

Hong Kong Language Needs Assessment Project

The beginning of a solution

The HKLNA Project

<http://homepage.mac.com/moogoonghwa/earth/current/hklna/>

Mr. **Steve Vela**

Aquatic Center Coordinator
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Department

Queen Anne Swimming Pool

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Seattle, Saturday, April 14, 2007

Re.: **Diving Practice Time Allotment**

cc: David Dawson, Diving Instructor, david@seattle-om.com

Dear Mr. Vela,

Pursuant to our discussion this past Monday I am writing to encourage the addition of more time for diving practice.

LESSON VS PRACTICE TIME (DURATION AND FREQUENCY)

Although *diving lessons* are offered every Monday and Wednesday for 90 minutes each, there is no time -- other than during Public Swims -- allotted to *diving practice*.

The eight Public Swims scheduled for a total of 8 hours each week are currently divided into thirds: 20 minutes for the *1-meter board*, 20 minutes for the *3-meter board*, and 20 minutes for the *rope swing*.¹ According to this time allotment there are only 160 minutes (20 min X 8) available for practice on either of the two springboards. *In effect, there are 20 fewer minutes allotted for practice than there are for lessons on either board.*²

To put it in a different way, a beginner who has not yet advanced to the 3-meter board has approximately 10% less time to practice than he spends in receiving lessons. An advanced diver who

¹ This division is deemed necessary because the rope swing prohibits use of either of the two boards, and because only one board can be observed at a time with three life guards present.

² Lesson Time: 90 minutes X 2 sessions = 180 minutes.

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performs solely on the 3-meter board is similarly constrained. Moreover, the diver must appear at the pool no fewer than 8 times per week to avail himself to these practice times.

I have been a university instructor for most of my life. It is normally expected that a student spends twice as many hours outside of class performing homework as he spends in class listening to his/her teacher lecture. Are sports any different in this regard? Although I have never observed the *Salmon Bay Swim Team* practice, it would appear that, in comparison, dedicated swimmers are receiving far more practice time than are dedicated divers. *A rough estimate yields more than 3 times as much.*³

I was astonished when approached by a 6-year old boy toward the end of my 30-minute practice and asked, if I would not stop diving so that he could swim in the deep end of the pool.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

This past Monday I observed an entire 90-minute diving class. There were about 7 students present on two boards. Under the assumption that each student stayed for the entire 90-minute class he/she paid \$15.00 for 11 minutes of direct observation by the assigned instructor.⁴ Converting minutes into hours yields a lesson fee of nearly \$80 per hour for *direct* observation and critique⁵. *This is a lot of money to be paid for lessons with little or no opportunity to practice.* This scenario also suggests that the purpose of the lessons is to make money for the pool -- not to provide Seattle residents with the opportunity to become good divers.

PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE VS DANGEROUS PLAY

As I explained to George and another of the three lifeguards present while I practiced this past Friday evening, if you do not reward physical discipline, it will never occur.

In general it takes much work before a dive becomes both pleasurable to perform and enjoyable to watch. In contrast, water play in the shallow areas takes absolutely no training and yields immediate reward. Water play in the deep end does require an ability to swim, but once you have learned, there is little more to learn. Based upon my brief observation of the rope swing, the activity can probably be mastered by the third swing. The number of dives that one can learn to master, on the other hand, is nearly infinite.

In addition, there is a strong tendency to play on diving boards. This can easily become a source of danger for serious divers who require focused attention to execute their dives well. During the

³ Salmon Bay Swim Team reserves the pool for about 14 hours (840 minutes) per week. The total available time each week for work on either of the two boards is 250 minutes. $840 \div 250 = 3.36$.

⁴ $80 \text{ minutes} \div 7 \text{ students} = 11.4 \text{ minutes per student}$. The first 10 minutes of the 90 minute class were spent performing warm-up exercises on the pool deck.

⁵ $(\$15 \div 11.4 \text{ minutes}) \times 60 \text{ minutes/hour} = \79 per hour .

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first 20 minutes of the Public Swim in which I participated this past Friday there was no attempt to separate serious divers from the aquatic clowns and dare devils -- the people that give diving a bad name through their dare devil antics and constant heckling that too often finish in tragedy.⁶

When I called Federal Way and approached them about open diving for individual practice at the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center, they told me there was none. Excessive liability was given as the reason.

CONCLUSION

In the end, I am sympathetic with the juggling act that you must perform with regard to public needs and demands. On the other hand, your pool appears to be according privileges to others far less worthy than the discipline, power, and grace that the sport of springboard diving commands.

There are 8 indoor and 3 outdoor pools in the city of Seattle. Surely one could be dedicated to the sport of diving. Next week I will try the Medgar Evers Pool, as you suggested, but I fear that things will be little better there, and I will be an even more foreign entity there than I was this past Friday at the Queen Anne Pool.

Someone has to take the initiative to bring about change. Is there some reason why that initiative cannot take place in Queen Anne?

The diving environment that I experienced this past Friday was neither long enough⁷, nor sufficiently comfortable (safe) to perform a solid workout.

Sincerely,

Mr. R. A. Stegemann, A.B., M.A., M.A.

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⁶ I am very grateful to George that I was even allowed to use the 1-meter board while the 3-meter board was open. Apparently, I was granted special permission beyond what is considered customary practice.

⁷ During the 40 minutes that I was permitted to dive, I was accompanied by four other "divers" for the first 20 minutes -- primarily children with nearly zero technique. Thus, I estimate about 30 minutes worth of diving practice for the entire time I was there. I am accustomed to diving for 60 to 90 minutes at a time with an average of two to three people per board.

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