of the physical properties of water and applying this to swimmers with disabilities. By making small changes in body shape (some swimmers with physical difficulties can only make small movements) and thus changing the relationship of the center of gravity and the center of buoyancy, swimmers can control their position in the water (Halliwick Association of Swimming Therapy, 2010).

From the small start, with just a few girls from the school, the first Halliwick Club, the Halliwick Penguins was formed and still runs to this day. More clubs were developed, and in 1952, the Association of Swimming Therapy (AST)—now called the Halliwick Association of Swimming Therapy—(Halliwick AST) was formed. Professionals working in special schools, hospitals, and care homes began to see how they could use this approach in their own settings to benefit their clients. These professionals and volunteers from clubs attended courses to learn more about Halliwick and thus Halliwick spread, first in the UK and then in other countries. In 1996, the International Halliwick Association (IHA) was formed. (For more detail about the history of Halliwick see ‘The Halliwick Story’ by Phyl McMillan on the Halliwick AST website at www.halliwick.org.uk).

As yet there is little research specifically about the benefits of using the Halliwick Concept for teaching people with disabilities to swim. There is research by physiotherapists addressing the physical benefits of using Halliwick in treatment sessions (but this is not the remit of this article). However, there are two publications related to teaching swimming using Halliwick:

(i) S.W.I.M. Swimming with Independent Measurement (Peacock, 2006) which is an assessment tool, based on Halliwick, which has been validated and can be used reliably in different practical settings to follow the progress of swimmers, as well as for research purposes.

(ii) a recent article from Brazil which has just been published which addresses the benefits of Halliwick. (Garcia, 2012).

Ethos/Philosophy

There are a number of principles that are core to the Halliwick Concept.

1. Halliwick is a holistic approach, as teaching competence in the water is incorporated into sessions as well as social and communication skills (Gresswell, 2006), cognitive tasks and therapeutic aspects.

The Halliwick Concept, previously called the Halliwick Method but now called Halliwick Concept to show that it continually develops and can be adapted for different settings, was originally designed for teaching people with disabilities to swim. However, it is an approach for teaching anyone, regardless of age, ability/disability or fear of water. The International Halliwick Association (IHA) defines the Halliwick Concept as “an approach to teaching all people, in particular, focusing on those with physical and/or learning difficulties, to participate in water activities, to move independently in water, and to swim” (Fons, 2010). While not well known in the United States, the approach is used in many other countries including the United Kingdom (where it originated), Australia, Israel, Japan, Malta and many countries in Europe and South America. Halliwick is used by swimming teachers, therapists, special needs teachers, parents, and caregivers. Anyone can learn how to use this approach.

History

Halliwick was developed by James “Mac” McMillan, working with his wife, Phyl. Mac was a swimming coach and an engineer, and in 1949 was involved in a swimming gala for able-bodied swimmers at the Halliwick School for Crippled Girls, where Halliwick got its name. Girls with cerebral palsy were watching the gala and said to Phyl, “Why can’t we learn to swim?” In 1949, taking someone with cerebral palsy in the water was unheard of, but Phyl talked to Mac, and eventually some of the girls started to learn with Mac and Phyl. The approach taken by Mac included using his understanding...
The term *swimmer* is used for all those who go in the water to learn to swim.

The sessions are fun, using games, activities, and groups as a means of teaching.

No flotation aids are used—this means that each swimmer has an instructor with them until the swimmer is competent in the water.

Sessions take place with the teacher in the water, not on the poolside.

The emphasis is on ability not disability.

First names are used by all those involved in sessions. When Halliwick started in 1949, this was a very unusual practice.

Swimmers are encouraged to improve their skills but are not over-pressured.

Instructors are always positive and encourage even small improvements in learning.

Teaching follows a logical structure: the Ten Point Program, described below.

**The Ten Point Program**

The Ten Point Program is at the center of Halliwick teaching. A short summary of these points follows. For a more detailed description with video clips go to the paper ‘The Halliwick Concept 2010’ which can be found on the IHA website at www.halliwick.org.

1. **Mental Adjustment**

   Mental Adjustment is very important for any learning to take place. A swimmer has to become happy to be in the water to learn efficiently. He or she also needs to be able to adapt to being in water with its different properties. Becoming mentally adjusted to being in the water takes varying lengths of time for different swimmers. Working with an instructor in a group situation, and the use of songs, games and stories can help swimmers develop confidence in the water. Mental Adjustment includes the very important safety aspect of breath control. Swimmers are taught to blow every time the face comes near the water or when submerging.

   Humming is another technique that is taught and is very effective at preventing water getting into the nose. Some swimmers with breathing difficulties find this easier than blowing. Some swimmers may not appreciate the safety aspects associated with swimming and will need to learn these so they can act appropriately in water.

2. **Disengagement**

   Disengagement is the process of a swimmer becoming more independent in the water and not relying on an instructor, the pool floor or the pool sides. Instructors can help swimmers become more independent by ensuring they only offer the support that is needed and work towards reducing this support and their verbal instructions to the swimmer.

   Point 1, Mental Adjustment, and Point 2, Disengagement, are processes that are important throughout all of the Ten Point Program.

   The 4 following points are about control of rotations. This involves learning to both stop an unwanted rotation taking place and to cause a rotation in order to change from one position to another. Unwanted rotations might occur because a swimmer is asymmetrical (for example following a stroke); if one part of the body is more dense than another (for example having dense legs which will tend to sink when trying to float on the back (supine); or because the water is turbulent to one side of the body. The aim is for a swimmer to be able to control rotations without excessive movements.

3. **Transversal Rotation Control**

   Transversal Rotation is the rotational movement around an axis passing from side-to-side of the body. It is the rotation involved when leaning forward to blow and in gaining the upright position from being supine. Movement around this axis can be brought about by changing the shape of the body and changing the relationship.
swimmers can learn that with small movements of the body they can make or stop a longitudinal rotation. Control of this rotation in the horizontal position is vital. If a swimmer is face down in the water they need to learn to rotate through a longitudinal rotation to achieve a safe breathing position on their back and be able to maintain this position. (Just standing up through a transversal rotation is difficult for many people with a physical disability.) As well as being important in the early stages of learning how to control the horizontal position of one’s body in water, it is also important in order to swim strokes efficiently, allowing a controlled glide and also rotation of the body to make efficient propulsive movements, in front and back crawl, for example.

6. Combined Rotation Control

Combined Rotation Control is controlling any combinations of the above rotations in one fluid movement. It is an especially useful rotation to teach to a swimmer with poor breath control. If he or she is falling forwards from a vertical position, he or she can, by turning the head, create a combined rotation (Transversal and Longitudinal combined) and can rotate onto his/her back (a
safe breathing position) without the face going in the water. For advanced swimmers Combined Rotation Control is needed to perform tumble turns.

7. Upthrust

Upthrust, caused by buoyancy, is a property of water that a swimmer needs to appreciate. Activities such as diving down to retrieve objects and trying to sit on the pool floor can help swimmers become aware of this effect of water. Mental inversion is a phrase sometimes used for this point as the swimmer has to accept that the water will help hold them up (unless they are actually denser than water). Mental Adjustment is very important at this stage, as a swimmer who is tense will be more dense and therefore find it harder to float. Upthrust is decreased in turbulent water and instructors and swimmers need to be aware of this.

8. Balance in Stillness

Balance in Stillness is when a swimmer can maintain a position without excessive movements, even in turbulent water. A balanced position makes it more efficient to change position in the water or make propulsive movements. There are many balanced positions that a swimmer can learn to achieve but the most useful ones are those in which the swimmer can breathe!

9. Turbulent Gliding

In Turbulent Gliding a floating swimmer is towed through the water in the turbulence created by an instructor moving backwards. There is no contact between the instructor and the swimmer. The swimmer does not make any propulsive movements, which might at this stage upset his/her balance but is controlling any rotations that might occur due to the moving water. This is good preparation for Point 10 when the swimmer starts to make propulsive movements.

10. Simple Progression and Basic Swimming Stroke

Simple Progression and Basic Swimming Stroke are when the swimmer learns to propel him/herself through the water. This would usually be with the swimmer on his/her back where breathing is easy. The movements may consist of clapping both hands onto the side of the thighs (this tactile feedback is useful for many swimmers), a sculling movement or a figure of eight type movement as used by synchronised swimmers. The movements are around the center of balance so as not to create unwanted rotations.

The Basic Swimming Stroke is like the old-fashioned English backstroke in which the swimmer is on his/her back and brings both arms low over the water to shoulder level and then brings the arms back to the side creating propulsion. This is a double arm action as opposed to the traditional alternating arms and helps the swimmer keep a balanced position.

The Ten Points have a logical structure, starting with a new, possibly nervous swimmer when he/she would be working mainly on Mental Adjustment (Point 1), progressing through control of rotations and balance and finishing with a competent swimmer who has achieved Simple Progression and Basic Swimming Stroke (Point 10). However, the structure should not be considered just a rigid progression. For example, a swimmer may be working in a session at more than one rotation (Points 3 – 6) and balance in stillness (Point 8) in the vertical position. At a later stage he/she may have mastered control of longitudinal rotation, being able to complete a full log roll (rolling from supine to prone and then onto
his/ her back again), but also be practising the more complex transversal rotation of learning to perform a somersault.

**Use of Games/Activities/Groups**

Learning is enhanced when the experience is enjoyable (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). Halliwick has always emphasised the use of games and activities to teach in a fun way the skills, concepts and understanding needed to become a competent swimmer. The term ‘games’ is very broad and encompasses singing, stories, visits, themes (e.g., transport, animals) and competitive games. Every game/activity, as well as being enjoyable, should have an aim based on the Ten Point Program. Although games/ activities can be used when working with an individual the experience can be enhanced by working in a group. There are many advantages for swimmers when working in a group (Reid Campion, 1997) including:

1. enjoyment
2. giving confidence,
3. learning by watching others,
4. performing at their best to keep up with others in the group,
5. the possibility of competition, and
6. demonstrating their new skills to others in the group, which is great for developing self-confidence.

One young man with cerebral palsy who has recently joined the Oxford Swans swimming club (where I teach) remembers when he was attending a mainstream school, being able to demonstrate swimming skills to his able-bodied peers, as he was the most proficient one in his class. He had learned to swim with Halliwick when he attended a special school a few years before. He has said to me, “this gave me a lot of confidence,” and he still remembers it 30 years later.

Groups also enable the swimmers to learn social skills (e.g. playing with others and turn-taking), and develop communication skills (for further information on communication see the article ‘Making Waves. Communication and Swimming!’ on the Halliwick AST website (www.halliwick.org.uk) including:

- enjoyment
- giving confidence,
- learning by watching others,
- performing at their best to keep up with others in the group,
- the possibility of competition, and
- demonstrating their new skills to others in the group, which is great for developing self-confidence.

Groups also enable the swimmers to learn social skills (e.g. playing with others and turn-taking), and develop communication skills (for further information on communication see the article ‘Making Waves. Communication and Swimming!’ on the Halliwick AST website (www.halliwick.org.uk) including:

- enjoyment
- giving confidence,
- learning by watching others,
- performing at their best to keep up with others in the group,
- the possibility of competition, and
- demonstrating their new skills to others in the group, which is great for developing self-confidence.

One young man with cerebral palsy who has recently joined the Oxford Swans swimming club (where I teach) remembers when he was attending a mainstream school, being able to demonstrate swimming skills to his able-bodied peers, as he was the most proficient one in his class. He had learned to swim with Halliwick when he attended a special school a few years before. He has said to me, “this gave me a lot of confidence,” and he still remembers it 30 years later.

Groups also enable the swimmers to learn social skills (e.g. playing with others and turn-taking), and develop communication skills (for further information on communication see the article ‘Making Waves. Communication and Swimming!’ on the Halliwick AST website (www.halliwick.org.uk) including:

1. enjoyment
2. giving confidence,
3. learning by watching others,
4. performing at their best to keep up with others in the group,
5. the possibility of competition, and
6. demonstrating their new skills to others in the group, which is great for developing self-confidence.

One young man with cerebral palsy who has recently joined the Oxford Swans swimming club (where I teach) remembers when he was attending a mainstream school, being able to demonstrate swimming skills to his able-bodied peers, as he was the most proficient one in his class. He had learned to swim with Halliwick when he attended a special school a few years before. He has said to me, “this gave me a lot of confidence,” and he still remembers it 30 years later.

Groups also enable the swimmers to learn social skills (e.g. playing with others and turn-taking), and develop communication skills (for further information on communication see the article ‘Making Waves. Communication and Swimming!’ on the Halliwick AST website (www.halliwick.org.uk) including:

1. enjoyment
2. giving confidence,
3. learning by watching others,
4. performing at their best to keep up with others in the group,
5. the possibility of competition, and
6. demonstrating their new skills to others in the group, which is great for developing self-confidence.

One young man with cerebral palsy who has recently joined the Oxford Swans swimming club (where I teach) remembers when he was attending a mainstream school, being able to demonstrate swimming skills to his able-bodied peers, as he was the most proficient one in his class. He had learned to swim with Halliwick when he attended a special school a few years before. He has said to me, “this gave me a lot of confidence,” and he still remembers it 30 years later.

Groups also enable the swimmers to learn social skills (e.g. playing with others and turn-taking), and develop communication skills (for further information on communication see the article ‘Making Waves. Communication and Swimming!’ on the Halliwick AST website (www.halliwick.org.uk) including:

1. enjoyment
2. giving confidence,
3. learning by watching others,
4. performing at their best to keep up with others in the group,
5. the possibility of competition, and
6. demonstrating their new skills to others in the group, which is great for developing self-confidence.

One young man with cerebral palsy who has recently joined the Oxford Swans swimming club (where I teach) remembers when he was attending a mainstream school, being able to demonstrate swimming skills to his able-bodied peers, as he was the most proficient one in his class. He had learned to swim with Halliwick when he attended a special school a few years before. He has said to me, “this gave me a lot of confidence,” and he still remembers it 30 years later.

Groups also enable the swimmers to learn social skills (e.g. playing with others and turn-taking), and develop communication skills (for further information on communication see the article ‘Making Waves. Communication and Swimming!’ on the Halliwick AST website (www.halliwick.org.uk) including:

1. enjoyment
2. giving confidence,
3. learning by watching others,
4. performing at their best to keep up with others in the group,
5. the possibility of competition, and
6. demonstrating their new skills to others in the group, which is great for developing self-confidence.

One young man with cerebral palsy who has recently joined the Oxford Swans swimming club (where I teach) remembers when he was attending a mainstream school, being able to demonstrate swimming skills to his able-bodied peers, as he was the most proficient one in his class. He had learned to swim with Halliwick when he attended a special school a few years before. He has said to me, “this gave me a lot of confidence,” and he still remembers it 30 years later.

Groups also enable the swimmers to learn social skills (e.g. playing with others and turn-taking), and develop communication skills (for further information on communication see the article ‘Making Waves. Communication and Swimming!’ on the Halliwick AST website (www.halliwick.org.uk) including:

1. enjoyment
2. giving confidence,
3. learning by watching others,
4. performing at their best to keep up with others in the group,
5. the possibility of competition, and
6. demonstrating their new skills to others in the group, which is great for developing self-confidence.

One young man with cerebral palsy who has recently joined the Oxford Swans swimming club (where I teach) remembers when he was attending a mainstream school, being able to demonstrate swimming skills to his able-bodied peers, as he was the most proficient one in his class. He had learned to swim with Halliwick when he attended a special school a few years before. He has said to me, “this gave me a lot of confidence,” and he still remembers it 30 years later.

Groups also enable the swimmers to learn social skills (e.g. playing with others and turn-taking), and develop communication skills (for further information on communication see the article ‘Making Waves. Communication and Swimming!’ on the Halliwick AST website (www.halliwick.org.uk) including:

1. enjoyment
2. giving confidence,
3. learning by watching others,
4. performing at their best to keep up with others in the group,
5. the possibility of competition, and
6. demonstrating their new skills to others in the group, which is great for developing self-confidence.

One young man with cerebral palsy who has recently joined the Oxford Swans swimming club (where I teach) remembers when he was attending a mainstream school, being able to demonstrate swimming skills to his able-bodied peers, as he was the most proficient one in his class. He had learned to swim with Halliwick when he attended a special school a few years before. He has said to me, “this gave me a lot of confidence,” and he still remembers it 30 years later.

Groups also enable the swimmers to learn social skills (e.g. playing with others and turn-taking), and develop communication skills (for further information on communication see the article ‘Making Waves. Communication and Swimming!’ on the Halliwick AST website (www.halliwick.org.uk) including:

1. enjoyment
2. giving confidence,
3. learning by watching others,
4. performing at their best to keep up with others in the group,
5. the possibility of competition, and
6. demonstrating their new skills to others in the group, which is great for developing self-confidence.

One young man with cerebral palsy who has recently joined the Oxford Swans swimming club (where I teach) remembers when he was attending a mainstream school, being able to demonstrate swimming skills to his able-bodied peers, as he was the most proficient one in his class. He had learned to swim with Halliwick when he attended a special school a few years before. He has said to me, “this gave me a lot of confidence,” and he still remembers it 30 years later.

Groups also enable the swimmers to learn social skills (e.g. playing with others and turn-taking), and develop communication skills (for further information on communication see the article ‘Making Waves. Communication and Swimming!’ on the Halliwick AST website (www.halliwick.org.uk).
Copyright of Palaestra is the property of Sagamore Publishing and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder’s express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.