THE CRISIS IN THE AQUATICS PROFESSION

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WHY IS THIS MOTHER CRYING?

She is crying because over ONE MILLION people drown every year.

She is crying because most of these are children.

She is crying because the next one may be her own child.

She is crying because we are not doing enough about it.

How can we help?
AIMS

1. To name the several crises in the global drowning picture.

2. To explore and describe the crisis in HIC’s within the aquatic “profession”.
THE DEMAND

360,000 children born every day! 15,000 each hour.
A huge new cohort of non-swimmers, every day.

In many HIC’s, the training of instructors is going down.
Recruitment is getting more difficult!

While in some HIC’s the drowning rate is slowly decreasing, in many it is stable or increasing.

Are we keeping up?
THE NEED

The global burden of drowning has been relatively stable over the past few decades.

The WHO statistic is ca. 360,000 drowning deaths annually.

These figures are not particularly reliable.

Experts agree that it is surely 2 – 3 times greater.
THE NEED

The WHO statistic!

a. Only 85 countries are included (mostly HIC’s). Some of these are as much as 50% incorrect.

b. It is mostly LMIC’s which are excluded from this number, whereas as many as 90% of all drownings take place.

c. The WHO ICD 10 system for recording the causes of death does not include a) natural disasters, b) water transportation accidents, c) suicide – as drowning.
THE NEED

Given the above, probably more than **ONE MILLION** drown annually.

If true:

More people drown than die of AIDS related diseases (now for the first time, under 1 million).

Maybe as many as in traffic (1.25 million).

*Are not many/most drownings preventable?*
THE SUPPLY

Example A: U.S.A.

4 Million children born annually. If children start learning at 5, five cohorts of 4 million = 20 million waiting. Many more; perhaps 50-100 million are in need of instruction.

The largest organization has a stable 40,000 instructors. 2-3 other organizations plus private instructors – maybe 100,000.

This means every instructor must teach 500-1000 each year.

Is this happening?
Example B: Norway

56,000 children born annually. 5 cohorts waiting for instruction = 280,000. Perhaps 1 – 1.5 million in need of Instruction.

Another 250,000 children in Grades 1-4. School swimming compulsory. 2 - 4 thousand teachers involved. 90% NOT certified.

Offer varies by municipality: From 10 hrs to 50hrs total during 10 yrs primary and middle. State curriculum says all should be able to swim after Grade 4. 50% remain unable to swim after Grade 4.

Two national organizations teach continuously. About 4-500 instructors involved. All certified.
THE TURNOVER

Example A: U.S.A.

Largest organization teaches 2 – 3 million each year.

They train about 15,000 instructors each year. 40,000 active at any given time. This is a stable situation.

15,000 IN $\rightarrow$ 40,000 OUT

Average career length = 2.67 years

This turnover is typical! Why is it happening?
“To become an expert requires ca. 10,000 hours and 10 years”. Eriksson, 1993

How does the average career length of 2.67 years fit with the above statement?

How many hours do these people teach?
THE TURNOVER cont.

Lets be kind and cut it in half!

To get “just good” at teaching swimming takes about 5,000 hours and 5 years – and probably, 5,000 pupils.

Average career length – 2.67 years
The “'expert'” teaches 1000 hours per year. That's 2 – 3 hrs pr. day, 7 days a week, all year long!

How many swimming teachers can match that?
Teaching swimming is a very popular summer job. Many teach only in the summer. Some teach only on weekends. Most teach only part time. They may teach 3 – 5 hours a week, maybe 100 hours/year, …….

maybe 300 - 500 hours in their entire career!

Is this enough to become even just “good” at it?

Ask Prof. Eriksson!
THE CONSEQUENCES

What are the consequences of a majority of our instructors/teachers being “inexperienced”?

Does it mean that most of our children are being taught by inexperienced teachers?

What price do we pay?
CONSEQUENCES

Instructors do not reach a level of reflection over what swimming really is. They fail to see that key competencies must be included and that skill must be expanded to “Water Competence” to address the needs of DROWNING PREVENTION.

They fail to see what the goals really are and strive for diffuse and varied goals. They forget the “Process”.
Consequences cont.

They choose the path of least resistance, i.e. “One size fits all”. There is little if any individualization. All are treated in the same way, as if they were all alike. THEY ARE NOT!

They choose to pursue an “error correction” model of teaching as if all existing capabilities are already “incorrect”. They become obsessed with “expunging error” rather than exploring the nature of the relationship between the water and their body. Langendorfer (1996)

Is this a “Learning friendly atmosphere” – a “motivational climate”? 
Consequences cont.

The inexperienced instructor fails to organize the activities of learners in a structured, systematic way with safety as their by-word.

They fail to discover that the organizing tools for safety are also the optimal tools for learning efficiency. The opportunity for the learners to benefit by a high level of activity and of repetition – in a play oriented atmosphere, remains unexplored.

Do they accept a far lower achievement level than that which is possible and which should be expected?
The inexperienced instructor has little sense of “progression”. They fail to see what comes next, what is slightly more difficult than the previous step in the process – both in general and specifically for any given learner at any given moment. They fail to see that NO progression fits all learners.

They are unable to judge when the learner is “ready” for a next step in the progression.

Again – Is this a “learner friendly” atmosphere?
CONCLUSION

Given the above:

Among other consequences, learners are not aware of what they really can do and more importantly, what they CANNOT do. (Moran et al, 2011). The product is incomplete.

The inexperienced instructor may actually contribute to drowning rather than to prevention.

CAN THEY SWIM? ARE THEY WATER COMPETENT?
Thank you Ladies and Gentlemen!