

Workshop 6

Swimming and water based activities



Workshop focus

In Queensland's climate, swimming and water based activities are popular pastimes for people of all ages. Many homes have pools, and many families take holidays by the beach. Water based activities are often included as part of the school curriculum. It is important that young people have a level of confidence in the water, whether it be for practising stroke development, playing water based games or activities, relaxing, or going to the beach.

It is highly likely that volunteers in the school community will have the opportunity to be involved in assisting with swimming and water based activities.

*Note: Participants do have the option **not to participate** in this workshop. Participants may prefer to simply observe the workshop instead. If this is the case, the facilitator may need to organise students or others so that participants have someone to observe.*

Pre-workshop requirements

Activity sheet 6.2 - Suggesting and demonstrating ideas for action

Add extra scenarios if necessary. Photocopy this sheet onto card and then cut out so that there is one card per pair of participants.

Ensure that participants know which pool is being used, meeting time and, if they are participating, to bring togs, towel, hat, sunscreen, sunglasses and a change of clothes. Ensure that you have met with the pool licensee to obtain clearance for the activity to occur. Ensure that the pool has the required equipment available, or organise to borrow from somewhere else.

If, as a facilitator, you would like further information, activities or ideas for conducting this session, refer to Meaney, P (Ed) (1994) Teaching Swimming and Water Safety. Melbourne, McPhersons Printing.

Materials required

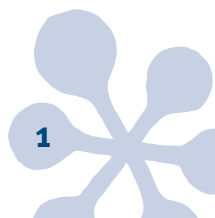
- 25m or 50m pool
- Butcher's paper and pen
- Kick boards and other floatation devices (enough kickboards for one per person)
- Water polo balls (or some other large ball suitable for use in a pool - enough for one per three participants)
- Objects that will sink to the bottom of the pool but be visible to the naked eye, such as 50 cent coins, golf balls, coloured weighted plastic rings, coloured numbered plastic disks (you will need to check which objects are acceptable with the pool licensee).
- Copy of Workshop 6 from the *Participant's Handbook*.

During this workshop it will be difficult for participants to record information in their *Participant's Handbook* when they are wet. It might be advisable to suggest that participants bring their Handbook in a plastic bag. When it is time to record an activity, allow participants to get out of the pool and be thoroughly dry before writing down notes.

Note that photocopy master sheets for activities are found at the end of each workshop section.

Workshop outcomes

1. Participants should be able to demonstrate or explain a range of water familiarisation activities suitable for young people.
2. Participants should be able to demonstrate or explain the basic points to help students with swimming freestyle.
3. Participants should be able to articulate some of the safety considerations when working in aquatic environments, and some ways of organising groups in the water.



Orientating phase

Sequence of learning experiences

Activity 1 - Understanding the aquatic environment

As a group, create a list of things they might need to find out about or consider when working with a group of young people in an aquatic environment. These should be recorded on the board or butcher's paper. The following ideas might be used as prompts:

- getting to and from the pool;
- supervising change room activities;
- safety considerations;
- accident or emergency procedures;
- skill/confidence level/range within the group;
- features of pool/environment (eg deep/shallow end, location of phone);
- organisation of students in aquatic environments (eg stronger/more confident swimmers towards deep end);
- simple problems that may be experienced and what to do (eg cramps, chlorine affected eyes, water in ears);
- organisation of the group (eg so that the whole group can be seen at one time, so the group can hear instructions clearly);

Point out to participants that they should always be dressed ready to jump into the pool immediately and assist any student experiencing problems. It is not satisfactory to think that pieces of equipment can simply be thrown to a student if they are in trouble.

After the discussion, participants should record this information in Activity 1 in the *Participant's Handbook*.

Notes for workshop facilitators

Participants should be reminded that when working in any new environment, they need to be aware of some of the safety and hazard considerations of that environment. They have a responsibility to find out some of this information before assisting in this environment.

Participants could be reminded to think of some of the socio-cultural reasons why young people may not feel confident in aquatic environments, and how they can address this.

As a facilitator, you should find out about the aquatic experience of the participants within the group.

It would be useful to know how participants would expect to assist in aquatic environments, as this may be a guide in the selection of activities, or the amount of time spent on various activities.

Reassure participants that the teacher is ultimately responsible for the safety and well-being of the students, however participants must show due care with any assistance they offer.

Remind participants that some teachers will provide lists of activities to guide the program. The tutor's role is to help the teacher as students follow the sequence of activities on the list.

Participants should also be reminded that as role models it is essential that they are sunsafe in their dress including a broad brimmed hat, sunscreen, a sunsafe shirt and sunglasses.

Approximate timeframe - 10 minutes

Orientating phase

Sequence of learning experiences

Notes for workshop facilitators

Activity 2 - Warming up

Guide participants through a series of stretches suitable for warming up the muscles associated with swimming. Particular attention should be paid to the arms and shoulders, as well as the legs.

Ask participants to record in their *Participant's Handbook*, any reflections they have on the warm up activities used.

If all students can swim, it may be appropriate for them to do a slow swim instead as a warm up. This will need to be left to the discretion of the teacher. If students are involved in vigorous physical activity there is always a greater risk of injury associated with not stretching. Many of the following activities assume a limited swimming ability.

Approximate timeframe - five minutes

Activity 3 - Entering the water

Discuss the different ways of entering the water and the safety considerations associated with each eg slide entry, using the stairs, jumping or diving in. Refer participants to Activity 3 in the *Participant's Handbook* for the different techniques of entry into the pool. Explain that this information is provided as a reference for them and they should read and understand the different types of entry and when they are used.

Ask participants to enter the water using the slide entry. Explain that this is the preferred method of entry for all students and as role models participants are expected to do this as well.

Ask participants to do some warm up widths of the pool, using any method eg kicking with or without a board, swimming.

Explain that most students should be entering the water by sitting on the side of the pool and sliding in. Safety considerations if students are jumping or diving include:

- only jumping or diving in at the deep end;
- ensuring that people do not jump or dive on each other; and
- when using stairs, go down facing the stairs to minimise slippage.

Facilitators should use this opportunity to note the range of abilities of participants.

Approximate timeframe - five minutes



Enhancing phase

Facilitators should negotiate the following activities with participants in accordance with individual confidence and competence. Some activities may be excluded, or timeframes may be increased or decreased.

Sequence of learning experiences

Notes for workshop facilitators

Activity 4 - Exploring water familiarisation activities

This activity should be carried out in the shallow end of the pool so that participants can stand. Ask them to suggest ways that they could make young people feel more comfortable in the water.

Invite participants to jump up and down in the water, and then to hold on to the edge of the pool, with their faces in the water, and blow bubbles. They can turn their heads to the side to breathe (noting that many beginners will simply lift their heads).

Ask participants to form pairs. Invite one person from each pair to bob under water, open their eyes, and count the number of fingers the other person is showing. The other person should not extend their fingers until their partner is under the water. Swap roles and repeat the activity a few times. This can be extended into activities like mirroring each others' movements under water.

Throw a range of objects into the shallow end of the pool, asking participants to collect them off the bottom, seeing who can collect the most.

Invite participants to form groups of three, providing one ball per group of three. Invite them to play a game of *Pig in the middle* across the pool. Be sure to point out that a wet tennis ball can hurt as can large balls when thrown hard. The ball used needs to be soft when wet. Rules also need to be established about how hard the ball can be thrown.

Ask participants to reflect on their experiences by completing Activity 4 in their *Participant's Handbook*.

Inform participants that some people are very uncomfortable in the water and need time to become familiar with the environment. Keeping those anxious about swimming at the shallow end, near the edge of the pool, with kickboard or other floatation device nearby, and engaging them in fun non-threatening activities are good ways to increase confidence.

Suggest that organising the group around the corner of the pool is a good strategy for being able to see everyone and having people close to the edge. Explain to participants that it is also a good strategy to use a rope to mark off the boundary of the shallow end to the deep end. Once students reach the rope, they will know not to go past that point.

Refer to Activity sheet 6.1 Ideas for aquatic activities.

This activity encourages participants to have their eyes open, to put their heads under water, and to hold their breath. Remind them to always give positive reinforcement to students.

For instructions on how to play this game, refer to Workshop 4 - Large and small ball skills.

Approximate timeframe - 15 minutes



Orientating phase

Sequence of learning experiences

Activity 5 - Floating and kicking

Invite participants to float on their backs in a star formation (arms and legs extended). Question them as to what some of the problems might be that young people have with floating, and how they might help them.

Repeat this activity floating face down.

Invite participants to push off the wall, with their bodies shaped like a torpedo, and to float towards the other side of the pool for as long as they can hold their breath. Repeat back and forwards across the pool, and practise standing from a floating position.

Invite participants to hold onto the edge of the pool, arms extended, heads up, and freestyle kicking. This can be repeated with just one arm holding on, or on their backs.

Invite participants to each take a kickboard, and kick across to the other side of the pool. To introduce a fun and cooperative component, kicking relays could be held. Ask participants to suggest ways that the ability of teams could be made more even in relays.

Ask participants what the elements of good freestyle kicking are eg legs extended, feet relaxed, knees not bending too much, water 'boiling' rather than lots of splashing.

Repeat kicking across the pool, with or without boards.

Notes for workshop facilitators

Inform participants that people have varying levels of floating ability. Buoyancy assists with activities such as swimming and floating.

Problems with floating and possible assistance include:

- feet sinking (lightly flutter feet to bring to the surface); and
- bottom sinking (pretend there is a string through the body that is pulling your bottom towards the sky, fill your chest with air and puff it up, volunteers can hold their hand lightly under the persons back and move it slowly away once they are relaxed, give them a kickboard to hold in each hand and then gradually ask them to let go of the boards).

Refer Activity sheet 6.1 Ideas for aquatic activities.

Participants may need to be prompted that the ability level of teams can be made more even by matching the abilities of swimmers or by giving some teams handicaps (eg not allowed to start until five seconds has elapsed, without kickboards).

Diagrams of these activities are in the *Participant's Handbook*.

Approximate timeframe - 15 minutes

Orientating phase

Sequence of learning experiences

Activity 6 - Introduction to freestyle swimming

Invite participants to stand in a space of their own at the shallow end of the pool, each with a kick board. Ask them to bend over so their faces are in the water, holding onto the kickboard with one hand, and simulating the freestyle arm movement with the other, at the same time as blowing bubbles. Repeat this with the other arm. Then, ask them to simulate the stroke using both arms, but continuing to hold the kickboard with the extended arm. As one hand brushes the leg, the opposite arm should be extended.

Ask participants to line up at the edge of the pool, and one at a time, with the next person leaving after two seconds have elapsed, to practise freestyle arm movements using the kickboard, whilst walking across the pool. Repeat this with the kickboard, but whilst kicking across the pool. Invite participants to suggest why they are waiting two seconds before leaving.

To introduce breathing, ask participants to again stand in a spot of their own, with the kickboard, and simulate the arm movements of freestyle. As the arm is moving towards the bottom of the pool, the head turns to breathe. Try breathing on one side only. Then, repeat activity first breathing whilst walking across the pool, then breathing whilst kicking across the pool, all the time practising arm strokes.

Ask participants to form pairs. Ask one person to swim across the pool, practising breathing, arm and leg movements, whilst the other walks beside and gives them feedback. Swap roles and repeat the activity.

Notes for workshop facilitators

Remind participants that these workshops are designed to provide basic knowledge and skills in a range of areas. For more detailed information on each workshop they should refer to their *Participant's Handbook*.

Suggest to participants that breaking the skill into parts, and isolating movements, allows learners to concentrate on one thing at a time and thus experience more success. An alternative is to do this activity out of the pool at first.

The time delay allows for individual feedback and positive reinforcement, but try to minimise the time off task for the rest of the group.

Refer to Activity Sheet 6.1 Ideas for the aquatic environment.

Use visual imagery to describe to participants the movement of the head. For example, imagine there is a steel rod running from the top of your head, through the middle of your body, and coming out between your feet. The head can only rotate to the side on this pivot.

Remind participants that they have a copy of Activity Sheet 6.1 - Ideas for the aquatic environment in their *Participant's Handbook*.

Stress to participants that these are the elements of freestyle swimming and that each step is another skill that students need to learn. We are moving through these very quickly today (perhaps five minutes only on each one) whereas students learning to swim will obviously take a lot longer.

Remind participants about the elements of giving feedback, and refer them to the notes they made in their *Participant's Handbook* for Activity 5 in Workshop 3.

Approximate timeframe - 20 minutes

Synthesising phase

Sequence of learning experiences

Notes for workshop facilitators

Activity 7 - Suggesting and demonstrating ideas for action

Invite participants to work in pairs. Give each pair one of the scenarios from Activity Sheet 6.2 Suggesting and demonstrating ideas for action. Ask participants, as a pair, to come up with some ideas or suggestions and then demonstrate how they would work with the teacher to improve performance, enjoyment and/or safety of the students.

They may use their own knowledge and creativity, as well as activities from today's session. Report these back to the group.

Each time a scenario is demonstrated, ask the other participants if they have any suggestions on ways that the demonstration could have been improved.

Ask participants to record the discussion in their *Participant's Handbook*.

This activity gives participants an opportunity to practise independently and apply what they have learnt in the session, identifying some of the key points that they would use to give instructions to someone else.

This activity doubles as a warm down.

Remind participants to make notes in Activity 7 of their *Participant's Handbook*.

Approximate timeframe - 15 minutes
(five minutes to develop and practise suggestions, 10 minutes for demonstrating to rest of group)

Activity 8 - What's new?

Invite each participant to suggest to the group something new that they have learnt today, and to comment on their level of confidence in now working with young people in aquatic environments.

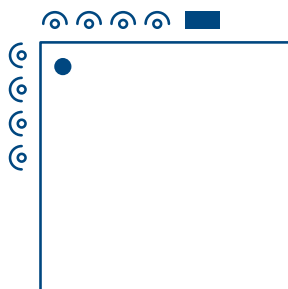
Try to establish whether there are any participants feeling particularly anxious about the possibility of working in pool based environments. Are there any things that the facilitator can do to alleviate their anxiety?

Approximate timeframe - five minutes

Ideas for the aquatic environment

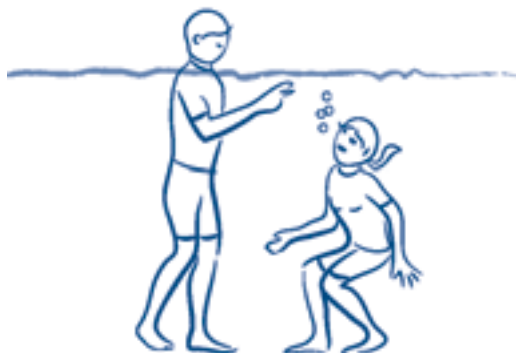
Activity Sheet 6.1

These sheets have been provided as a reference for some of the activities undertaken in Activity 4.

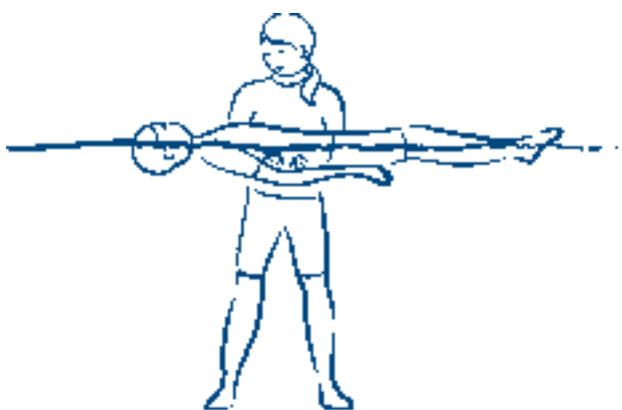


An idea for organising the class within the pool

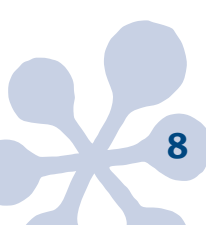
- ⦿ Student
- Demonstrator
- Teacher



Counting fingers (or identifying other objects) under the water



Providing support to a person while they are floating





Using floatation devices (eg kickboards) to support yourself while floating



Practising arm drills whilst walking in the pool



Practising arms, legs and breathing using a board

Suggesting and demonstrating ideas for action

Activity Sheet 6.2

Copy the following onto coloured card. Cut along the lines as indicated, and laminate each card. You may choose to make up additional activities of your own before copying and laminating. Each group will demonstrate one action for the whole group.

Suggest and demonstrate a sequence for teaching someone how to float.	Suggest and demonstrate a sequence for teaching someone how to combine freestyle kicking with the arm action.
Suggest and demonstrate some activities for helping a new swimmer to become more confident in the water.	Suggest and demonstrate some ways to re-organise the group to cater for beginners and those with more confidence.
Suggest and demonstrate some ways to modify group activities to increase the time on task.	Suggest and demonstrate some ways to modify group activities to make them more fun.