

The Lesson Plan

A suggested lesson plan for a 45 minute class would be;

1. 5 minutes warm up which may include fun activities for the lower groups
2. 5 minutes revision
3. 30 minutes stroke technique which could consist of either;
2 x 15 minute segments allowing for work on 2 strokes or
3 x 10 minute segments allowing for work on 3 strokes
4. 5 minutes jumping and diving practice which may be done in deep end, off blocks or diving board

Total = 45 minute lesson

Please ensure adequate time is spent on kicking activities.

Even at the higher levels check the basics such as body position, breathing and kick technique – they can get overlooked when, in fact, they might need fine-tuning. The basics are like the foundations of a building – if they are not built strong and true, you can never make a really good swimmer.

Other Hints

- ◆ Whilst diving is NOT a tested competency until later in the programme, most swimmers should have a rudimentary dive in place by Beginner C. If you have more advanced levels that are having trouble with their dive, go back and cover the rudiments from the side of the pool as shown in the Beginner C section of the curriculum. *Most* problems with diving stem from the head position and the confidence of the swimmer in entering headfirst. Most learners will want to lift their head to 'see' where they are going which results in a poor entry. The teacher needs to work at their skills and confidence, so they can in theory dive with their eyes closed.
- ◆ **Fundamentals that must be learned at any and every level include body position, streamlining and Finger Tip Drag Freestyle.** Once these skills have been taught, please insist that EVERY push or dive is performed with a streamline and that EVERY stroke of Freestyle is performed with Finger Tip Drag so it becomes an ingrained habit. EVERY child must be able to consistently perform these 2 skills. Please check that all of your swimmers are able to perform both skills *perfectly*, and if they can't, don't do ANY other work until they can. Streamlining, perfect body position and hence a well-balanced swimmer is the result of head position – get the head right and all else will follow.
- ◆ **Two exercises that the owner NEVER wants to see in H²O are**
 1. **Holding the kickboard with 2 hands and kicking with the head being turned sideways to breathe and**
 2. **Backstroke one arm or catch up stroke, with the resting arm above the head – it must *always* be kept at the leg.**
- ◆ Have some 'filler' drills that you can use at each level to keep kids busy and constructive if you are working one-on-one. E.G. In Beginner A, kids can always practice bubble and breath 10 times; kicking on the wall or kickboard while they are waiting their turn at something else. Unless a child really needs the rest, all children should be kept active and busy all of the time. Children who are bored or idle can become disruptive. Also, parents will not see value for money if their child is constantly waiting to have a turn. Filler drills will allow you to give 6 students each full 45 minute class rather than only 7 or so minutes of your undivided time.
- ◆ Aim to find out some information about any new swimmers in your classes. For instance at times, swimmers get 'lost' in the system despite our best efforts. One of the most

important questions is “How long has each swimmer been at that level”. A child who has been at one level for 3 or 4 terms needs some major assistance.

- ◆ There are times when it is better to limit your swimmers to shorter distances rather than longer ones, particularly when introducing a new skill. Shorter distances will allow the teacher more feedback opportunities and greater interaction with each student within the same time. E.G teaching Breaststroke timing is often best with just 2 or 3 strokes out and back aiming to perfect those, before sending them off on longer distances.
- ◆ Whilst the use of fins is advocated do not overuse them to the point that swimmers become reliant on them, always ensure adequate time is spent kicking without fins too. You can also use them to ‘reward’ swimmers e.g. “ If you do this really well, you can use fins on the next one.”
- ◆ Despite every good intention there will be some children who need more attention than others in your class. These children may respond to a ‘quick fix’ solution. In other words, sometimes you get better, faster results not by giving lengthy explanations and drill progressions, but by finding a short cut that may save a lot of time and effort. As an example lets imagine that you have spent considerable time with your class over a few weeks thoroughly teaching a high elbow recovery, only to have a new swimmer from another swim school enter your class who swims with straight arms. Perhaps you want to move the group on to something else, but you need to spend some time with the new swimmer to get him up to speed on high elbows. Simply telling the child to touch his armpits with his thumb on each stroke *may* get the desired result quickly. If the child does not respond to the quick fix, then you will need to try a slower, more thorough approach.
- ◆ Another ‘quick fix’ is to get into the water with the swimmer and move their limbs in the desired movement.
- ◆ **It is *mandatory* for teachers to be in the water for Beginner A, B and C classes. It is *preferred* that teachers spend some time on occasions in the water with the higher levels too as you can get better, faster results.**
- ◆ All teachers should talk to every parent on both the first and last lesson of the term, to update the parent on the child’s progress. However, if a parent wants to talk at length to you, please arrange an alternative time to talk when it won’t take you away from your class. Most questions can usually be referred back to the desk for one of the girls to follow up on, but if necessary have them leave their details at the desk and make a follow up call to them.
- ◆ Always finish your class on a high note. Kids will remember their *last* moments of the lesson whether they are good or not and it will effect their attitude the next time they come. Make sure they finish with something *fun and leave the pool smiling* so they look forward to the next lesson.