

My Thoughts on How to Become a More Effective Adult ALTS Swimming Instructor





My Credentials



The Rocky Run YMCA in Media, PA has been my home pool for the past 10 years. Prior to this I have taught and coached swimmers of all ages and skill levels in Wilmington DE, Royal Oak MI, Hillsboro OR, and Little Rock AR. I have also taught and coached in Cairo (Egypt), Jeblah (Syria), Athens (Greece), Tokyo (Japan), and Vientiane (Laos). I have spoken at swimming clinics and workshops in Asia, the Middle East, and the US. I studied under and closely observed Dr. James Councilman in action at Indiana University and was mentored by and worked closely with innovative Coach Bob Mattson at his Wilmington Aquatic Club. I actually began my career as a coach at the Wilmington YMCA where I also first learned how to swim many years ago and will end my career here at the YMCA in Media

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The Purpose of This Discussion Today

- Introduce you to my thinking about ways to make you a more effective instructor
- Share some of my experiences in teaching and coaching swimming for more than 60 years
- Share my Insights on how to make your efforts in the pool more relevant in the ever changing landscape of learning how to swim – what about this revolutionary thought – *“give people what they want as opposed to what you or the organization thinks they need”*
- Respond to any questions you might have and exchange ideas and experiences.



Key Questions for This Discussion

- Why do we teach swimming – love, money, fame, obligation, commitments made, etc.?
- How effective do you think you are?
- What is your track record?
- How or do you or your organization even measure your effectiveness? How is your effectiveness currently measured?
- What have you been doing to become more effective?
- Are you even interested in trying to become more effective? Or does your ego or blindness get in the way...?



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#1 - Have a serious interest in improving your effectiveness and embrace and publicize a metric(s) that measures your effectiveness. This should be an ongoing effort as your learning should never stop no matter how much you think you know or what experience you've had. This is integral to your own credential.

EXAMPLE: Develop or re-energize a specific plan to do so

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#2 - Become a more knowledgeable student of L-T-S methodology and curriculums - do some homework – how are others doing it? Read up and study videos on techniques – become a source yourself of new and innovative ideas and be more insightful – develop or improve your analytical capability – participate in events like this , etc.

EXAMPLES: attend clinics, seminars, earn additional certifications, and read and read, and study videos that you've taken or seen...

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#3 – Be willing to be more flexible in your approach to teaching swimming – you must be willing to continue the quest to solve a wide variety of L-T-S problems that you’ve encountered and not found solutions to in your USMS teaching manual. There is never a single solution.

EXAMPLE: There are many different ways to teach a breaststroke kick – how many ways have you tried?



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#4 – Build a portfolio of teaching experiences populated with innovation, experimentation, examples of testing alternative approaches to what you may have learned, and note directions to be avoided. Develop a list of available resources for you to search for possible solutions. Contribute to instruction exchanges on Facebook and other social media.

EXAMPLE: Build and maintain library for you and others to use.

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#5 – Build a relationship with each student that goes slightly beyond the mechanics and emotions of L-T-S – this may impact how much a new swimmer will trust you and believe what you are saying. This includes offering to spend extra time off the clock helping swimmers who are having progress problems – show compassion!

EXAMPLE: Host special one-off “no charge” clinics to address specific problems

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#6 – Determine if there is anything in your teaching environment that could be changed or modified that might assist you in becoming a more effective instructor?

EXAMPLES: Water temperature?, better lighting?, more available space?, less noise?, a change in time of day?, more instructive signage, etc.? Ask for it – just don't wish it...



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#7– Create a protocol to follow with each student beginning with an orientation to the pool area at start of your classes and continues on with use of supporting material, videos taken with your cell phone, and written follow up to each class. Each class should have a format, a sequence of events, and space for flexibility.

EXAMPLES: Hand out a “Welcome to My Lessons” flyer, create library of boiler-plated Follow Up e-mails, etc.

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#8 – Survey former students about how they felt about your class – did it meet or exceed their expectations?, would they recommend it to others?, what might have been done to make it more effective?, etc.? This is a great feedback tool for you – who better to evaluate your teaching effectiveness than your adult students?

EXAMPLE: Make up and hand out a Class Satisfaction card with 4 or 5 simple questions that you circulate at end of each series.

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#9 – Build a library both written and video of innovative ways to solve learning and skill mastering techniques. This library should include scanned magazine articles, videos, podcast links, website addresses, and promotional material related to swimming that your students might be interested in seeing ranging from simply learning how to float to learning how to do a flip turns or tread.

EXAMPLE: Build your own website or Blog site – it can be really a great tool that makes you look and feel more professional.

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#10 – Develop promotional materials that could be used to promote your classes and you as an adult swimming instructor – toot your own horn and back it up with testimonials and videos of examples of your activities and successes.

EXAMPLE: Again, this could also be very useful content to add to your own website which should become your own “credential”.



Rate Yourself: Key Traits of an Effective (Swim) Instructor



In my opinion, these are the four key traits of an effective swimming teacher (or any other type of skill-based activity) – rate yourself 1-5

▪ Passion for teaching (swimming) adults

▪ Knowledge of how to teach, analyze, and correct swimming

▪ Flexibility in approaches and efforts

▪ Compassion for adult students trying to better themselves.



Let's All Remember The Essence of Good Swimming (and teaching of same)

- 1. Must be relaxed but purposeful**
- 2. Must be efficient and productive**
- 3. Must be knowledge-based and learned**
- 4. Must be swum with strength and flexibility**
- 5. Must be repeated and tuned continuously**
- 6. Must be done with enthusiasm and purpose**

Thank You for Your Interest

I am glad to answer any questions you might have offline – please do not hesitate to contact me.

My friend Richie and I bid you a good evening and hope you have some great classes tomorrow!!

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Attachments

- [Learning to Swim as an Adult – Tip Sheet \(Boilerplate\)](#)
- [Fitness Swimming Training – Tip Sheet](#)
- [How do I stop my legs from sinking when using the flutter kick? – Qwik Links \(Video\)](#)
- [Freestyle Swimming Stroke – Tune Up](#)