Why Do Good Swimmers Drown?
Looking at Survival Swimming at Beginner Level.

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Looking at the research drowning occurs:

- Most often outdoors, between 0 and 15 degrees C. (<20 in the summer)
- When one is fully dressed in “heavy” clothing.
- Over estimation of own ability to manage the demands of the environment.
- An under estimation of conditions, waves, currents, weather change.
- Inability to tackle the unexpected.
- Occurs close to possible rescue.
- “Good” swimmers drown more often.
Analysis tells us that:

- Know your environment
- Be used being in cold water
- Manage owns inter-actions with cold water and the milieu
- Be able to swim with clothes and shoes, (winter clothing)
- Swimming is not enough

One of the main goals of the Norwegian Life Saving Society:

- Reduce drowning incidents in Norway by Focusing on Self Rescue in all swimming education.
- Manage their environment first
- Cope with the unexpected
Why attempt School Swimming outdoors

- No access to pools
- Poor or no swimming skills
- High drowning statistics in relation to population
- Close proximity to the sea
swimming versus survival

- Swim suit
- Low resistance
- Specific techniques
- Head down
- High speed
- Calm, stable conditions

- Fully clothed
- High resistance
- All round swim skills
- Head up
- Slower speed
- Variable/challenging conditions

Coping with the environment
Beginner Swimming in School

Facts about the Project.
- Started autumn 2007:
- 2nd grade, 3 classes
- 55 pupils, 6-7 years old
- 2 well established junior school teachers and 1 assistant (between 40 and 55 years) in the water
- 1 forest school teacher

Conducted from 1.mai to mid June, and mid August to September
- Parental Support
- 100 % participation.
- Pupils divided into 3 groups.
- Lowest temperatures: water = 8 degrees C, air = 7 degrees C

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May in Norway

Learning Pathway

- How to use a PFD
- Familiarisation with the immediate environment
- Gain breath control in cold water,
- Rotation skills needed for survival
- Transition to wet suits (all the above)
- Traditional swimming skills
- Without wet suits
Natural Learning

• It was necessary to let the child’s personality direct their activities (the cautious and the adventurous).
• Each pupil’s new skill was the platform for their personal next step.
• Their different approaches all led to the same learning.
• Strengthened and supported each other’s learning

Risk Management

• Life saving was an integral part of the program
• From an organisational perspective
• From a learning perspective
Learning Outcomes

• Where are my clothes? Being organised.
• Coping with cold shock
• Body awareness: stopping before the onset of exhaustion
• The value of a life jacket (PFD)
• Importance of regaining body heat.
• Swimming became a small part of the whole learning experience
• 55 children swimming

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Results

- 55 pupils can swim in cold water.
- Pupils understood why wearing a vest (PFD) was important, also when one could swim.
- Pupils mastered the all round ability and techniques to get themselves out of a potential crisis.

The Need for Further Research?

- Can Swimming Education only be classed as Drowning Preventative when it is linked to the environment where accidents might occur?
It is Possible **even** in Norway