

Lesson Guidelines

This is a list of guidelines for all instructors to follow. This will clear up some of the grey areas and make our program more consistent and in turn we will be providing a better service to our customers. Most instructors follow these guidelines already, but if we all follow them consistently our program will improve.

Start and finish times

Our customers pay close attention to when their lessons start and finish and expect to get their moneys worth. It is very important that you start and finish your lessons on time. It is difficult to start a lesson on time when you are teaching classes back to back, but do your best. Be sure to finish your lessons on time so that you can start your next class as close to “on time” as possible and to ensure that our customer are getting what they pay for.

Keep your students moving

People learn by doing, especially when it comes to swimming. Parents like to see their children moving as well. Think of ways that you can keep everyone in your class busy doing something at all the times. Blowing bubbles, practicing floats and kicking are all good activities to fill time. Instead of having your kids practicing a skill one at a time why not have them all practicing at the same time. Use wave formations instead of just one person at a time. This might mean that you’re bringing your higher level classes into the shallow end of the pool, but that is fine and you might find that your kids perform better in water where they can touch the bottom. Challenge yourself to keep all your kids moving all the time. One of the reasons that swim team kids get good results quickly is because they swim a lot. The Canadian Red Cross states that 95% of class time should be wet.

Instructors in the water

The children in your class love it when the instructor gets in the water. I realize that the water may be cool and you might have 3 more hours of teaching ahead of you, but you need to be in the water. My rule is every class, every day the instructor must get in the water. Remember that most people learn by seeing skills performed and demonstrations cannot be done from the deck.

Pre and Post-tests

It is important for us as instructors to pre-test our students to determine what skill level they are at. This will give you a place to start your lesson and it will identify what you need to work on with your class. We want to take our students at whatever level they are at and move on from there. We don’t want to waste time working on skills that they have already perfected. To make your teaching time more effective and concise evaluate your students at the beginning of each lesson and at the beginning of the lesson set.

Post-testing your students is equally important. It is valuable for your students to see what they have accomplished in that class and to motivate them to do more the next time they come to the pool. It is also valuable to you the instructor. If your students all accomplished something then your teaching methods and styles were successful. But if your students didn’t accomplish very much then maybe you need to change your approach. Post-testing your students will also post-test you.

Use of play equipment

The boats and water slides should be special treats and should **NOT** be used every day. Parents pay for swimming lessons and expect to get that. They can bring their own kids to the pool to use the play equipment at any time, but they often cannot teach their children to swim. This doesn't mean that you don't use them at all because they are very valuable teaching aids, but their use should be a minimum. **Water slides should only be used on the fifth and the last days of the lesson set.**

Standards

Standards are set nationally by the Red Cross and for standards to work, they have to be standard for everyone. You can definitely teach to a higher standard, but you have to evaluate at the appropriate level. When deciding whether or not to complete a child don't even think about what kind of successes or failures that child will have in the next level. If a child can perform all the required skills in their level then he/she is ready for the next level. Make sure that the children in your classes can perform the skills in their level before you move them on to the next one. The back of every class sheet states clearly what skills must be performed before a participant can move on. It is very important that children are in a swimming level appropriate to skill level.

Lessons cards

Start positive, say something constructive and then finish positive. It is very important that you re-direct the customers to what level they should be registering in next. Make it perfectly clear to the customer if their child passed or needs to do that level again. Say something like "re-register in AQ 3 again". When a child doesn't move on to the next level make sure that you have the reasons why written on the report card.

Pre-school Lessons

- PS 1** Every class should be taught in the Teach or Leisure pools.
- PS 2** The first class should take place in the Teach or Leisure pools. The remaining classes should start with 5 to 10 minutes in the Big pool and then move to the Teach or Leisure pools for the rest of the class.
- PS 3** On the first day start with 5 or 10 minutes in the Big pool. The remaining classes should start with 15 to 20 minutes in the Big pool and then move to the Teach or Leisure pools for the rest of the class.

PS 4/5 Most of these classes should be in the Big pool.

These are suggested guidelines and should be treated that way. If you have a very advanced PS 2 class, feel free to spend more time in the big pool and if you have a weak PS 4 maybe spend more time in the smaller pools. Don't be afraid to do stroke work in the teach or leisure pools. Some children perform better in warm water and where they can comfortably touch the bottom. Some of our goals of the pre-school program are to introduce children to the big pool and to have them feel comfortable there.

AquaQuest Lessons

- AQ 1-3** Most of these classes should be spent in the big pool with only about five minutes of your class in the warm pools. A child should leave AQ 3 being very comfortable in the deep end and should be able to float on their front and back competently.

- AQ 4-6** The emphasis of these levels is front crawl, so the majority of your classes should be spent working on this skill. Most of your time should be spent in the big pool working on front crawl. Front crawl drills like kicking are very valuable to candidates in these levels.
- AQ 7-9** In these levels the candidates get introduced to all the different swimming strokes. The majority of your time should be spent on introducing and practicing these new swimming skills.
- AQ 10-12** Refining strokes and endurance are the emphasis to these levels and should be what you spend most of the time working on.

Private Lessons

First and foremost you have to remember that parents pay a lot of money for these lessons and they expect results. It is important that on the first day of lessons you find out exactly what the customer wants or expects from the lesson. Typically people register in private lessons to work on a specific skill like front crawl, so if this is the case you should spend most of your time working on that skill. If parents are unspecific about the skills they want you to work on spend most of your class time practicing swimming.

Record Keeping and Binders

It is very important to keep good and up-to-date records of all your swimmers. When a parent asks you why their child didn't complete a level you will be able to back up your decision with the paper work. Also if you are sick or miss a class a substitute instructor will be able to look at your worksheets and pick up where you left off.

Your binder needs to be kept in a place that others can have access to it. Not being able to find your binder is very frustrating for a substitute instructor. If the substitute instructor doesn't know what the class has already worked on then the new instructor will end up spending a lot of time reviewing skills that have already been completed. So keep your binder accessible.

Clean-up

After you are finished teaching you are expected to help clean up the entire deck. The pool is a very busy place and the deck needs to be cleaned and cleared of equipment as soon as possible. Often the only guards that are available are guarding a swim and are not able to leave their guarding position to clean the deck. Leaving equipment lying around the pool deck can be dangerous to the public and it doesn't look very good. It is your responsibility to clean up all equipment after teaching lessons.