

LESSON 13: OPEN-WATER SWIM SIMULATION

Grade-Level Outcomes

Primary Outcomes

Lifetime activities: Refines activity-specific movement skills in 1 or more lifetime activities (outdoor pursuits, individual-performance activities, aquatics, net/wall games or target games). (S1.H1.L2)

Fitness activities: Demonstrates competency in 2 or more specialized skills in health-related fitness activities. (S1.H3.L2)

Engages in physical activity: Creates a plan, trains for and participates in a community event with a focus on physical activity (e.g., 5K, triathlon, tournament, dance performance, cycling event). (S3.H6.L2)

Embedded Outcomes

Physical activity knowledge: Identifies issues associated with exercising in heat, humidity and cold. (S3.H3.L1)

Challenge: Chooses an appropriate level of challenge to experience success and desire to participate in a self-selected physical activity. (S5.H2.L2)

Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- demonstrate swimming techniques used in open water.
- identify safety concerns when swimming in open water.

Equipment and Materials

- Rescue tubes
- Kayaks or paddleboards (safety boats)
- Swim gear
- Brightly colored swim caps

Introduction

Although we have conducted most of our swim training in the pool, the swim leg of a triathlon usually takes place in an open body of water where the elements are changing constantly. Today, we will conduct a group open-water training swim and discuss safety and strategy.

Instructional Task: Open-Water Swim Safety

■ PRACTICE TASK

Hold a question and answer period about open-water swim safety.

Guiding questions for students:

- What should you take into account when swimming in open water and might not think about when you are in the pool?
 - Water temperature?
 - Identification?
 - Lifeguard?
 - Open-water swim conditions (ocean water versus fresh water)—pollutants, tides, current, wind?
 - Safety equipment?

EMBEDDED OUTCOME: S3.H3.L1. Use these questions to help students understand the impact of temperature on performance and the need for hydration and, potentially, wetsuits.

Student Choices/Differentiation

Help students understand open-water swims by showing a video or a slideshow of open-water swimming.

What to Look For

- Students can recognize the differences between open-water swimming and pool swimming.
- Students can identify the differences between open-water lake swimming and ocean swimming.

Instructional Task: Simulated Open-Water Swim

■ PRACTICE TASK

Students participate in a simulated open-water swim:

- Remove lane lines from the pool and have students who are waiting cheer and splash to mimic choppy, noisy race conditions in open water.
- Predetermine a distance or course (e.g., out and back, triangle, loop).
- Give each participant a brightly colored cap for safety.
- Review sighting: Have students warm up in shallow water, practicing their sighting while warming up their bodies.
- Discuss what to do if anyone needs assistance: hand up, yell.
- Simulate a triathlon start. For larger groups, use a wave start.

Note: If an open-water course is available, be sure to have lifeguard coverage on land and in a small craft, such as a kayak.

Guiding questions for students:

- Why do triathletes wear brightly colored caps?
- What do you think will be most difficult?
- What are some of your fears?
- What was most difficult?
- Did you overcome your fears?

EMBEDDED OUTCOME: S5.H2.L2. Open-water swimming can be very unnerving for students because of the conditions and number of people in the water. Use this task to debrief about the challenge aspect.

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Allow for multiple distances in the course to account for students' various skill and training levels.
- Strong swimmers may complete the course twice.

What to Look For

- Students are sighting successfully.
- Students are able to maintain a steady sightline while swimming.
- Students react calmly if they bump into another swimmer.

Formal and Informal Assessments

Exit slip: What was the most challenging aspect of the open-water swim simulation?

Closure

- Open-water swimming is very different from pool swimming. You have no walls for taking a break, and safety becomes front and center during training. You should never swim by yourself in open water. What safety considerations should you remember when swimming in open water?
- Many people are afraid of open-water swimming, especially when the elements are unknown. Like anything, the more you practice race-like situations (open water versus pool), the more comfortable and confident you will become by race day.
- As we approach race day, everyone should be tapering off on his or her training. In class, we will piggyback on where everyone is in their training and will reserve a day for active recovery, with yoga.

Reflection

- Were students afraid?
- Should this lesson occur earlier in the module?
- Did I have enough safety equipment?

Homework

- Continue to train for the race! We are almost in the home stretch.
- Continue your journals.
- Create a snack plan for before, during, and after the triathlon that you can use in the event.

Resources

USA Triathlon: www.usatriathlon.org

USA Swimming: www.usaswimming.org

US Masters Swimming: www.usms.org

Internet keyword search: “open-water swim,” “triathlon starts,” “triathlon nutrition”