level?

- Small groups are for discussion and activities so we can address personal needs. What makes a small group work better?

- Describe how the rotation method enhances deliberate practice?

- Is it okay to say, "sorry. I missed that last attempt. ?

- What skills are confusing to you?

NOTES:

*Skill learning is an information learning "dump" where you fill your brain with new info.

3. Class Setup

Timeline: 45 minutes

- 5 minutes: Break into small groups

- 10 minutes: Discuss how to set up classes in the water at your facility. How is it different for each level

- 30 minutes: Activities 1 & 2, challenge.

Leadership Actions:

1: Document class setups

Make sure that you've defined the ways you can set up a class in advance.

Where will you use benches? How will you use them?

Where will 3 year olds go? 10 years old?

2: Provide visual examples

Draw out your swim class setup locations on paper or digitally to put on a large screen / phone.

Set up your pool for different situations and show staff what it would look like.

3: Follow through with setups

Show participants in training class setup and let them experience / see it, but follow through with your setup in practice when you're actually running programs.

Use the setups you train for.

Objective:

- Review your site specific class layout and how benches or platforms are used.

- Define where each level typically is taught and how.

Leader Goals:

- Teach participants how to setup a pool for lessons.

- Demonstrate or show the proper way to put benches in the water or take them out.

- Define orientation of benches, and when you would need more than 1 bench for a class.

- Define where levels go for in the pool; Level 1 and Guppies in the shallow end. Levels 3 and 4 in the deep end or lanes.

Participant should learn:

- Where to expect level 1 swimmers.

- Where to expect to put swimmers of all levels.

- How to put benches or platforms in and out of the water. Where are they stored?

- How you communicate which levels and benches are needed for each class time.

- Where to get toys and materials for each class.

Training Activity 1

Levels setup pictures:

Draw 4 lanes and different bench configurations on 4 separate pieces of paper. Should resemble your pool.

Participants in your small group must label each layout with the correct level associated with it.

BONUS:

Come up with different variations for different pools, or allow multiple levels using same layout to accommodate shorter or younger swimmers.

Discuss differences, nuances of each layout.

Training Activity 2

Putting benches in the water and removing them:

Put two benches in the water and remove them properly.

Use the edge of the water to slide the benches out of the water without pulling on the weak center part of the handles.

Able to be done without getting wet; optionally do this in the water later point in training.

Challenge

Max class setup pictures:

Create a basic outline of your pool. Give everyone in your small group a blank piece of paper with the outline printed on it.

Draw where the following classes would go with these benches and toys:

- 4 level 1 classes, 12 swimmers
- 1 Level 2 class, 2 swimmers
- 1 Level 3 class, 6 swimmers
- 5 benches
- 10 kick boards
- 4 sets of fins for each size.

Customize for your pool

Variations for same level
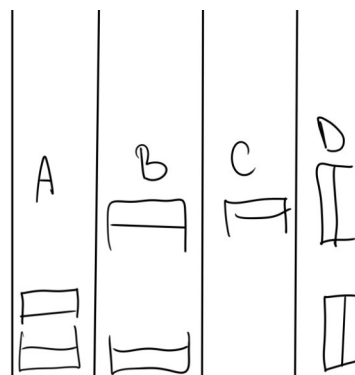
Pull on the corners

Slide bottom edge on edge

Allow for creativity

Use realistic constraints

4. Command Language

Timeline: 45 minutes

- 5 minutes: Break into small groups

- 10 minutes: Discuss what command language is. Discuss removing ", okay?"

- 30 minutes: Activities 1 & 2, challenge.

Leadership Actions:

1: Speak with command

Throughout training you should speak clearly, concisely, and with periods.

If you want to ask a question, ask it entirely without simply saying "Okay?"

Practice speaking directly.

2: Give feedback

Create a safe environment to help people speak better.

Public speaking is a common fear; help improve verbal delivery by practicing how to speak well in safe spaces.

3: Allow for many attempts

Just like swimming and learning a new skill we have to practice it.

Use training activities and challenges to reinforce good language habits; no filler words, "okay?" and distracted voice.

Objective:
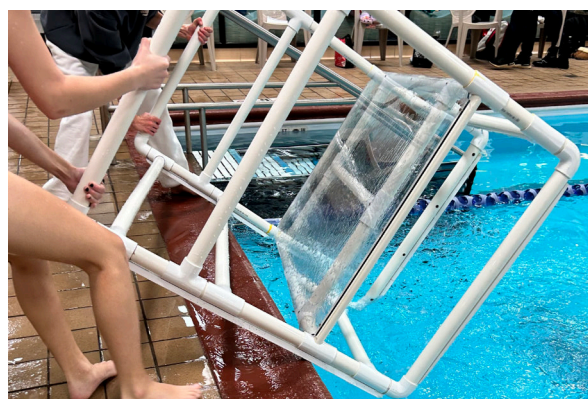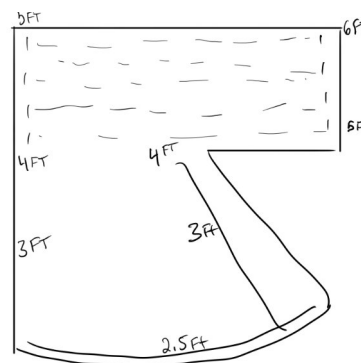
- Teach instructors how to speak with command.

- Remove dangling ", okay?" at the end of commands.

- Practice speaking well to a group.

Leader Goals:

- Emulate good language for instructors to model.

- Speak in sentences.

- Give clear, concise instructions.

- Provide opportunities for training participants to practice speaking in sentences, with command, and confidently.

- Remove the dangling ", okay?" from language.

- Build awareness of verbal ticks.

- Educate on small achievable task language: "Do this. Do that. Do this. Do that."

Participant should learn:

- How to speak in periods. (commands).

- What a dangling ", okay?" is and why it ruins your authority.

- That confidence and curt commands are more effective for teaching than friendly, off the cuff, unplanned, distracted language is.

- Why poetry and writing is good for teaching; our words matter. Teaching swimming is using words to make others do specific motions with their bodies. Well crafted language gets better results.

Removing ", okay?"

Training Activity 1

Read, Read, Remember:

Using a lesson plan for any Level Day 1, have a participant in the small group read the instructions exactly on the page for Activities 1 & 2.

Give feedback on the participant's voice; weak? Loud enough? Mumbling?

Read it again. Give feedback again.

On third attempt have them give directions of same activities in their own words.

What changed? How can they improve?

Training Activity 2

Small group discussion:

Say a command to a swim lesson with ", okay?" at the end. How does that make the instruction a question?

Say a command with a period.

Example: We're doing 5x streamlines, okay? Vs We're doing 5 x streamlines.

Have each person in group practice giving a swim lesson command with ", okay?" at end, then do it again without.

Discuss how to speak with periods, and how to get results with small simple sentences. Do this. Do that.

Challenge

Leading the blind, with commands:

Put 3 towels on the ground, or 3 pieces of paper. Have them at least 5 feet apart and not in a line.

Form partners.

One partner is blindfolded. Other must use their words and specific commands to get the partner that is blindfolded to walk to each towel and stand on it.

Fail if blindfolded person doesn't stand on each in less than 1 minute, and if commander uses "umm, ahh, like, okay?" more than 2x in a row.
Use short simple commands with specific steps needed.

Read exactly as written

Avoid "umm, ahh, like, ok"

Level 4: Day 1 of 4

Goals:

| - Comfortable freestyle arms reaching to position 11 with each stroke. | - Freestyle breaths to the side without lifting or struggling. Focus on kicks and body position strength. | - Do lots of reps of str SL + BK to master the - Use longer distances |

| **Activity 1:** | **Activity 2:** | **Challenge** |
| Streamline + 3 FREE + Flip | Streamline to flags + 3 BK | Push off the wall |
| 3 x Streamline then do 3 free without breathing. Then do a front flip.
- Attempt no breathing
- Focus on good SL underwater and good arms above. | 3 x Streamline underwater on back.
- Stay in SL to the flags.
- After the flags, do 3 BK strokes counting when thumb exits the water. | Push off the wall position on the ...
- surface
- underwater
See who can go t |

Keep commands short.

Constant small tasks.

Setup obsticals

5 steps forward, 30° left
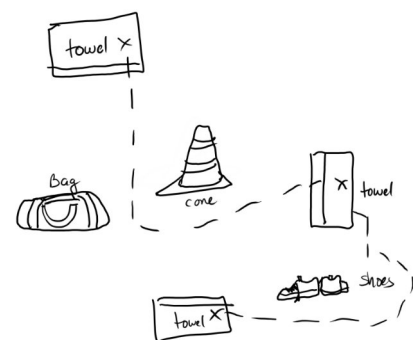
Commands Continued

Focus on the following:

1: Small achievable tasks

Instructors should be constantly giving small tasks or commands to their swimmers.

"Stand here. Move here. You go. Wait here. Streamline with all three. Put your face in. Look down. Wait. Put your hand on the bench. Hold my shoulders."

2: Follow lesson plan; read it!

Lesson plans are written so that instructors can literally read exactly what it says and get results.

They are written with ".'s" Use them as examples.

3: Remove ", okay?"

Let new instructors watch a veteran teach.

Task new instructor with counting the number of times the teacher says ", okay?" at the end of a sentence.

The trainee and INS will improve after review.

4: Practice giving commands

Come up with small tasks that you can do in your facility. Have participants practice giving multi-step commands to someone.

"Using only your words, and without intuitively doing task, get a partner to pick up a box and put it on a shelf like a robot would."

5: Give feedback to staff

Follow up with staff during their teaching.

The more we're aware of something, the better we can avoid it, or do it.
Tell staff what language they do well or not.

Speak in short sentences.

Guide your swimmers and staff through lessons by using your voice and demanding results.

Do this.

Make sure that the swimmer does it. Enforce it.

Small achievable tasks for giving commands:

- Get in the water. Stand on the bench.

- Go underwater 4 times up to your comfort level (chin, lips, nose, eyes, whole head).

- Walk around the benches in a square 4 times. When you cross a bench, kiss the water.

- Keliegh, start first, go here, kiss the water, go to that corner. Good. Keep going. Geoff, you're next. Go.

- We're doing front glides with support. When you're waiting for your turn, practice picking up rings from the bench with your foot, or with your hand. Keliegh, you're first. Put your hands out in front of you, put your chin in the water, push off with me.

Weak?
Be strong.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some examples of weak commands or language?

- What are some examples of strong language?

- How do you craft language that gets results?

  - Know what you want to do before you speak.

  - Describe main objective

  - Give small achievable steps to accomplish task

  - Clearly define success conditions.

  - Clearly define failure.

- Poetry is crafting language for maximum sound and image; teaching swimming is using voice and demonstration to get someone else to do a very specific dance with their body, in the water. Which words should you avoid using?

- What do we mean by "small achievable tasks?

NOTES:

5. Feedback

Timeline: 45 minutes

• 5 minutes: Break into small groups

• 10 minutes: Discuss what feedback is. Provide examples of good feedback and bad feedback. Demonstrate non-verbal feedback. Use the word "fail" in a safe way.

• 30 minutes: Activities 1 & 2, challenge.

Leadership Actions:

1: Model effective feedback

Throughout training praise participants that do things well.

Give feedback on when participants failed: you did this, next time do that.

Approach feedback as helping, not punitive.

2: Ensure respect

Sometimes using the word "fail" can have negative connotations when used to deride or criticize someone. We use the word "fail" as an objective statement of fact. "You failed the challenge because of [reason]."

Avoid laughing at someone's struggle.

3: Use discussions

Beyond the activities and challenge use time to discuss feedback, and practice correcting swimmers when they do something wrong.

Feedback is the most essential part of swim lessons. It is how swimmers improve.

Objective:

• Define effective feedback.

• Set expectation of constant feedback; talk all the time!

• Using praise, non-verbals, and "fail" successfully.

Leader Goals:

• Establish a habit of feedback; always be correcting and striving for the next improvement.

• Using framework of "rotation method" to give feedback on every attempt to every swimmer.

• Using the word "Fail" in a safe and productive way.

• Foster an environment of success and improvement through genuine desire to make the swimmer / instructor better.

• Feedback is the second most important part of lessons after safety.

• Feedback creates change and improvement.

Participant should learn:

• Feedback layer cake

• Acceptable non-verbals

• When it is okay to say "Fail."

• How to watch everyone when you have a lot of swimmers.

• How to leverage framework for the best chance at getting results from swimmers.

• Earning respect and trust from swimmers through your words.

• The importance of giving quality feedback.

Words Correct Actions

Training Activity 1

You did this, next time do…:

1 person is the "feedback giver."

Rest of the group is tasked with a simple thing like walking in streamline with 1 of the 3 things wrong.

Feedback giver should state for each person:

"You did [this], next time [what they should do correctly]."

"You had your elbows bent like a ballerina. Next time squeeze your ears with your arms."

Every person gets chance at being "Feedback giver."

Training Activity 2

 Discuss:

Talk about the feedback layer cake: positive, negative, what to do to improve.

Discuss how rotation method allows for constant feedback. Have 1 person stand in a corner. Rest of group must walk past them 4 times. Person must give feedback on how they walk each time they pass. Be specific. Enforce improvement.

Discuss using the word "fail" during challenges and what objective fact means.

State what happened, and why it doesn't meet success criteria.

Challenge

Non-verbal directions:

Have 1 person get the rest of the group to do a swimming activity/skill on land without speaking.

Have the 1 person correct wrong group behavior with non-verbals like thumbs downs, head shaking, or physical adjustments.

Example:

Everyone do 3 streamlines growing from the ground.

Demonstrate, point, and give feedback with facial movements, hand gestures, etc.

State what they did wrong

Give alternative action
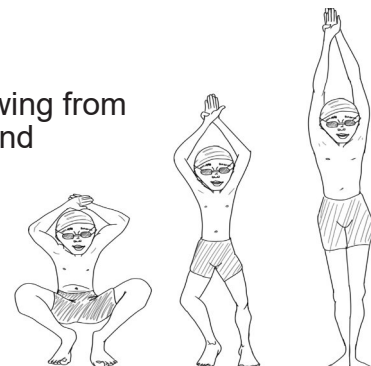

Did well, failed, next time

Silence kills. Speak!

Smile, thumbs up, clap

Frown, thumbs down, shake

Growing from ground

Feedback Continued

Focus on the following:

1: Praise effort

Feedback praise should be focused on the attempt, the effort, of the participant.

"I can see you're putting in a lot of effort to do your streamline. Well done. Next time squeeze your ears too."

2: Liberally use non-verbals

Smiles, thumbs ups, clapping, celebratory hands in the air; do it all.

You don't always have to speak aloud as long as your message is getting through.

Use your body and your words!

3: Allow and expect failure

Create an environment where failure is expected and encouraged.

We learn best through struggle.

Build trust with students and push them into difficulties so they can overcome.

4: Earn trust

Consistently give feedback through voice and non-verbals. Establish a habit of receiving feedback on every attempt, and the swimmers will look to the instructor automatically. They'll come to expect feedback. This builds trust.
Earn that trust by giving swimmers attention.

5: Laugh! Have fun! Smile!

Get involved with your student's successes and failures. Work together to improve.

Smiling, laughing, enjoying yourself shows. We can see it. Fun breeds effort.
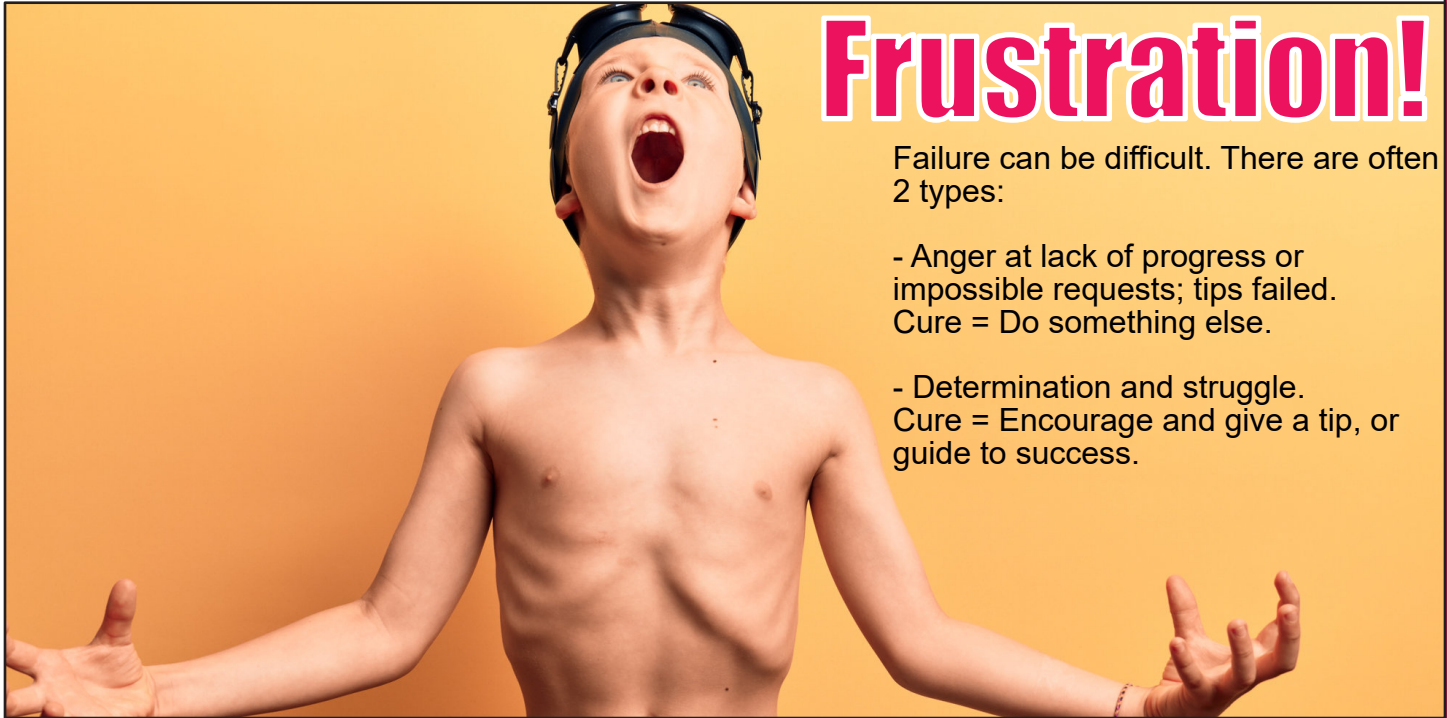

Yes! You locked your thumb!

Thumbs UP! Cheer! Celebrate!

Share swimmer success with joyful dances, arm pumping, or enthusiastic clapping and laughing.

Your reaction will encourage further success!

Frustration!

Failure can be difficult. There are often 2 types:

- Anger at lack of progress or impossible requests; tips failed.
Cure = Do something else.

- Determination and struggle.
Cure = Encourage and give a tip, or guide to success.

Discussion Questions:

- Give three examples of "praising effort" over praising skill.

- Is "i'm glad you attempted that back float" considered "effective praise?"

- Do you think praising intelligence creates laziness in the future? Why or why not?

  (praising intelligence: "you're so talented." "you're naturally gifted.")

- Is there ever a time to use negative feedback like "that was a fail?"

- How can we foster failure without frustration?

- Challenges have clear fail / success conditions. Have you seen swimmers laugh when they fail then celebrate when they make another attempt and succeed?

- Give three examples of a feedback layer cake using "Praise, failed item, correction."

- We know that "don't spill the water" translates in the hearer as "spill the water."

  Is there a time to say, "Don't streamline on the surface?"

NOTES:

6. Teaching Methods

Timeline: 45 minutes

- 5 minutes: Break into small groups.

- 10 minutes: Review the Rotation Method in extreme detail using graphics, images, or gif's of what it should look like. Cover waves and 1-on-1 as well.

- 30 minutes: Activities 1 & 2, challenge.

Leadership Actions:

1: Illustrate rotation method

Use images, video, gifs, physical action, tv, phones to illustrate what it looks like when its done well.

Swimmers move autonomously, on their own after given instructions.

2: Lead discussion

The training activities are good for this section, but put significant effort and time into the presentation of rotation method.

Prepare images and video in advance, and be prepared to show it with description.

3: Go first during activities

Sometimes you can give instructions and instructor candidates will do them without your involvement. These sections are done best when the leadership knows the nuances of rotation method and feedback and demonstrates great instruction first.

Objective:

- Stress importance of the rotation method.

- Allow variations on class size and skill; supported front and back glides vs Level 3.

- Encourage swimmer movement and maximizing time on task (doing something).

Leader Goals:

- Describe in clear language what the rotation method is and why it is so effective.

- Show rotation method in action through video or gif or physical practice (in person).

- Review how supported glides and level 1 classes often do not use rotation methods.

- Discuss differences between constant motion and 1-on-1 skill work and when to use them.

- Ensure instructors know what you mean by "traffic cop."

  Traffic Cop: instructor that says, "okay, you go. Wait. Now Jane go. John go." They give traffic directions, not feedback on skill attempts.

Participant should learn:

- Rotation method.

- How to keep swimmers moving.

- How to deliver instructions using 3 x SL+ [something] formula.

- Waves; all swimmers moving at the same time.

- What to do with other swimmers in class when doing 1-on-1 skill work.

- How to leverage bench locations to remove fear and allow for constant swimming motion.

Rotation, Waves, 1-on-1

Training Activity 1

Walking rotation method:

Using an open space setup your group like a lane in the water. See picture to right.

"Everyone will go two times. Walk in streamline to the flags, move over, and return to the line. You can go when the person ahead of you starts to return. Jane, go first. Ready? Go."

Give feedback on the streamline skill; only tell people when to go when they violate the instructions. Attempt to automate people moving and focus on how they do streamline walk.
Each person gets chance to be the "instructor."

Training Activity 2

1-on-1 and Waves then discuss:

Line up 3 people shoulder to shoulder. A 4th person stands in front of them, like an instructor and a class.

Instructor calls a person by name. That person walks to them. Instructor tells them something and sends them back to the line. Instructor calls the next person and repeats. 1-on-1.

Line up same 3 people. A 4th, the instructor tells them all to walk or run across a space. Wave.

Discuss when to use each type of student interaction.
1-on-1 is best for supported glides
Waves is best for games or Level 4 in lanes.

Challenge

Rotation Run Race:

Create two groups of equal size. 1 person in each group is the "instructor."

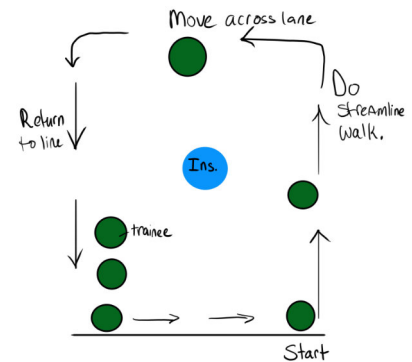Tell the "instructor" what activity they need their group to do following the rotation method.

Winning team is the one that completes reps first without any students failing more than 1x.

Example:
4 x walk in streamline 3 steps then do 5 FR arms with hands reaching above head each stroke.
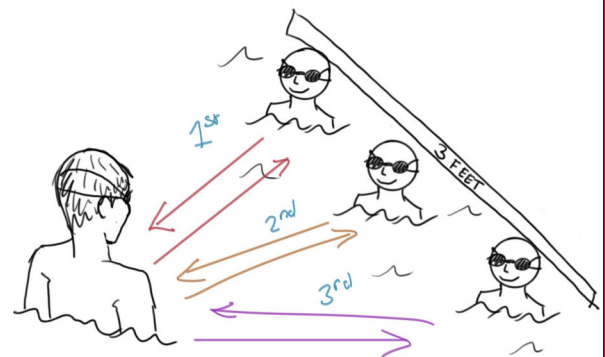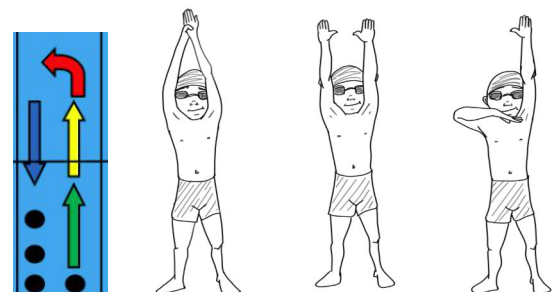
Focus on the following:

1: Rotation: keep moving

The rotation method keeps swimmers moving doing multiple reps. It works when swimmers know the framework, AND instructors give consistent feedback.

Instructors need to leverage the format to maximize the results and need to talk!

2: Adapt to swimmers

A guppies or level 1 class won't be able to use the rotation method as much.

Use 1-on-1 or an adapted rotation method type with the benches or shallow water.

Use what is appropriate to swimmers.

3: Avoid "John, go. Stop, go."

If the instructor is wasting time and breath to tell swimmers when to go it causes two problems.

1. Swimmer isn't efficiently taking their turn.

2. Instructor is not giving feedback.

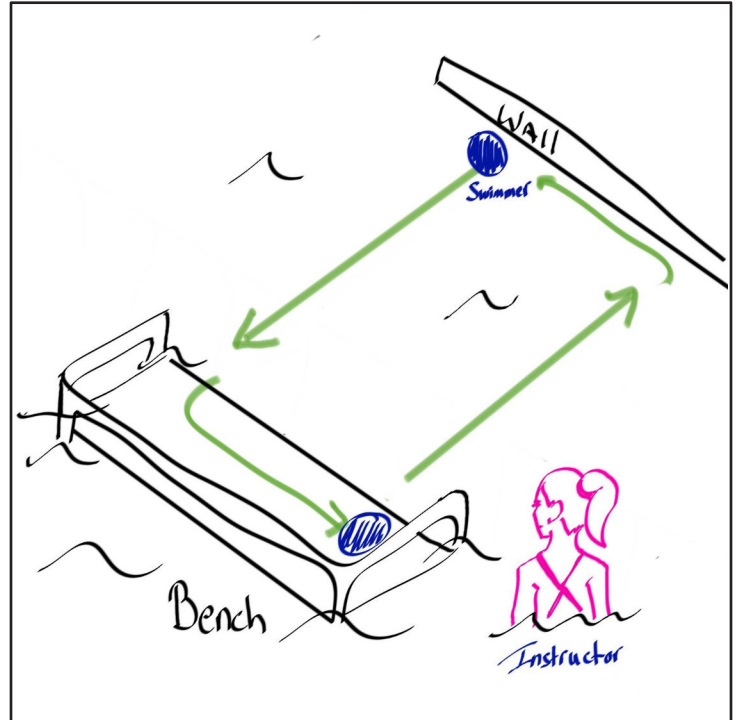### 4:Rotation is circle swimming

But shorter.

Circle swimming is where people swim down the right, turn around, and swim back on their right.

Rotation method is a shorter version of this.

5:Go when the way is clear

Define when the next swimmer can take their turn instead of waiting for the instructor to say "go." Automate swimmer actions to give more feedback.

More feedback; rotate

Position instructors in common sense locations where they can see each swimmer's attempt.

If necessary, and safe, let instructors stand on deck so they can see better.

Keep moving
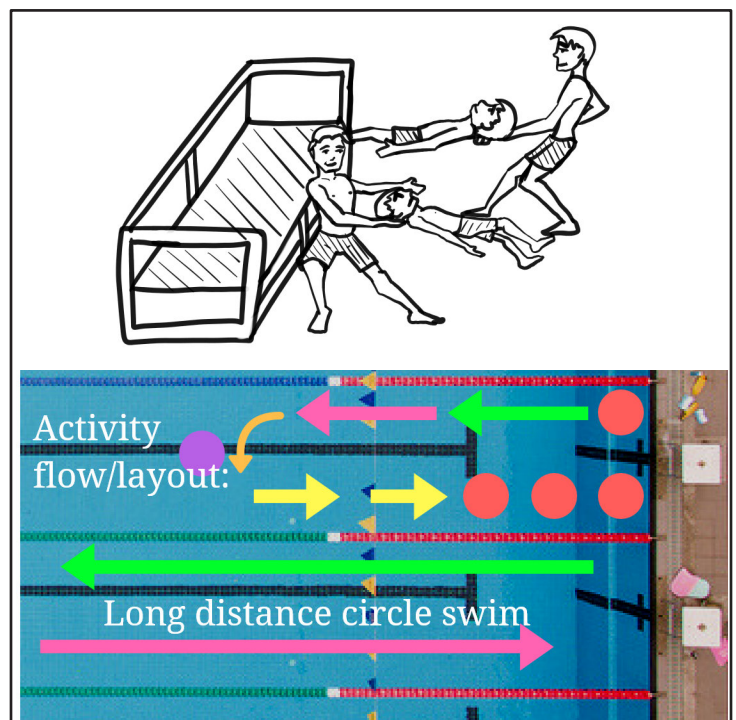
Discussion Questions:

- What is a "traffic cop?" Why does it keep an instructor from giving feedback?

- Giving feedback is the most important part of swimming lessons after safety. How does the rotation method foster feedback?

- Can you adapt how you run lessons? (use 1-on-1, waves, or rotation).

- What does this icon mean?

  You'll see it on lesson plans and skill sheets.

  (It means use the rotation method in a lane. The horizontal line represents flags or about 5 yards).
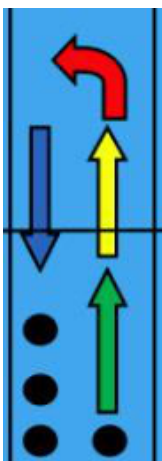
- What do you do without benches?

- How can the rotation method be used without a bench?

NOTES:

7. Addressing Fear

Timeline: 45 minutes

- 10 minutes: Lecture on fear and how to overcome reluctance.

- 5 minutes: Break into small groups.

- 30 minutes: Activities 1 & 2, challenge.

Leadership Actions:

1: Prepare fear speech

In advance prepare a short lecture about why children are afraid at swim lessons.

Discuss how instructors can overcome those fears.

Provide actions they can take to earn trust.

2: Reinforce "ask often."

If a swimmer in a lesson is sitting on the edge refusing to get in the water, let them.

Ask the swimmer repeatedly, at every time it would be their turn, if they want to join in.

Respect their choice. Constant offers to join.

3: Let parents help

Let a reluctant swimmer sit on edge or near class with their parent. Encourage swimmer to sit on edge with parent behind them.

Gradually have parent move further away. Use every tool to build trust and confidence.

Objective:

- Give instructors tools to deal with fear, hesitation, crying, and defiance.

- Instill building trust as a core tenant of your swim lesson program.

Leader Goals:

- Discuss how empathy is putting yourself in another person's shoes.

- Address root cause of fear, hesitation, or crying: new experience, being forced to do something against will, strangers, lack of trust.

- Discuss how to build trust with swimmers.
  - Demo everything first, with variations for skill level (chin in water instead of eyes).
  - Be predictable; do the same things in the same way every time.
  - Ask participants to join, and respect their choices; don't want to go under, don't make them.
  - Demonstrate activities with other students.

- Lead discussions and keep tangents or wandering topics to a minimum.

Participant should learn:

- How to handle reluctant children, crying kids, and fearful students that won't participate.

- How to build trust through their actions; demonstrate every skill before asking swimmer to do it, offer variations to address reluctance (chin in water instead of whole head during supported front float), show other students having fun, asking to participate frequently.

- That consistency and predictability is a good thing for new participants. Fear comes from unknown; establish habits and be predictable.

- To avoid surprise or chaotic lessons with dramatic skill shifts; doing flips in a level 1 with kids that don't go underwater.

Build Trust

Training Activity 1

Have so much fun:

Role-play 1 person is the instructor, others (up to 4) are swimmers in a lesson. 1 swimmer is afraid and will sit outside group watching.

The instructor should come up with 2 activities to do on land as a group. Instructor must ask the afraid swimmer to participate at least 4 times, but allow them to say "no."

Make the activities fun. Laugh. Play.

Example activities:
Jump on 1 foot twenty times. Make a goofy noise if you fall. Do the swing dance twirls with everyone else once.

Training Activity 2

Role-play reluctance and progression:

1 instructor, 1 swimmer, 1 parent. Rotate doing each.

Instructor must ask the swimmer to participate over and over. "Will you join us? No? Then go here."

Parent listens to swimmer and instructor; does what they say.

Swimmer says "no" to everything 3 times, then says yes.

Go through progression:
- Have swimmer and parent sit near class watching.
- Have swimmer sit on the edge of the pool, parent away
- Have swimmer enter pool and do activity, parent leaves

Challenge

Do something you've never done before:

Have a bold person come up with a wild, goofy dance of 3 moves. Demonstrate it in front of the group.

Everyone else in the group takes turns performing the same dance in front of everyone else.

Anyone can say "no." A "no" = fail.

Can you do something you've never done before?
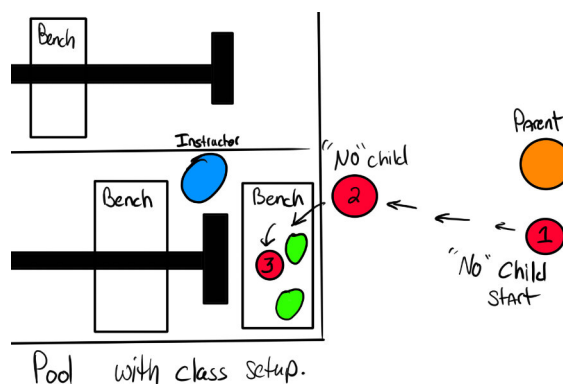Without fear? What makes it scary?

Fun is interesting

Fun increases participation

Ask often. No → Yes

Do at pool, or pretend

Encourage goofy and weird

Social anxiety ok, allow no.

Fear Continued

Focus on the following:

1: Use empathy and caring

Approach frightened swimmers with empathy and care. Maybe they had a traumatic experience. Maybe they had a distressed or drowning incident.

Be compassionate, allow for fear, and gradually push them to participate.

2: Earn trust

Be consistent and set clear expectations.

"Do you want to go underwater?" "No." "Okay."

Show alternatives to scary things. Help and adapt to individual needs.

3: Actively ask to join

Consistently ask reluctant swimmers to participate. Ignoring the frightened does nothing to bring them into the less.

"Do you want to join us?"
"Will you come sit on the side?"
"Can you put this toy in the water?"

4:Ask to help you out

If the frightened swimmer doesn't want to join the group ask them to help in a small easy way.

"Can you get me a kick-board? They're over there."
"Can you fill up that bucket with water?"

5:Persist. Accommodate.

Keep making attempts to have swimmer join you. Continue asking for them to do stuff.

Let them sit on the side, with their parents, watch from afar. Do what it takes. Takes time.

Listen when they say "no."

Gradually work on changing their "no" into a smiling "yes."

We can do that by having fun, showing them what to expect, and listening when they decline to do something. Be honest, earn trust, and have fun.

Show others having fun!

Fear of the unknown

Let swimmers watch your lessons first. Let them see and hear what the instructors are asking.

Demonstrate a trusting, caring, loving environment where they'll feel safe.

Discussion Questions:

- How does letting a child sit out of the lesson and watch build trust?

- How does consistency across instructors (all following rotation method, same scripts, same supported floats) make it easier for a swimmer to join a class?

- Why are people afraid of swimming lessons?

- If you have a child that is crying in your class, the first step is to let them cry and give them choices. When should we remove them from the class?

- Should we give a child reasons to be afraid like, "Are you cold?" "Do you miss your mom?" "Are you afraid of drowning?"

- When should we ignore a child's fear and do something they might not want to do?

- Don't panic! They can smell you fear! What can you do to remain calm and give your class confidence?

NOTES:

8. Peer Teaching

Timeline: 3+ hours

- 20 minutes: Assign 2 skills from blue section of Teaching Swimming; or level skills. Instructor will create 2 progressive activities and 1 related challenge for each skill. Instructor will teach them to a "class" of their peers; in water.

- 180 minutes: Peer Teaching where every instructor at training teaches their 2 skills using Activity, Activity, Challenge formula for each skill.

  Example:
  Skill: Streamline, Level 3
  Activity 1: 3 x SL on a different plane
  Activity 2: 4 x SL. 2x do it wrong, 2x right
  Challenge: SL in airplane past the flags

Leadership Actions:

1: Assign skills & explain

Prepare a list of participants. Assign 2 skills and level to each.

Explain how the participants will teach to their peers as if they're in a swim class of that level. Participants should use the formula and use your training materials as a guide.

2: Allow time to prepare

Whether you give time over a lunch break, or dedicated time during your training.

Offer yourself and other leadership as a reference. Have copies of the Teaching Swimming workbook and printouts of lesson plans available to use as guide.

3: Evaluate instructors

Watch the instructors from the deck.

Avoid intervening and micromanaging during the lesson. Let them figure it out.

Give feedback on activity & challenge choice.

Objective:

- See instructors that have gone through training use the tools you taught in a practical setting.

- Evaluate instructors on their teaching performance.

- Give instructors a chance to practice in a safe space.

Peer Teaching expectations:

Assign skills: Each participant gets 2 with level. Kelly: streamline, level 2 & fly kick, level 3.

Preparation: Give participants time to create activities and challenges appropriate to their skill/level

Instructor: Teaches their activity, activity, challenge to a group of 3 - 4 of their peers. Use progressions, tools, and workbook as a guide. Lesson plans & skill sheets good resource too.

Peers: Act as a class of students at the level that the instructor was assigned. Be respectful, patient, and listen. No acting out.

Leader: Evaluate the instructor. Can they teach to your program standards? Give feedback.

Participant should learn:

- How to put together their own progression activities and a create a challenge.

- Know where to find activity ideas and challenge ideas: Teaching Swimming workbook, lesson plans, SwimSheets, skill specific guides, general lesson plans.

- How some ideas don't work in the water.

- That it might be necessary to adapt in the moment. If something isn't working, change it.

- That the skills we practice have a purpose. They make lessons easier to run.

Assign Skills and Levels

Each participant needs to have teach to their peers two skills as part of a level.

Skills:

Use the headings of the blue section in the Teaching Swimming workbook. Or use the Testable Skills for your level structure.

Levels:

Use your level structure and attach it to the skill so the instructor knows what type of activities and challenges are appropriate. You can do SL in every level and what you do will change based on the level.

Preparation Time

Provide copies of the Teaching Swimming workbook, let instructors use their phones and the Teaching Swimming online course.

Print out copies of sample lesson plans.

Print out copies of skill specific sheets with progressions for teaching complex skills like breathing to the side, breaststroke, butterfly, etc.

Serve as a resource and answer questions, give feedback, and help create activities or challenges.

Peer Teaching

Time to see training participants teach!

Did they speak with command? Did they remove ", okay?" from their sentences? Did they give clear concise directions?

Watch and avoid intervening unless absolutely necessary. Let the instructor teach.

Give feedback to the instructor in private or in front of group, but be respectful, helpful, and constructive.

Keep groups moving and on task.

Okay to delegate veterans to serve as leaders.

Mix of skills and level

Use documents to help

Breaststroke

Introduce Arm Motion:

Feel the Kick:

Give time to prepare

Help others, work together

Ensure peer respect

Have fun, learn, grow!

Peer Teaching Continued

Instructor evaluation:

1: Are activities appropriate?

Did the instructor choose the right activities for their skill and level?

Were the activities effective? Did the swimmers learn anything?

2: Was the challenge effective?

Did the challenge seem fun or interesting?

Did the instructor give any thought to the challenge?

Did they instructor celebrate swimmer success?

3: Command language?

Did the instructor speak clearly, with command, and expect their commands to be followed?

How did the instructor speak, or how was their delivery received?

4: Was there feedback?

Did the instructor use verbal or non-verbal feedback to keep swimmers engaged?

Did the instructor establish an expectation that swimmers should look to them for feedback?

5: How can the INS improve?

What are specific actionable things the instructor can do now to improve their teaching?
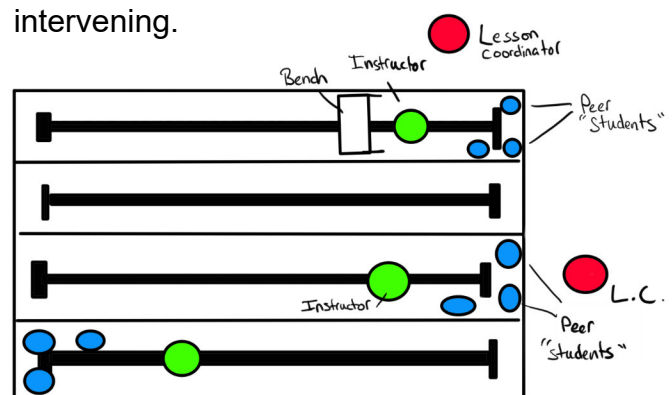
Where can they do better?

Get them involved

Teaching peers can be a challenge.

Get people involved by making it fun and encouraging laughter.

Avoid treating peers like children. Teach to age.

Each group of peer teaching should have a Lesson Coordinator observing.

Watch. Avoid intervening.

Give feedback

Peer teaching evaluation:

Did the instructor:

- Speak clearly

- Give instructions in a loud voice

- Give clear, easy instructions

- Control class

- Give feedback to swimmers

- Use non-verbal feedback

Were the activities:

- Appropriate for the level

- Progressive, 1 leads into 2

- Adapted for common framework; 3 x SL + [something]

- Easy to explain

Was the challenge:

- Connected to the activities / skill

- Fun

- Too easy

- Too difficult

- Too complex

- More game than challenge

What was the challenge's skill and roadblock to doing the skill?

NOTES:

Problem Solving

Overcome struggles and issues with this section.

This is not a comprehensive list of things you'll face, but it should help prepare you for managing staff, setting parent expectations, and running a better program.

Remember to be proactive; do things before someone tells you to, or before problems rise.

Address staff directly, honestly, and in a collaborative tone and you'll be one step ahead of a manager that barks orders or does nothing.

There will be a myriad of things that go wrong, are challenging, or flat out difficult.

Ask for help.

Stop and think; what should I do?

Define what is most important, do that.

Get the best results by being honest, collaborative, and kind.

Parent Communication

1: Left side pages: Description, Tips, Tools

The pages on the left side identify issues, problems, or challenges, and attempt to give you focusing tools to overcome them.

There are so many things that we need to know and focus on as a Lesson Coordinator / Aquatic Professional that we cannot cover them all.

Our goal is to give examples and options to use in your toolbox.

2: Right side pages: Solutions and fine points

You'll find a stack of 3 items on the right side pages. They are intended to work in rows:

Title and clear example, an informative picture, and key points related to the title to help you succeed in your actions.

This book is for YOU to use as a guide and reference.

Testing

3: How to handle job challenges outside water

This section is about the part of running a swim lesson program that isn't "in the water teaching."

As a leader of your swimming program you are tasked with communicating to parents, handling groups, organizing instructors and swimmers, and dealing with random events.

How to Use This Section

Tools to fix problems

This section highlights problems you might face and attempts to give you solutions.

When you see instructors without their shoulders in the water, standing around playing with kick boards, remind them to keep moving.

Left side pages = general help

Use the left side to understand the concept, learn general tips and tools to being a better leader, and shape how you are going to respond to challenges.

Right side pages = specific examples

Use the right side pages to further develop your response and actions using examples.

The right side should be your walk-through, step -by - step guide to solving problems.

Facility Specific Notes:

Facility notes

Level Assessments

How to test swimmers on a "testing day" and when you have enroll by day classes.

How to test swimmers quickly in less than 30 seconds; quick test.

4 types of testing:

• Testing day

• Drop in / test during class

• Prior records; last evaluation

• Self-reported by parents/swimmer.

Choose the testing or assessment that works best for your situation.

Assess swimmer skill often and UPDATE your records. Whether you use an online database like www.swimlessons.pro or something else, make sure it is accurate.

Adapt your assessment style based on the scenario you're in:

- Summer camp swim lessons with 300+ swimmers: Testing day using quick test, then spot check ability during the classes.

- Small indoor lessons: group by age, then assess using quick test, adjust classes, then document specifics.

- Returning swimmer: use records and place by level documented. Update as needed.

1: Leverage quick tests

What skills are crucial to each level?

Level 1: Go underwater
Level 2: Independent glides
Level 3: Side breathing Front crawl
Level 4: Individual Medley: IM

2: Track your data; online or written

Keep track of your swimmer's progress.

Use a database, excel, SharePoint, swimlessons.pro, etc. Or write it down and keep your records available.

Update often with skill growth and specific notes.

3: Evaluate swimmers officially

Send evaluations to your swimmers and their families at regular intervals.

Have a standard evaluation form that shares their level, skill progress, and personal notes based on observation.

Testing

Quick Testing

Define the single essential skill for each of your levels.

Level 1: go underwater alone.

Level 2: independent glides.

Level 3: Front crawl side breathing; no lifting head.

Level 4: IM. Know all 4 competitive strokes; able to do all pieces if not whole swim.

Categorize first; nuance later

The goal of Quick Testing is to assign levels super fast.

Experienced Leaders can quick test a person in about 30 seconds of interaction.
Focus on speed: Go under? No. Lvl 1.

Refine levels and groups later as you see the swimmer in the water more.

Update your records to match.

Testing Day

Group by age and further segment as needed, gender, height, etc.

For each group:

1 Leader: documents level on rosters and updates records.

1 INS: In water with 1-3 swimmers at a time. Do quick tests.

1 helper: organize group and keep occupied; direct traffic.

Testing: brief & keep moving

Use Quick Test criteria.

Once assessed get swimmer out of water and direct to alternate activity on land.

Work as a team to test many swimmers quickly.

Leader should focus on stopping swimmer at appropriate test.

INS should direct swimmers in water.

Drop in Classes / Spot testing

Group by age first:

- 3 years, 5-6, and 8+ will generally all be about the same skill level.

Refine groups by skill:

- Watch each class, and create "levels." Move swimmers to their appropriate level group.

Adjust as needed. Move swimmers mid-lesson.

Age > comfort > skill > refine

Without any extra info other than age put all the same age together.

Watch the class once it starts; move swimmers to other groups with similar ability.

Works great for classes where the participants can change every day/week.

Update records to use level in future.

Evaluations

Have a clear system for doing evaluations.

An evaluation is a formal written document or digital form that you fill out when watching a swimmer. The evaluation should be written for the parent or the swimmer and delivered quickly and regularly.

Swimming Ideas recommends that Lesson Coordinators do all evaluations, or trained staff members who are responsible.

- Have regular evaluations; periodic: every second week, or the first week of the month.

- Evaluations should include the following:

  - Level tested

  - Skills tested

  - Comments for the swimmer to give more context and development to parent/guardian.

- Be specific in your comments. Use objective facts whenever possible.

- Avoid generalizations like, "Great job!" with no context.

1: Objective fact based evaluations

Johnny lifts his head during front glides.

What specifically did Johnny "do" in the lesson?

Use clear statements of observable facts when you're writing an evaluation. Avoid general filler words or being polite. State what you saw when evaluating the swimmer.

Level 1
- L1: Go underwater unassisted
- L1: Supported front glide
- L1: Supported back glide
- L1: Go underwater without touching bottom and recover to standing

Level 2
- L2: Streamline 3 body lengths on both front and back (back can be in soldier)
- L2: Streamline and then front crawl arms for 5 body lengths (total)
- L2: Streamline and then back crawl arms for 5 body lengths

2: Tie your comments to the level skills

When you are writing comments make sure your words are matching the level you're testing.

Talk about what the swimmer did (objective fact) and discuss how that swimmer can improve to meet the skills of your level.

3: Remember your audience; selling point

Evaluations are updates to the parents about how their swimmer is doing. Ideally all evaluations will show a consistent growth and record improvement.

Use the comment section to sing swimmer's successes and tell a story of growth to parents.

How Are They Doing?

Define level & skills evaluated

Format your evaluations to include the level and skills that you're evaluating the swimmer against.

If using www.swimlessons.pro the evaluation page will include the level name and title along with the skills associated with that level on the evaluation page.

Include name of levels and skills with specifics.

Swimmer: Test 2 from form

Levels Evaluated on 2022-07-07 10:59:

Level 3

Level 3 Skills:

- L3: Front crawl 8 meters with breathing
- L3: Back crawl 8 meters with body at surface
- L3: Demonstrate "11, Eat, 11"
- L3: Demonstrate Breaststroke Kick on edge
- L3: Demonstrate Butterfly Arms

Notes:

The swimmer is awesome and cool. They're working on some really inter

Levels & skills are your guide

Aim your comments at the skills in the level you're testing.

If a swimmer has not mastered a skill describe in detail what they've failed at and what they need to do to meet the objective.

Be specific in your comments

Write about the swimmer using specific things you saw them do during observation.

Watch the swimmer in a lesson.

Document what you saw with skill mastery.

Write comments specifically related to what you saw.

Tie the comments into their skill progress.

Level 3 Skills:

- L3: Front crawl 8 meters with breathing
- L3: Back crawl 8 meters with body at surface
- L3: Demonstrate "11, Eat, 11"
- L3: Demonstrate Breaststroke Kick on edge
- L3: Demonstrate Butterfly Arms

Notes:

Testy does a great job of streamlining with all three components; looking down, locked thumb, and squeezed ears. When Testy moves from streamline to freestyle they lift their head up. Will work on side breathing more, but attempt to practice turning the head to the side at home too.

Avoid meaningless praise

Great job! Well done! Wow!

These are useless to a parent. Make your comments specific to the swimmer and informative.
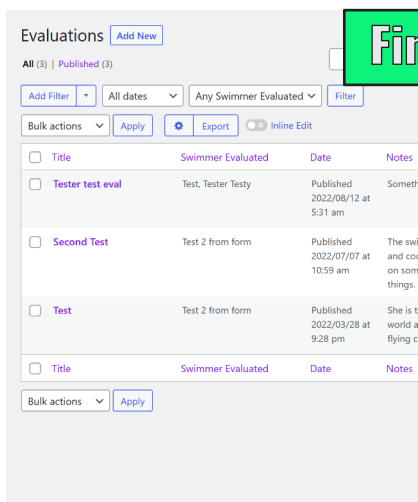
This is your chance to give targeting feedback for improvement to parents.

Use evaluation records

Track your evaluations; whether you do them digitally or with paper.

Keep copies available to your LC staff, or your admin so you can reference later when looking at a swimmer or answering parent questions.

Swimlessons.pro has evaluations on the swimmer page for parents/users, and in the admin dashboard.

Evaluations Add New

All (3) | Published (3)

| Add Filter | All dates | Any Swimmer Evaluated | Filter |

| Bulk actions | Apply | ⚙ | Export | Inline Edit |

	Title	Swimmer Evaluated	Date	Notes
☐	Tester test eval	Test, Tester Testy	Published 2022/08/12 at 5:31 am	Somethi
☐	Second Test	Test 2 from form	Published 2022/07/07 at 10:59 am	The swim and cool on some things.
☐	Test	Test 2 from form	Published 2022/03/28 at 9:28 pm	She is th world an flying co
☐	Title	Swimmer Evaluated	Date	Notes

| Bulk actions | Apply |

Find a system that works

If you can use a relational database that works best, but requires some advanced knowledge.

Options:

- Swimlessons.pro

- SharePoint

- Access

Parent Communication

You have more experience in swimming lessons than most parents.

Be confident when you talk about levels, skills, and progress. You are an expert.

Be honest and brief. Parents don't need a long speech; they want an answer and appreciate explanations like "why" your program does things.

Parents care about their child's safety and progress.

Train and review procedures with Aquatic Professionals to build confidence and mastery over your programming.

- Approach parents first; be proactive.

  Go to them, ask, "What swimming questions do you have?"

- Be honest. Explain your program, why you do things, and how that relates to their child.

- Remain firm regarding safety decisions.

- Define levels, provide written examples of skills, and point out how the child is doing.

- Use an active lesson as an example.

- Remain calm; they want answers and you have them!

1: Address parents first; allow questions

Avoid ignoring the parents. Go to them regularly with updates. Approach them before they feel like they need to track you down just to get an answer.

Being proactive and leading the interaction will help parents perceive you positively.

2: "I don't know" is okay to say

If they ask you something about their child be honest. If you don't know, don't' make something up.

Investigate, research, talk to instructors, or watch a class then report back.

Be sure to follow up if you promise to do something.

3: Explain "why" and the process

Parents want to understand the system. If they have a question, address it best you can and provide context for why.

Address issues that seem off, and build parent confidence and trust when you follow up.

Common Questions

Why aren't they doing anything?

Variations:

"They're just going in circles."
"They're only playing games."
"They haven't worked on front crawl at all."

Explain that the instructors are following a progressive swim lesson with the formula: activity, activity, challenge.

If the INS isn't doing enough, address it immediately and report back to parent.
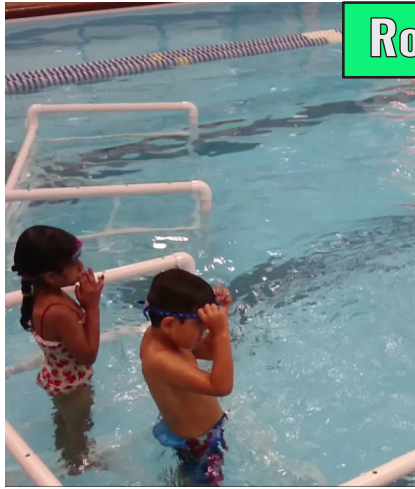
Rotation method in use?

Instructors can get distracted or spend too much time talking.

Reign them in and push them back to using the rotation method to keep swimmers moving and doing something.

Feedback is important, but it should happen WITH multiple attempts at a swimming skill.

When is my child going to swim well?

Variations:

"How long will it take to be ready for swim team?"
"When will they do side breathing?"
"How come they don't swim the whole way?

Explain that swimming is a long process where the only way to improve is to spend time in the water.

Learning the specific swim motions takes time.

Repetition, practice, time

The activity, activity, challenge lesson plans use a mix of classical conditioning and fun to improve swimmer's ability.

We do the same things because they are effective; and swimmers do them differently each time.

Mastery comes with practice, feedback, and time spent doing things well; over and over.

Why aren't they swimming far?

Variations:

"They stay in the shallow end."
"Why didn't they swim the whole length?"
"The benches are too close."

Explain that short distance skill work provides a safe space where swimmers can practice without worrying about breathing, struggling to stay on the surface, or being left alone.
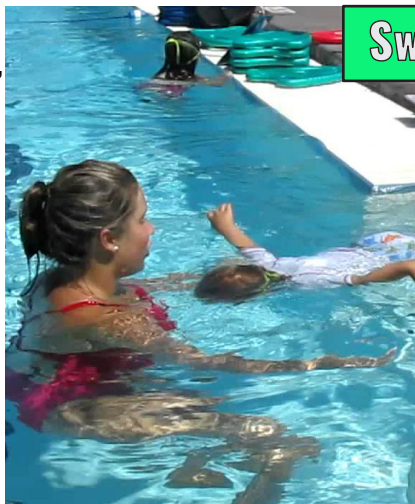
Swim longer when ready

Limiting distance and number of breaths and arm strokes is an effort to remove fear.

Swimming a 25 poorly with struggling to breathe is worse than doing a SL + 3 arms strokes and 1 side breath.

Let swimmers build confidence and master short distances with excellent form; provide longer swim chances. Pepper long distance swims in lesson.

Fear: Parents on Deck

Do you allow parents to be on the deck during swimming lessons?

If yes, consider the following:

- Define a clear place for parents to watch.

- Allow parents to access the pool quickly; they may see their child in danger and act before the lifeguard.

- Restrict access; it must have a purpose.

- Limit parent ability to influence the lesson. They will talk to swimmers, distract, and undermine instructor at times.

Parent's want their child to be safe.

They want their child to learn swimming.

A frightened child may want their parent to remain close, a part of the class, or stay visible.

Provide a clear progression for parents of frightened swimmers:

- Walk swimmer in to pool.
- Sit together away from pool but near class; 5-10 ft.
- Have child sit on edge, near class, parent stays distant; 5-10 ft. Away.
- Parent leaves for the designated parent area when swimmer joins the class.

1: Define options: walk in, stay, transition

Notice a frightened swimmer? Give parent options.
- Welcome to walk child in
- Welcome to sit near class together and watch
- Encourage child to leave parent, sit at edge of pool
- When child comfortable, push parent to leave
- Allow parent to have line of sight to child

2: Struggle: parents hovering too close

Parents may abuse ability to be on deck. Restrict their movement; clearly define what is acceptable.

Hovering parents can cause child to act out more, resist participating, and disrupt instructor by intervening. Inform parent of allowed progression on deck.

3: Struggle: parent & child too scared

Parents that are too attached and afraid for their child will frighten their children, and potentially others.

Let them stay close in approved observation spots and remind them not to participate in the class.

Parent and Child sitting from afar

Provide space near each class where parents are allowed to sit with their swimmers and watch.

New experiences are frightening and often times a new swimmer needs to watch and learn the format of things before they build the courage to participate.

Keep the parent and swimmer far enough away that they don't distract the class.

Parent →
Scared child

CLASS
Bench
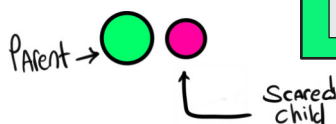
Limit parent access

Define where they can go, and tell them what they should do.

"Sit and watch here together. Let the instructor ask the swimmer to participate. When he's ready, have swimmer sit on the edge."

Instructor should still ask the swimmer, not the parent, if they want to participate with each new activity and challenge.
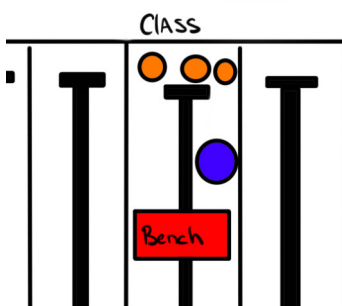
Parent on deck, child at edge of class

When the child is curious enough their confidence will allow them to sit on the edge of the pool with their class.

Parent remains seated distantly.

Child sits on side.

Instructor should provide small tasks for swimmer on edge to do: splash with feet, pick up small toys, pour water in pool, demonstrate skills on deck.

Parent →
Move to watch + participate without Parent
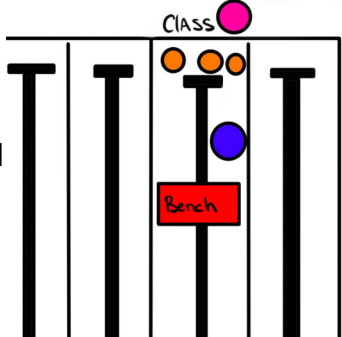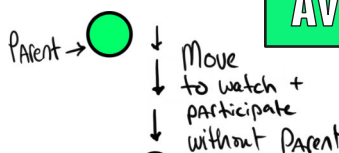
CLASS
Bench

Avoid rushing the process

Fear is difficult to overcome.

Letting the child say "no" to participation questions like, "do you want to show me a streamline with the rest of the class?" is okay.

Give the child small easy tasks like:

- Get 2 kick-boards for the class
- Throw three rings in the water for class to get
- Use feet to keep floating toy under

Parent visible, child near or in class

When the child is confident enough in their ability to be safe and part of the class let the parent leave the deck and go to the standard observation area.

Swimmer may not go in the water yet.

Let the child decide when it wants to participate.

When child is Comfortable parent moves away to observation area.

CLASS
Bench
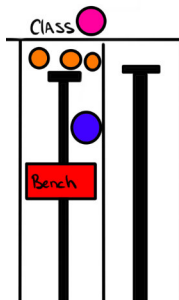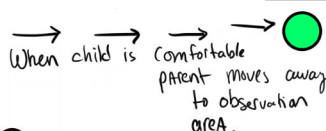
Comfort takes time

It may take three to four lessons or more for a child to be comfortable enough to get in the water.

This is normal.

Provide a welcome, loving environment built on trust and clear demonstration and expectations.

Communicate with parent that it is a process and this flow works.

Fear: Engaging the Frightened

We will cover how to handle a frightened swimmer by outlining a few tactics to get reluctant swimmers in the water.

Remember a few things:

• Scared of a new environment; new things are frightening. Needs time to learn what to expect.

• Water is overwhelming; can drown.

• New people are strangers; need time to warm up.

• Loud noises, loud water, loud kids can be overwhelming.

Time and gentleness usually win over fear.

We can help accelerate the process by doing a few crucial things with children that are obviously hesitant and scared.

- Let them watch from afar and with parents first. Encourage new participants to observe your lessons before joining.

- Smile when you're interacting with the swimmer. Welcome them into your facility.

- Engage with them frequently in a positive way, with positive language.

- Ask swimmer to do simple, easy, achievable tasks.

1: Ask the swimmer to participate often

Every time an instructor does an activity or challenge, ask the reluctant swimmer to participate.

"Do you want to join us doing bobs?"
"Johnny, will you kiss the water too?"

Avoid ignoring the swimmer not in the water yet.

2: Doesn't participate? Ask them to...

Do something simple, achievable, helpful, easy.

"Can you get me a floating toy for the class?"
"Can you put your feet in the water and splash 3 times?"
"Can you throw these rings so David can get them?"

3: Laugh so much they want to join!

Have so much fun that the child can't help but be curious what the laughter is all about.

Nothing builds curiosity and desire to be part of something like joyful, happy, excited enjoyment. Make the lessons FUN!

Types of Criers

Child clings to parent screaming

Avoid ripping the child away from their safety and comfort.

Let the parent walk the child into the pool and have them sit near their class.

Make sure the distance is close enough to hear, but far enough away to not be a distraction to the rest of the class.

The class must continue.

Time & patience best

Usually the child is so terrified they cannot fathom being away from their parent or sense of safety.

Letting the child watch and grow more comfortable is usually most effective.

Continue offering to participate.

Continue giving small achievable tasks to be part of the class without getting in.

Child is crying, but ok without parent

This child may be tearful or sniffling, but is okay sitting on the side without the parent.

Still ask if they want to participate.

They are most likely frightened of unclear expectations or worried the instructor will force them to do something they are not comfortable with.

Demonstrate consistency in lessons; use framework.

Watching and learning

Let the child absorb the flow of your lessons.

Keep the child engaged and stimulated by giving simple tasks, encouraging them to join, and adapting tasks to the child without forcing them into the uncomfortable.

Time and encouragement generally help best. Once child is confident of expectations will likely get in.

Child refuses to participate in water

Sometimes a child cries in the water when everything seemed fine.

Ask questions.

Avoid providing reasons for the child to be afraid:
- "Are you cold?"
- "Are you afraid of going under?"

Say:

"How can I help?"
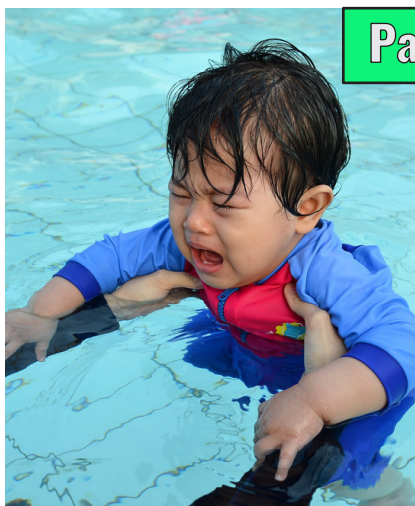
Paralyzed by fear

Maybe they saw someone dunk in their class.

Maybe they fell off the bench and are scared.

Things happen. Build trust by providing a loving, caring, lesson filled with encouragement, positivity and laughter.

Time and experience will help cure.

69

Staff: Delegation

You cannot do everything yourself.

Being a supervisor comes with responsibility; you have pressure from your Aquatic Professional or Director to accomplish a task well: effective lessons.

You must be able to delegate responsibility and get things done with the staff you oversee.

Delegating doesn't mean telling people what to do.

Delegating is empowering staff members to necessary things that make your lesson program better.

Fostering a collaborative and caring environment where you are the leader, and not the task master, is crucial to delegating responsibly.

Establish procedures for things that have to happen, train staff on how to successfully execute those things, and empower staff to be responsible for them in a day.

- Putting benches in the water and removing them.

- Organizing toys, distributing them to right places on the deck.

- Reading the rosters, handling crying children, or filling in where necessary.

1: Language: respect flows both ways

Communicate with your staff respectfully. Avoid yelling; walk to the person to speak.

Give meaningful tasks without being flippant or rude.

Trust staff to accomplish things without micromanaging, but expect them done well.

2: Language: avoid haughty, lording, kingly

Speak plainly and with the objective in mind.

"We need to put the benches in, Ben can you lead that objective?"

Avoid: "Ben, put the benches in, now" followed by sitting down and gossiping.

3: Provide opportunity and recognize effort

Avoid playing favorites; spread the responsibility and allow many people to participate in tasks.

Thank staff for accomplishing tasks, and give verbal and non-verbal feedback once done. Simple "Thank you's" go a long way to fostering staff attitude.

Leadership Tips

Your time is valuable; you need help

Ask for help. Start with your staff and decide what is most important.

Balance safety, parent communication, instructor assignments, swimmer groups and evaluations, and the flow of daily lessons.

Things change, so have a plan or idea how things should run smoothly. Work towards goal.

Let staff help you.
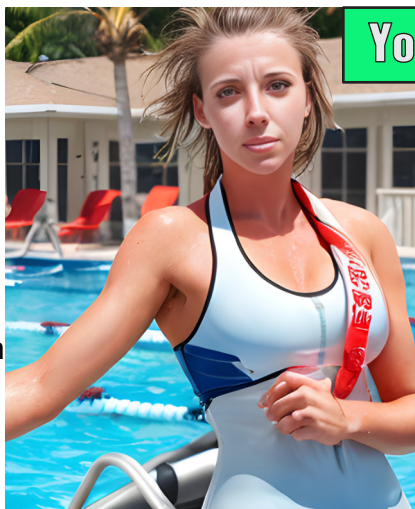
You make decisions

Being a leader is making decisions: what needs to be done immediately, soon, and long term.

Delegating tasks to staff is encouraged to free you up for the more important things.

Is it worth your time to pull the benches from the water when you could be reviewing the day's lesson with the parents?

Establish re-occurring tasks

Being a leader means you are in charge of the lessons for that day. That includes the setup, the distribution of swimmers, the group assignments, the level evaluations, and parent communication.

If the same things need to happen every day make sure that you've trained staff to do them without being told.

Customize tasks for facility

Large outdoor pool camp lessons are different than smaller indoor lessons.

Have training that leads staff to put benches in specific locations, and distribute toys based on level or need.

Share rosters and information with staff and give them things to do:

- Put all toys in logical places
- Put benches where needed
- Clean messes, etc

Listen to staff; adapt to suggestions

Your staff have valuable insight and experience.

When they suggest things that improve your program or operations be open to them.

Avoid thinking you always know best.

Incorporate valuable feedback and adapt your operations.

Use all resources to improve your program.

Ask staff for feedback

Don't be afraid to ask what you can do better. People will tell you if they feel safe.

Encourage feedback: we learn through failure.

Not all suggestions or feedback should be listened to; malicious or inappropriate based on your experience or leadership can be explained why it wouldn't work.

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Staff: Collaborative Leading

You are not an island. A leader is only as good as their team.

Remember to work together. Foster relationships, work side by side, and share responsibility to accomplish goals and tasks.

Collaborative leading is about approaching goals and tasks with a shared sense of purpose.

Beginner swim instructors will not immediately know all of the things they need to do; that's your job to train.

Establish routines, habits, and provide guidance to share your lesson vision with the rest of your staff.

- Speak with "we need to do this…"

- Ask for help instead of always ordering people to do things.

- Lead by delegating responsibility and holding staff accountable.

- You and your staff share a common goal; fun and effective lessons. Frame your language to serve that goal together.

- Avoid singling out people and being rude to them.

- Give praise in public, give corrective feedback in private.

1: Use "we" as a tool and collaborative cue

"We need to put the benches in."
"We need to start lessons on time."

Avoid saying "you need to put the benches in."

Using an inclusive word like "we" helps establish repeatedly that lessons are a team effort.

2: Ask staff for help; can you help...

"Can you help us put the benches in?"
"Can you three check in swimmers and start class?"

Asking goes a long way over barking orders. When working with peers it is easier to ask for help for things you know need doing. Delegate by asking for assistance in accomplishing shared tasks.

3: Explain why things are they way they are

People like to know why they're doing things. They'll question when something doesn't makes sense or seems stupid.

Explain the reasoning behind a policy or procedure to build trust, increase buy in, and grow the team.

Let's Work Together!

"While I review classes, can you..."

Help the staff you're managing to understand your role by stating what you're doing.

Ask for help or delegate responsibilities by first stating what you are busy with.

This gives staff an understanding into priorities, what your job role does, and how they can help in the future.

Inform; not making excuses

Explaining what you're doing is not an excuse for doing something yourself; it is a public declaration of what is more important for you.

The benches need to go in the water, but more importantly swim instructors need to know who they are teaching.

Or

Parents need to talk with you.

"Will you two be in charge of..."

You can delegate responsibility to staff.

Give reliable people a chance to taste leadership by putting them in charge of a simple task like putting in all the benches.

Define scope of task.
Limit the time frame to do it.
Allow them to conscript others to help them.
Follow up and address needs or give praise.

Ask, define, accountable

ASK:
"Will you two be in charge of class locations today and making sure all instructors are in the right pool area?"

DELEGATE:
"Do it by 10am when classes start, and you can bring up to 1 more person to help. Can I explain better?"

ACCOUNTABLE:
"Well done, all classes look in the right spot. Any issues?"

"Today we need to work on..."

Frame your feedback to staff as a collaboration. "We need to work on…" is important language because it implies correctly that you need to work on it too.

If the instructors are failing at something that means YOU are failing at it too; not enough feedback, training, guidance, or accountability.

You will work on helping, they will work on improving.

Staff fails are your fails

When your staff repeatedly fail, or fail en mass then it is your fault.

Or the Aquatic Professional's fault.

You are the leader and YOU are just as crucial a piece of successful fun and effective lessons as the teachers in the water.

When they fail, we fail.

Staff: Objective Based Tasks

Give staff tasks that have a specific objective instead of micromanaging how those things are done.

Vague Task:
Tell the instructors where to go for each level they're teaching.

Micromanaged Task:
Give 1 smiley face, 2 rings, 3 kick-boards, and a level specific sheet to every swim instructor by 10am, you have 2 minutes. Go.

Objective based task:
We need to get the benches in the pool by 10am. We have 15 minutes, can you two put a team together and get that done?

Focus on the goal that you want to achieve.

Delegate tasks to staff in a collaborative way and give them enough training and context to do them well.

Once someone has a basic understanding of what is required (they're properly trained) avoid reviewing fine details unless they're needed.

Delegate tasks by focusing on the objective: hone it into "what needs to happen?"

Need instructors to be ready for their swimmer? Ask someone to gather the instructors and herd them to start location.

1: What needs to happen?

When delegating tasks trim it down to the core objective or goal.

What is the desired result?

Kick boards needed in a level 3? Ask staff to prepare class area before it starts and include kick boards.

2: Aim your language at your goal

"Our goal is to have all swimmers moving as much as possible throughout the lesson. Focus on using the rotation method or 4 x SL + [something] from the wall to the bench."

Objective: reduce downtime in lessons.
Tasks: use rotation method, use lesson plans, etc
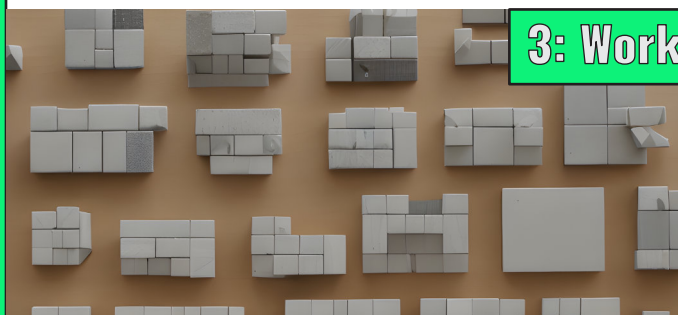
3: Work together; break into chunks

Chunking is breaking complex tasks or skills into smaller pieces, doing the small pieces and putting it all together at the end.

Claim a portion of the task, delegate others, explain relevance, and put them together when done.

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Update staff on teaching locations

Have class assignments finished before the shift.

Have class locations documented and use typical way of communicating information to staff.

Delegate to 1 person to ensure each instructor knows what class they have, at what time, and where it is.

Objective: staff in right place
Task: Inform all staff of info
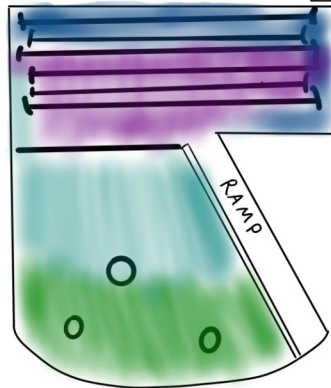
Your basic training should cover most of the framework on how things work.

Objective based tasks are things that need to happen daily, weekly, or outside the normal operations.

As long as your delegate knows generally how to accomplish something you can delegate the task.

Assign tasks that have purposes.

Prepare pool for lessons

Lane lines need to be adjusted to appropriate place.

Swim benches need to be put in the water / taken out.

Toy bags need to be distributed / returned.

Rosters need to be distributed, collected.

Instructors need to debrief with Lesson Coordinator at set location. Breaks discussed.
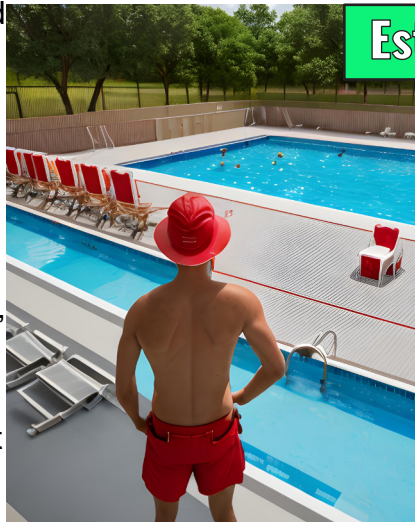
Establish routines & tasks

The more familiar things are the smoother than can run.

Have the same location for your debrief and preparation.

Teach same levels in same spots.

Discuss with staff what objectives need to happen, allow people to volunteer.

Follow up on task completion.

Leadership Opportunities

Delegating objective based tasks is a way of building competence and letting staff prove they're ready for more leadership roles.

Can they be trusted to accomplish tasks that must happen?

Can they understand the importance of the objectives?

Are they curious and helpful?

Do staff intuit tasks?

The leaders are those that know what to do, and start doing them, or asking to take initiative.

Pluck people that learn intuitively the flow of lessons and start helping you before being asked.

They are future leaders, they are people you can trust and rely on, they are people to spend energy mentoring.

Staff: Holding Accountable

Swim instructors are responsible for teaching fun and effective swim lessons. They have responsibilities, they have ownership over aspects of their job.

Lesson Coordinators hold the swim instructors accountable to their responsibilities.

Define responsibilities: what do swim instructors own.

Train, guide, inform: make it clear what they should do.

Evaluate & Feedback: hold staff to trained standards and quality.l

- Give staff responsibility

- Make instructions and objectives clear

- Provide step by step instructions

- Train and prepare staff for success

- Hold staff accountable to the responsibilities and clear instructions you've provided.

Two components to treating staff with respect:

- Give them responsibilities
- Hold them accountable to those responsibilities.

1: Define responsibilities; give ownership

Swim instructors are responsible for teaching a good quality lesson using the lesson plans, level structure, and the activities and challenges of your program.

When staff owns their responsibilities the onus to do well is on them. LC empowers them and holds them accountable to what they're responsible for.

2: Provide guidance, training, and feedback

Hold staff accountable to their responsibilities by providing adequate training; so they understand what is required.

Conduct frequent training to refine objectives and improve ability to meet expectations.
Give frequent feedback on performance.

3: Hold accountable with standards

Use published and trained standards as your metric when giving feedback.

Define specific standards. Train them. Define them.

Give feedback and hold accountable to standards.

Responsibilities

Conduct safe lessons

The safety of the swim class is paramount; first, essential.

The instructor is responsible for teaching classes safely.

They should make good choices informed by common sense and facility specific training.

No level 1s in the deep end.

No letting swimmers roam unattended, no turning back.
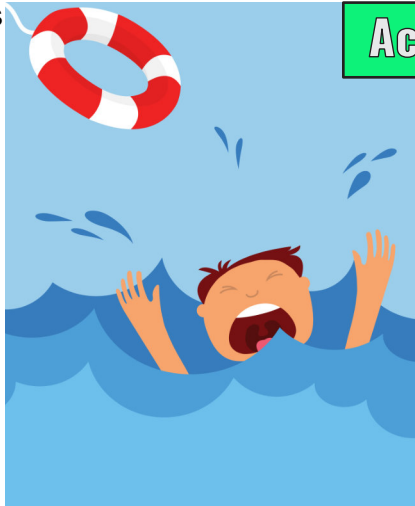
Accountable for safety

Are the swimmers safe?

No turning back on swimmers.

Giving proper physical support in deep water.

Making safe choices on where to take class (deep water or not).

Restricting class behavior to remain on benches in area. Enforcing rules.

Fun and Effective Instruction

Fun = entertaining and interesting teaching that makes participants smile and engaged in lesson.

Are the instructors making the lessons fun?

Effective = are the participants growing or improving daily with specific feedback based on their demonstrated attempts?

Are the instructors producing results?

Accountable for fun & growth

Are the swimmers bored from dull language, lazy teaching, disinterested?

Be entertaining, dynamic and loud.

Have fun with swimmers; be involved.

Use a variable tone of voice with different volume for joy.

Choose diverse challenges and games; be funny, fun, and engaged.

Feedback, pushing the next steps

The instructor is responsible for pushing the swimmers to the next step.

Every skill is broken into "chunks" or smaller pieces.

The instructors need to know the chunks and the next step and guide the swimmers to them incrementally; step by step.

Use feedback to push swimmers to improve.

Accountable for feedback

Are the swimmer's stagnant?

Instructor needs to give specific feedback for swimmers to improve.

Is feedback given enough?

Is feedback aimed at the next incremental step of difficulty?

Is the instructor talking enough, pushing enough, encouraging?

Staff: Feedback & Evaluations

Praise in public, correct in private.

When you tell an instructor something they're doing really well be loud, share it publicly and draw attention to their success.

When you need to improve poor behavior do it privately. Pull the instructor to the side of the pool and speak quietly, or wait till after a lesson.

If you need to intervene in a lesson do it as calmly and without emotion as possible: "can you have swimmers move more frequently?" Give a goal, or target: "use the rotation method."

- Be consistent; avoid favorites.

- Give regular feedback each day.

- Don't wait till evaluation day to say everything you should have said weeks ago.

- There should be no surprises in an employee evaluation.

- Your feedback should come with the same intent as swimmer feedback: instructor improvement.

- Be excited when your staff get better at teaching swim lessons.

- Embrace conflict; say something now instead of waiting until things get worse.

1: Praise in public, improve in private

Encouragement   Praise Achievement   Listen   Explain

Trust   Inspire   Enforce Rules   Have Patience

Use your non-verbals as much as possible. Just as swimmers get in the habit of looking at instructors for feedback, your instructors should be in the habit of looking to YOU for feedback.

Be liberal with your praise. Give corrections one-on-one in private without anger. State facts, give a goal.

2: Give everyone the same effort

Avoid playing favorites. No one likes a manager/supervisor that has clear favorites with different standards.

Hold each instructor to the same objective standards. Give leeway and freedom to those that earn it; prove their understanding of levels & skills.

3: Stick to the facts; focus on improvement

State what happened and craft your feedback on future improvement.

Avoid belaboring or beating a dead horse about something an INS did. Point it out, give alternative future goal, move on. Evaluate on if they improve.

Evaluation Structure

What does the instructor do well?

Document what the swim instructor does well in specifics.

Avoid vague statements like "good job!"

Highlight specific instances of observed excellence and document them.

Share any items from parent praise or feedback from other staff.

Be positive, be honest

Example: Sally does a great job of giving feedback to every swimmer all the time. Swimmers look to her after each attempt and she notices them, gives a non-verbal or a specific comment.

I like how Sally appears to really enjoy teaching; she comes up with new challenges and frequently talks with LC's about how the Activity, Activity, Challenge format works well.

Goals for improvement

Outline your goals for the swim instructor to improve their teaching and behavior.

Avoid saying, "you did this wrong."

Instead, outline a path for future success by offering a target, or a goal.

"Give more specific feedback to each swimmer attempt. Review "effective feedback" in the training workbook."

Look to the future, not past

Example:

John wasn't doing the rotation method on 1/1/2021. After correction he began using it according to the lesson plans and his classes have improved dramatically.

In the next session I'd like to see John enforce the rotation method and circle swimming with more diligence.

Goal: keep swimmers moving more.

Instructor's feedback for you

Give the staff member a chance to give you feedback.

This can be terrifying and worrisome, but don't fret.

Hearing feedback from your staff lets you improve just as your feedback to them helps them.

Embrace hearing from your co-workers and adapting their input to improve your program as a whole!

Listen, acknowledge, learn

Example:

What do you think our swim program does well?

What are some things we can do to make lessons better for swimmers? For instructors?

Do you feel like you've had enough training? What would you like more information or help with?

Staff: Learning for Adults

Anyone 15+ is considered an adult for learning purposes.

How can we make sure our adult (15+) staff learn the best from us?

Adults learn differently from children.

While we use the same format and tactics as we do for teaching lessons we will supplement our activities and challenges with context and information.

We will answer "why" we do things as part of our instruction.

- Respect their time.

- Be prepared in advance. Know what you're doing.

- Introduce a concept, and explain why we're doing it. Explain how and why each item is important.

- Provide experiential opportunities. Let the staff practice doing things.

- Provide reading, notes, guides, information as a resource, but practice and drill with actions.

- Use a mix of visual, demonstration, and verbal delivery. Avoid long speeches and lectures.

1: Respect staff time: set expectations.

Define start time, breaks, and end time. Adhere to it.

Outline what training will look like: discussion, group activities, in water, etc.

Provide clear expectations for what staff is expected to be responsible for and what you will do.
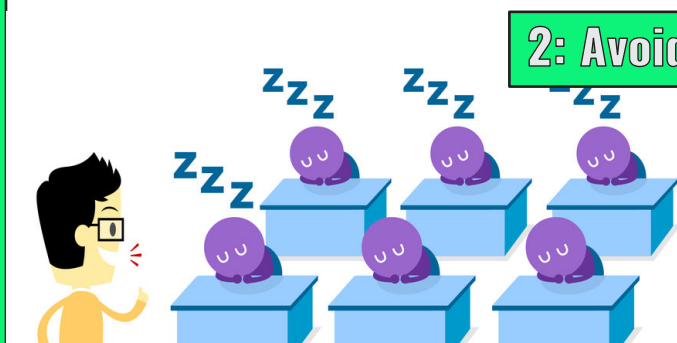
2: Avoid long lectures or reading off sheets.

Keep your speaking to a minimum.

Avoid reading out of the book as much as possible.

Do things. Use activity, activity, challenge format to give staff a chance to do things or be active.

3: Learn by doing. Explain "why."

Give staff opportunity to practice concepts in scenarios or physically do something.

Have the staff do the rotation method after reviewing it in pictures or videos.
Explain the "why" behind processes and policies.

Reading, Seeing, Doing

We attempt to provide as many different mediums for learning as possible.

Provide reading material.

Offer images and videos.

Use gif's and live examples.

Have staff DO things as close to real world scenario as possible.

Teach using all the tools

Multi-media and interactive activities are best.

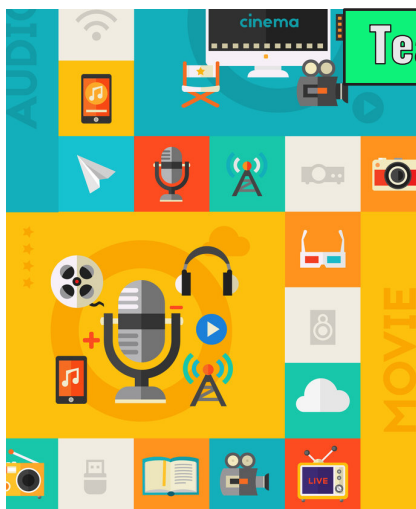Even better, let the staff come up with their own activities aimed at skills you want them to research review and describe.

Use TV's on mobile stands.

Use phones and video on YouTube!

Learn by teaching

Before training delegate a section of your training day to members of your staff.

Ask them to prepare an activity and come up with instructions.

Have them teach the topic to their peers.

We learn very well when we have to teach a topic.

Give them tools to succeed

Point staff to resources:

- www.swimminglessonsideas.com/resources/

- Teaching Swimming online course

- Level structure course

- YouTube

- DuckDuckGo.com

Make training relevant

As you go about teaching adults and teens remember that they want to know WHY they're doing something.

Explain why each activity and concept is relevant to teaching swimming.

Inform staff about why the rotation method is effective.

Explain why saying "okay" at the end of a sentence erodes authority.

Why are we learning this?

Explaining why is a two-way road of respect.

We will attempt to respect our staff's time by training only the most relevant and important skills, while letting them be fun, entertaining, and have self-direction during lessons.

They will show respect back by learning the training material and following the expectations of lessons.

Staff: Discipline

Your facility should have a standard procedure for handling staff that do not show up on time, or do not show up at all.

Pay attention to common parent management tactics like "I emailed the other lesson coordinator."

Hold staff accountable to their shifts.

Remove the emotion, and find a solution.

Document everything.

Take action when there are trends, repeat offenders, and stick to the facts.

Non compliance:
- Remind staff of their responsibilities, what they have ownership of: quality lessons.
- Give direction towards desired actions: "speak more to the students and less to other instructors."

Disrespect / Inappropriate behavior & language:
- Intervene immediately.
- In private detail why language and behavior is not appropriate for children and families.
- Give stern warning

Dangerous actions:
- Intervene immediately.
- Remove offending staff member.
- Replace with another staff or self.

1: Remove emotion and anger from voice

Do not approach your staff with visible anger or rage.

Remove emotion from your discipline. State in clear facts their behavior, explain why it is a problem, and detail what your expectations are.

Remain calm. Remain in control.
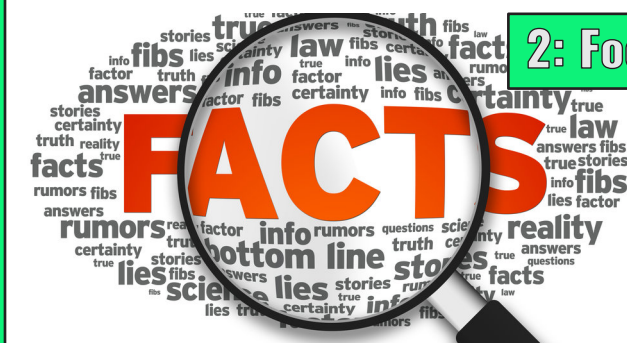
2: Focus on the facts and desired outcome

State the clear facts of their behavior: you did this.

Describe exactly what you expect their behavior to look like and be.

State what you need the staff member to do in the future; how can they improve?

3: Follow up with staff. Avoid ignoring

If you give staff feedback on their behavior to correct failures make sure you follow up with them.

Encourage positive behavior with praise.

Discourage negative failures with further training.

Document everything

Write everything down.

Document with objective facts what happened.

"Sally showed up late by 10 minutes without calling in advance."

"Johnny did not show up to work. Called at 8:02am. No response."

Use your program's system to write everything down.

Verbal warnings

Have a conversation with the staff member.

Be specific. Be direct. Be clear.

Repeat yourself.

Ask if they understand.

Provide context and training on why their behavior is a problem.

Track trends and act on them

Reference your documentation. Look at your records.

Is Sally constantly late?

Is Johnny missing many shifts without letting anyone know?

Look for patterns and have a meeting with the employee.

Use your evidence and documentation to back up your issues.

Written warnings

After you've verbally reprimanded someone, and documented it, if they're still making the same errors, it is time for a formal "write up."

Use your program's disciplinary form and write the objective facts.

State desired outcome (what the staff member needs to change), and state consequences of further failure.

Deliver to staff in person.

Quickly remove

If you've offered opportunity to improve, if you've provided training and guidance and still, still your employees are failing at the same things it may be time to remove them from employment.

Quickly move to remove bad seeds.

Get rid of people that do not change.

Their actions led to this result.

Dismissal

Follow your program's rules for dismissing a staff member.

Send them home.

Describe exactly why they're being fired.

Be clear, even handed, and fair.

Be respectful, kind, and encouraging putting the action on their behavior.

Swimming & Meditation

Meditation is training your thoughts to do what YOU want them to do, not what the brain wants.

Some describe your brain as the "monkey brain" doing instinctual things.

When we're teaching swimming we want the swimmers to be deliberate with their actions and swimming strokes.

Meditation is the PRACTICE of making your brain do exactly what YOU want it to do.

We use focus on breath as a tool to train your brain to do something very boring: focus on breathing.

Boring thought is super difficult because the brain craves stimulation.

Training yourself to focus on your breath isn't about the breath. It has nothing to do with thinking about your breathing.

It is all about training your thoughts to focus on what you CHOOSE to think about.

Our goal is to train our swimmers to think about their swimming with deliberate specific practice.

We want to encourage swimmers, just like meditation encourages purposeful thoughts, to purposefully control their bodies in very specific swimming motions.

1: Focus, Focus, Play

Activity, Activity, Challenge is deliberate. We want short bursts of intense focus followed by a palate cleanser: challenges.

We ask that swimmers give energy and attention to doing the activities well, then allow a fun and engaging refresher with the challenges.

2: Short distances = intense thought & skill

We restrict longer swims because we want the swimmer to spend their energy doing the short brief burst of action with powerful effort.

Demand excellence. Demand performance. Demand that swimmers put their effort into each attempt. We demand by asking, giving feedback and praise.

3: Thoughts develop into actions

Swimming requires specific unnatural movements.

Swimmers need to think, or tell their limbs to move in those choreographed movements.

What starts with their will translates into action.

Deliberate Practice

Clear explanation of skill

The instructor must clearly define what skill they are asking a swimmer to do.

Provide visual, example, or video of the skill.

Allow the swimmer to attempt it and fail.

Make it clear what the instructor wants, and aim the swimmer at that vision.

Know where you're going

The swimmer needs to know what the target skill is and what it looks like.

Once they understand, they can model it, or ape it.

Movements will be sloppy, erratic, raw at first.

Refine through multiple attempts.

Thoughtful attempts at skill

Our goal is to provide opportunity for deliberate practice; or the focused thought at improving or doing a specific action.

We want the swimmer to do 3 strokes of freestyle returning to position 11 with each stroke.

Do they think about position 11? Do they thoughtfully put their hands in position 11?

Thought leads to action.
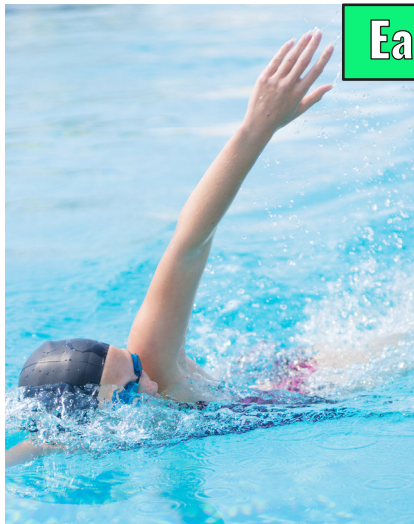
Each attempt is deliberate

Each attempt or round of 3 x SL + 3 FREE in Position 11 should include a specific thought in the swimmer to do something specific.

Maybe on the first round it is to just meet the instructions; streamline and do 3 strokes.

Maybe on the second round the thought is to hit position 11 with a straight elbow.

Improvement from feedback

The final piece of deliberate practice is feedback from a "master."

With every attempt our goal is to provide feedback to the swimmer.

If they are going to put the effort into thinking about doing something well, we have to put the effort into watching them, evaluating that effort, and providing feedback intended to improve them.
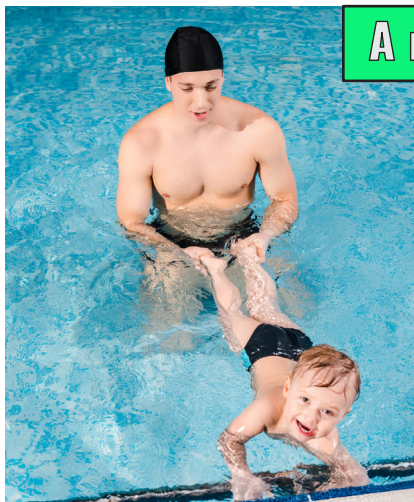
A master's eye accelerates

Swimmers will learn faster when a "master" gives relevant feedback.

The swim instructor is the master.

The feedback the swim instructor gives to a focused attempt will dramatically increase new skill acquisition.

The instructor's feedback is a CRUCIAL role in accelerating learning.

Personal Growth

You can improve by asking yourself one question: what is the next step?

Be curious.

Be interested in "why" things are done a certain way.

After each day evaluate yourself by asking, "what could I have done better?"

Remembering what you did in a lesson and critically evaluating the success or failure of your plans is an important step at improvement.

If something went poorly identify why, make an adjustment, attempt again.

You will fail.

Your instructors will fail.

How you handle failure will either let you improve yourself and your program or drive you away from success.

Remember challenges; learn from them to smooth things out in the future.

If something isn't working like you expected it to, change something, or stop the activity.

Cut your losses and avoid forcing something that isn't working.

Iterate with small changes.

1: What went well? What can I improve?

Define what parts of activities or challenges went well.

Could the success be better? Could your instructions be clearer?

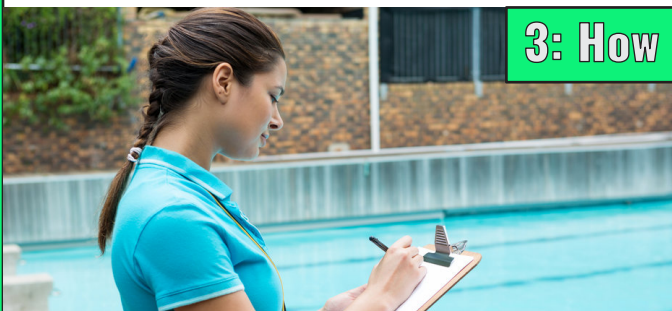What can you leave alone because it worked?

2: What failed and how can we adjust?

Define parts of activities and challenges that you struggled with.

Maybe you had to explain something in more detail, or had to stop people and start over.

What roadblocks did you encounter? How to fix?

3: How can I do my job better?

Ask yourself, "how can I improve."

Ask your staff, "What can I do to better help you?"

Listen. Listen. Listen to feedback from staff and coworkers and if it is valid, do to improve.

Ask for more

Discover the next step

Your training and the program you work with will take you only so far.

They'll outline what is expected of you, and what you are responsible for. They should define what you have to hold staff accountable to.

But what is the next step?

Personal growth comes from looking at the job and thinking about what isn't written.

Initiative= Learn what to do

Learn the flow of work and the job responsibilities, then look beyond it.

Start thinking about the larger picture.

Look at the lesson structure.
Look at the level structure.
Look at processes and how things are done. Are there areas of improvement?

Do them. Start taking action to move your program in your direction.
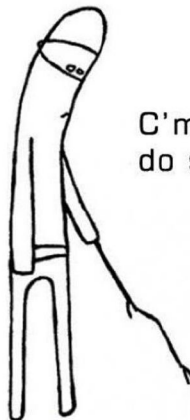
Avoid waiting to be told

I like to say that I'm "opening the door" to staff and swimmers.

I want them to walk through the door.

Don't wait for your supervisor to tell you to discipline a staff member that is disruptive.

Do it.

Take the actions you know you should take, or think you should take.

C'mon, do something...

Take action; do things

Be bold. Face conflict with staff immediately and get it over with.

Learn the systems you work in and start making the system better; testing, evaluating, feedback, levels, etc.

If you're in doubt, think in an action: I could be [doing something] right now.

Do it. Talk to that staff member. Talk to the parents. Clean up the deck. Do stuff.

Push for more; lead by asking

In your regular meetings with your supervisor ask for more responsibility.

Come prepared with information about why you need to take action, what the benefits are, and how it will change the program.

Avoid waiting for a supervisor to give you tasks; come up with your own and ask for support.

Ask for more responsibility

"What more can I be doing?"

"Can I help with…"

If you want to further your leadership and earn more promotions, or get feathers in your belt (achievements for future jobs and resumes) then you have to ask and take on more responsibility. Remind your supervisor that you're ready.
Ask for more.

Thank you!

Thank you for reading and using this training workbook for Lesson Coordinators and Aquatic Professionals.

The goal is to help new managers to work with staff and get better results from their training, instruction, and planning.

If there are core concepts that you think are lacking or that we could improve on, please reach out and share your feedback.

Send suggestions and improvements to: jeff@swimminglessonsideas.com

This has been a labor of love and respect. My hope is that you or your staff benefit from a robust training guide, level specific help and explanation for testable skills, and use the green sections for improving your leadership on and off deck.

Swimming Ideas, LLC started as a resource for swim lesson games and has grown to a repository for high quality developmental swim practices, training courses, and tools to provide fun and effective swimming instruction.

We want you to have better swim lessons today. We provide free references and resources for generating ideas and teaching lessons.

Need Level specific lesson plans? Check out our All-Access Membership for your Team where every person can take the online courses, download the lesson plans, follow the PDF training workbooks, and access image laden skill sheets.

As an Aquatic Professional you can download all the PDF files for books and lesson plans and print them out for staff to use in the water.

Who am I?

Jeffrey Napolski is a career Aquatics Professional with 25 years of experience teaching swimming and working at indoor and outdoor pools. He is a master game creator and author of Teaching Swimming: Fun and Effective Instruction, How to Create Fun and Effective Swim Games, and How to Create Fun and Effective Developmental Swim Practices.

He works as an Aquatics Manager for a park district and vacations in Door County, WI with his family.

Like most aquatic people Jeff started lifeguarding and teaching swimming in high school at 15.

"There are no limitations to the mind except those we acknowledge."

"Most so called failures are only temporary defeats."

- Napoleon Hill