

Drowning preventative Swimming Education in Norway

Learn to swim conference 2016

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A decorative graphic at the bottom of the slide featuring a blue water splash with numerous bubbles and light reflections, set against a background of layered blue waves.

Background

Drowning preventative swimming education?

Definition of swimming?

Pool – Outdoor – any difference – any need for different definitions?

An example

Abid Raja is a well known Norwegian Politician.
After two boys drowned he decided that he had to learn to swim.

Shortly after he did participate in a reality show.

<http://www.vgtv.no/#!id=37867>

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Swimming

“Swimming is a person’s ability to move the body in the water without sinking while being able to breathe”.
(Michael Iwersen, Kystlivredningen Denmark 2015).

- Able to swim 1945 – swim 200 meters in open water
- 4 basic skills – head below surface, float, glide, propulsion
- ”Swimming test” in Denmark (in pools)

A fundamental change

Swimming education – from outside into pools

*Swimming-ability is to gain control and swim to safety after unexpectedly falling into water.
(Whiting 1971)*

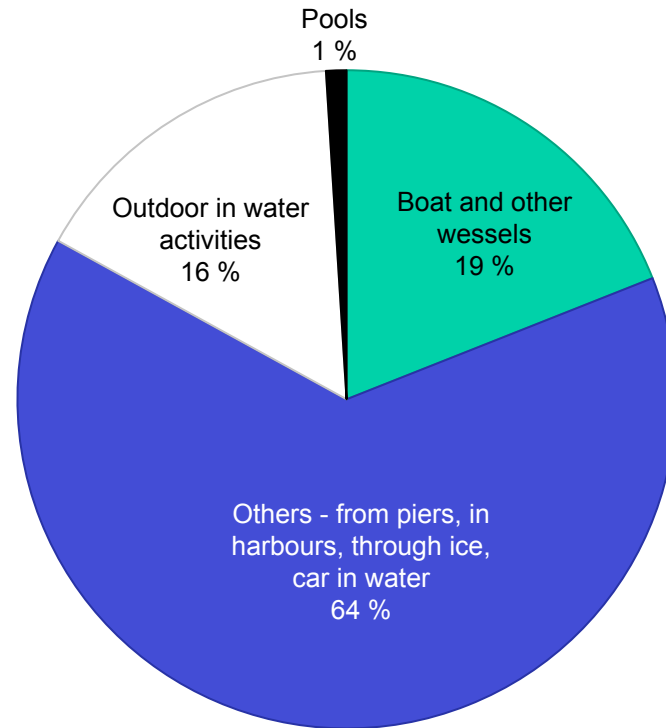
Swimming-ability

Swimming-ability 1980 - Described as 8 basic skills in pool (4 additional)

Test (Nordic def. 1996): Fall into deep water, swim 200 meters where at least 50 meters on back

Part of Swedish curriculum

Drowning Accidents in Norway



Mostly

- "good swimmers"
- less than 3 meters from possible rescue

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Water competence:

Kevin Moran: *"the sum of all personal aquatic movements that help prevent drowning, as well as the associated water safety knowledge, attitudes, judgement and behaviours that facilitate safety in, on and around the water"* (R. Stallman; in Proceedings of the Lifesaving Conference p. 71, 2011)

Includes swimming, swimming ability + 8 additional skills

Norwegian curriculum:

Swimming:

- Playing in water and perform the basic skills

Swimming-ability:

- Fall into deep water, swim 100 meter on front, during which, perform a dive, get hold of an object with the hands, stop and rest for 3 minutes, then swim 100 meters on the back, and exit the water.

Water competance part 1:

- Behave safely in, on and around water, be able to describe the dangers and call for help.

Water competance part 2:

- Perform the basic swimming skills on the front, on the back, on the side and submerge and ability save oneself after a fall into water.
- In practice show safe behaviour and ability to assess the risks and take the necessary safety precautions in, on and around water and different weather conditions.

The new Foundation

From conflict to cooperation

In a drowning preventative perspective, it doesn't matter if we focus on swimming, swimming ability or water competence as long as we clarify our objectives, take account of the process and agree about the final goals.

In practice Swimming Federations focus on "Swimming"- Lifesaving Organisations follow through to "Water Competance"

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Is it possible?

At first glance it seems to be difficult or even impossible to have swimming education in cold water.

However with regular lessons one will acclimatise to the conditions:

[http://tv.nrk.no/serie/norge-rundt/
DVNR04005014/12-12-2014#t=1m52s](http://tv.nrk.no/serie/norge-rundt/DVNR04005014/12-12-2014#t=1m52s)

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Health and Safety

The formal legal requirements for drowning preventative swimming education (including outdoor) is founded in the Health and Safety laws and regulations.

The main intention is to prevent serious accidents

Documentation

However, by **documenting** the Safety Procedures, one can ensure that:

- the knowledge is in the organisation
- the teachers feel comfortable and safe about teaching
- the owners, managers and employees are protected against any lawsuits

Teachers qualifications

- Knowledge about safety procedures
- Swimming and Lifesaving skills
- Pedagogical Education and experience in actual environments in general
- Specific for swimming...
- Procedures for educating and introducing new personal for the actual activities

Safety Procedures i.e. "on the beach"

- Organisation
- Teachers tasks and responsibility
- Groups
- Changing areas
- "Safe areas"
- "Exposed areas" – safety routines
- Emergency action plan

Supervision for "early rescue"

Keep close to the activity and look for:

- Cold shock
- Exhaustion
- Anxiety
- Instinctive Drowning Response

General behaviour

- Hyperventilation
- Illness

Safety Procedures

i.e. "going into cold water"

On entering water – use the time needed to master cold shock

Submerge the head – ensure everyone has control

Swim in shallow water – ensure everyone has control

When entering deep water – surveillance for "early rescue".

Safety Procedures in the Water

Self awareness of limitations due personality and the conditions

Practice further within these boundaries to reduce the limitations – moving the boundaries

Learn "to be rescued" – if in difficulty know how to:

- Go to the nearest safe place
- Call for attention
- Grasp and hold on to rescue equipment

It is absolutely forbidden to grab hold of or submerge each other

Safety procedures "after swimming"

- Get warm and dry
- Get something to eat
- Get everybody together
- Make sure that everybody is ready "to move on"
- Give voice to personal experience

Overall progression

- Starting with lifejackets – for general safety
- Introducing lifebuoys, boards, rubber - dinghies...for safety as well as pedagogical means.
- Lifejackets and clothes
- Wet suits
- Swimming "gear" – often covered for protection from jellyfish...

Results

First project, just outdoor education – 95% learned to swim and gained water competence part 1

Most effective outdoor in autumn – indoor during winter
outdoor in late spring – summer

Must be combined with other outdoor learning

Important with support from parents – “problems” are not obstacles and argument for not doing outdoor education but something important to overcome and an argument for outdoor education

Over all drowning prevention

In addition to what's mentioned here already, it's important to

Have a lot of fun