

# TEACHING TEMPLATE

As the ASA builds on the positive changes of regionalisation, business development manager **Ann Burgess** takes a look at one of the ASA's quality products – the National Plan for Teaching Swimming (NPTS)

**M**ost of us realise that the ASA National Plan for Teaching Swimming will develop a strong pathway for all aquatic athletes guided by the holistic principles of Long Term Athlete Development. But what is the role of the swimming teacher? We all recognise what a vital and valuable role the swim teacher plays in the early development of children in their care. We must also recognise that teaching is truly a vocation and – to avoid complacency – we should remind ourselves that:

- We all aim to work ethically to the same values
- Our love of the sport and enthusiasm for teaching will lead the participant (regardless of age or ability) to want to experiment for themselves
- Our main aim as a teacher is to give the individual a love of the learning process – to *want* to practice. (If you have to scare your students into practising, we're obviously doing something wrong!)
- Enthusiasm, motivation and dedication are the key attributes that we need in order to raise individuals to their full potential
- Our 'career' is unique – so let's make the best of it!

## JOY AND SATISFACTION

We don't need to be reminded that one of the most rewarding aspects of teaching swimming – if not *the* most – is the sheer joy and satisfaction when the non-swimmer disregards all teaching aids and achieves five metres for the first time. That's when we can stand back and 'take a bow' for a job well done – and that's only for starters!

We don't need to be reminded of the time when one of our charges returns to the pool and describes how they've been instrumental in saving someone's life – and it was all down to the fact that they remembered the vital life-saving skills that you taught them.

The NPTS provides a template for learn-to-swim schemes across Britain – a progressive, imaginative and motivational way to learn to swim. It's a national scheme which, with accompanying expert support and advice, leads to effective, successful implementation, though it carries some flexibility and can therefore fit the needs of all users.

The main aim is to provide a degree of consistency throughout the country with regard to swimming provision. It provides:

- A structure and quality to all swimming lessons
- A clear consistency in approach
- Standardisation of teaching methods

## IMPLEMENTATION

The NPTS is a core progressive syllabus (national swim awards levels 1-12) split into six phases – from non-swimmer through to pre-competitive development. The level outcomes provide the swimmer with a clear, structured pathway of progression based on individual achievement. The intention is to provide the athlete with the necessary skills in order to:

- follow a pathway of further opportunity
- access a quality assured Swim 21 swimming club
- raise awareness and signpost to other aquatic disciplines the swimmer may wish to participate in
- educate children about the healthy lifestyle benefits of swimming
- encourage long-term participation

The emphasis within the NPTS is on the *quality* of swimming skills and strokes. Distance should be regarded simply as an addition to the correct execution of the stroke. It is important that teachers, parents and pupils do not regard a distance badge as an indication that pupils are safe in deep water. It is merely an indication that they can travel from A to B without stopping.



The ASA can now develop opportunities for people to be involved in swimming to whatever

## FOUNDATION LEVEL: ADULT AND CHILD

### Introducing early confidence and movement activities

This stage takes babies from initial introduction to the water through to achieving independence. Time devoted to generating a feeling of being at ease in the water will enhance the development of more complex skills.

- Fun and enjoyment are critical at any stage of learn-to-swim but particularly at this stage
- The main emphasis is placed on the importance of water confidence and appropriate activities at an early stage
- We need to create an environment for confidence building, development of balance, buoyancy, breathing, submersion and movement in water.

## PHASE ONE: NON-SWIMMER

### Introduction and development of LTAD FUNDamental movement literacy

- Agility, Balance, Co-ordination, Speed (A, B, C, S)
- Kinesthetics ('feel for the water'), Gliding, Buoyancy (K, G, B)
- Catching, Jumping, Throwing, Striking (C, J, T, S) – introduction of ball games such as mini-polo.
- Developing awareness and understanding

This category covers the initial process of introducing inexperienced swimmers to the water environment, developing confidence and being at ease in the water.

Focusing to a great extent on 'learning through structured play', the main outcomes involve moving around quite freely, submerging and opening the



level they choose for the whole of their lives

eyes, floating and using the arms and legs to achieve a simple form of travelling through the water.

**PHASE TWO: BEGINNER**

***Building confidence in the water***

The beginner phase aims to build on initial confidence and to encourage a sound foundation in all aspects of 'watermanship' incorporating the principles of LTAD FUNDamentals that will later underpin the execution of sound swimming technique. As well as being completely 'at home' on and under the water, the child is continuing to develop an awareness and understanding of activities he or she is performing.

**PHASE THREE: IMPROVER ONE**

***Development of LTAD FUNDamental movement literacy***

The focus now is on building competence in the basic elements of propulsion, 'feel' for the water (different methods of sculling should be an integral element of skill progression) multi-skill/multi-stroke approach with a continuing emphasis on the importance of body position, good streamlining, technique and breath control forms the basis of progression

**PHASE FOUR: IMPROVER TWO**

***Further development of LTAD FUNDamental movement literacy.***

The aim here is to consolidate aquatic skills and teach controlled breathing so pupils can swim competently, using correct basic techniques on three of the main strokes over the standard distance of 25 metres and on butterfly over 10 metres.

**PHASE FIVE: ADVANCED ONE**

***Consolidating principles of LTAD FUNDamentals.***

Once an acceptable degree of basic competence is achieved in the FUNDamental skills, swimmers can progress to the development of more efficient swimming. This level also consolidates the wider range of associated aquatic disciplines as well as providing for the development of a greater awareness and expertise in personal water safety and survival swimming. From this stage swimmers can move on to a wide range of swimming opportunities and other aquatic sports, confident in the knowledge they have achieved a solid foundation.

**PHASE SIX: ADVANCED TWO**

***LTAD FUNDamentals to Swimskills stage***

As well as the further development of the main swimming strokes, this phase acts as an introduction to the early stages of training in competitive swimming:

- It provides the basis for swimming as part of a healthy lifestyle

- It continues with more advanced activities in the other disciplines
- Development of both basic aerobic swimming endurance and speed are integrated within the programme

**PRE-COMPETITION DEVELOPMENT PHASE**

***Preparing for competitive swimming***

This level leads logically on from Advanced Two and has been designed specifically to prepare young swimmers to take part in the developmental coaching and training programmes run by swimming clubs in preparation for taking part in competitive swimming. The phase focuses on:

- Consolidation of effective technique
- Racing skills associated with them
- Suitable range of drills and practices
- Training to train (building the engine)

**AWARDS SCHEME**

***NPTS provides a direct link to the ASA awards scheme***

The National Swim awards and all other supporting awards listed in the NPTS Teachers' Toolkit are an integral part of the NPTS. The provision of awards is a logical consequence of the teaching process to reward the individual for appropriate achievement.

The Kellogg's Frosties ASA Awards Scheme is the largest and most successful in British sport. Around two million awards are issued every year to motivate swimmers of all ages and abilities around the world.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE**

***Organisations involved in providing swimming programmes include:***

- Local authorities and trusts
- Private leisure contractors
- Swim schools
- Local education authorities
- Swimming clubs are now engaged in working towards the two essential 'kite marked standards' the ASA has developed to support all areas of swimming provision
- Aquamark
- Swim21

**AQUAMARK**

***The aim of the Aquamark is to assist in improving the level of swimming ability in the UK and is broken down into the following objectives:***

- To ensure effective implementation of the ASA NPTS
- To assist in the provision of a consistently effective service to users
- To encourage the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers and coaches
- To ensure that we can provide long-term development and sustainability
- To provide a benchmark to which swimming programme providers can aspire

**REFRESHING**

Wouldn't it be refreshing to find everyone working towards the same aims and objectives, with all those involved in swimming delivery aspiring to achieve quality provision for our children?

It is now becoming more apparent that the best examples of good practice around the UK are those working together with the ethos of a true partnership. As a governing body, we are often commended by external agencies for quality assurance systems that are the envy of other sports. In order to improve the all-round level of swimming ability across the UK, we have:

- the tools to create an excellent service
- examples of best practice
- the resources to facilitate the sharing of best practice and develop role models within the sport

**REGIONAL STRUCTURES**

With the establishment of the new regional structures late last year, we are now in an exciting, unique and enviable position to take ownership, be accountable and to continue developing and expanding opportunities for everyone to participate in the sport from grassroots to whatever level they choose for their whole lives.

'Destiny is a matter of choice, not a matter of chance.' So let's take action now and make a difference... ■

**If you wish to purchase the NPTS, call 01527 514288 to be put in touch with your ASA regional business manager.**

