

A REVIEW OF “BEYOND LANGUAGE BARRIERS: TEACHING TECHNIQUES FOR SWIMMING” – BY E. JAMBOR (1996)

- The article by Jambor (1996) presents a “case study” to illustrate how using 3 types of teaching tools helped a group of beginners learn the basics of swimming.
- The teaching situation was especially difficult because of the language barrier between swimmers and teacher/coach – the instructor spoke only English and most of the students spoke mainly Spanish.
- Despite the language difficulty, the teacher was able to use the teaching tools of **Task Analysis**, **Creativity**, and **Peer Teaching** to help the students better understand and learn the swimming skills that were being taught.
 - **Task Analysis** – is ‘breaking down’ a complex skill (e.g. the full Freestyle stroke) into basic parts (e.g. kick, arm pull, breathing, etc.) that can be more easily explained, understood, and learned. Once these parts are understood, they can be learning. Once they are learned, the student can start to combine them with one another to form the whole complex skill – the simpler parts are “steps” toward learning the complex skill.
 - **Creativity** - in this case, the instructor used creative descriptions of the basic parts of the freestyle stroke to help the non English-speaking students understand the skills. He did this by working with the English-speaking students to come up with terms that had more meaning as a description of the physical skill (e.g. using “flapping kick” instead of “flutter kick”, or “side breathing” instead of “rhythmic breathing”).
 - **Peer Teaching** – the teacher had the English-speaking students describe the skills to the non-English students in their native language. Coupled with a physical demonstration of the skill by the teacher, this helped the students to understand and learn the skill.
- The teacher also engaged in a rapport and confidence-building exercise that involved sitting with his students before class and discussing their past swimming accomplishments. The author believed that this exercise helped increase the students’ confidence before they attempted new (and possibly frightening) swimming skills.

The main conclusion of the article was that by using the teaching tools described above, along with physical modeling and confidence-building, communication barriers could be overcome and more students could be included in the learning process.

Reference

Jambor, E. (1996). Beyond language barriers: Teaching techniques for swimming. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 67, 34-36.