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## Aquatic managers of northeast Iowa : a description of current practices of staff training and implementation detailing competencies, frequency, and evaluation

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AQUATIC MANAGERS OF NORTHEAST IOWA: A DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT  
PRACTICES OF STAFF TRAINING AND IMPLEMENTATION DETAILING  
COMPETENCIES, FREQUENCY, AND EVALUATION

An Abstract of a Thesis  
Submitted  
In Partial Fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Degree  
Masters of Arts

Tracy N. Carey  
University of Northern Iowa  
July 2017

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe how aquatic managers implement aquatic staff training and development. According to the American Society for Training and Development, U.S. organizations spend more than \$50 billion annually on employee training. Organizations place an important emphasis on training and development for their employees. Aquatic facilities play an important role in the communities they serve. Operating an aquatic facility has become increasingly more complex in recent years due to new technology with filtration systems, differentiating certifications and facility regulations.

Therefore, aquatic managers must ensure their lifeguards are capable and competent of doing everything the lifeguard certification and facility orientation has instructed them. The benefits of training in an organization are numerous. Furthermore, aquatic managers are responsible for ensuring lifeguards are properly trained to handle potentially life-threatening incidences.

This study utilized the qualitative interviewing method to gain an in-depth perspective on the methods and content implemented during aquatic staff training and development in six aquatic facilities in Northeast Iowa. The results from this study demonstrated with the exception of the content being implemented during training, there are very few themes that are similar across the six organizations' training methods. A discussion of implications and recommendations for current practice and future study in regards to aquatic training and development is included.

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Entitled: AQUATIC MANAGERS OF NORTHEAST IOWA: A DESCRIPTION OF  
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DETAILING COMPETENCIES, FREQUENCY, AND EVALUATION

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

Degree of Masters of Arts

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DEDICATION

To: My Grandparents

Who, above everything else, cherished education and a hard work ethic.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

According to the American Society for Training and Development, U.S. organizations spend more than \$50 billion annually on employee training (Smith & Mazin, 2004). Organizations place an important emphasis on training and development for their employees. Aquatic facilities play an important role in the communities they serve. Swimming is exceedingly appreciated as both a health benefit and a use of leisure time (Clayton & Thomas, 1989). Additionally, “more leisure time and increased personal incomes have also contributed to interest in aquatic sports...to accommodate these people, aquatic facilities abound throughout the United States and Canada” (Clayton & Thomas, 1989, p. 2). Aquatic facilities have a common goal between them, to ensure their patrons are experiencing a safe and enjoyable time at the facility. Operating an aquatic facility has become increasingly more complex in recent years due to new technology with filtration systems, differentiating certifications and facility regulations (Fawcett, 2005). Therefore, it is expected that Aquatic managers have a great deal of responsibility in terms of training and development with lifeguards and other aquatic staff. According to the American Red Cross (2012), lifeguards “must be able to supervise swimmers, minimize dangers, educate facility users about safety, enforce rules and regulations, provide assistance and perform rescues” (p. v). Furthermore, Aquatic managers must ensure their lifeguards are capable and competent of doing everything the lifeguard certification and facility orientation have instructed them (Markel Insurance Company, 2004).



Cable (1993) indicates “lifeguards need more extensive training than ever as aquatic programs get more diverse and open to persons with all levels of water skills” (para. 1). Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) and Jehanzeb and Ahmed Bashir (2013) indicate the benefits of training for an organization are numerous. In addition, aquatic managers are responsible for ensuring lifeguards are properly trained to handle potentially life-threatening incidences (Cable, 1993).

#### Significance of the Study

There is not much research that has been done in the past on the training aspect of aquatics. There is research on employee training and development in the general terms but not specific to the aquatic field. The majority of the resources found for this study have been in the early 1990s; therefore, this study hopes to help future aquatic managers with their employee training and development practices.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe how aquatic managers implement aquatic staff training and development.

#### Research Questions

The specific questions of the study include:

- What content is being covered in aquatic staff training?
- How often is training being implemented for aquatic competencies?
- How do aquatic managers evaluate whether or not an aquatic employee is competent?

### Hypothesis of the Study

It is hypothesized that aquatic managers are covering the aquatic competencies individuals are taught in the lifeguard certification courses. It is hypothesized that aquatic managers place a heavy emphasis on the technical skills of lifeguarding such as backboarding, water rescues, and CPR. A third hypothesis of this study is that aquatic managers allot an insufficient amount of time for training during an operating season. Finally, it is hypothesized aquatic managers do not have a systematic tool or criteria to evaluate whether or not their employees are competent in required aquatic skills.

### Definition of Terms

Aquatics – taking place on or in water (Aquatics, n.d.).

Staff Training – the systematic approach to effecting individuals' knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to improve individual, team, and organizational effectiveness (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

Staff Development – systematic efforts affecting individuals' knowledge or skills for purposes of personal growth or future jobs and/or roles (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

Competent – having suitable or sufficient skill, knowledge, experiences, etc., for some purpose; properly qualified (Competent, n.d.).

Emergency Action Plan (EAP) – is a written document required by particular Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards (OSHA). [29 CFR 1910.38(a)]

The purpose of an EAP is to facilitate and organize employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies (OSHA, 2016).

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe how aquatic managers implement aquatic staff training. What aquatic competencies do aquatic managers implement in their employee training and development? How often do aquatic managers implement staff training and development at their facilities? Finally, how do aquatic managers evaluate whether or not their employees are competent in the skills required for the job? The purpose of the review of literature highlights training in the Aquatic field, different types of employee development, reason organizations need and implement training and development programs. In addition, this chapter also explores benefits to the employee as well as the employer, and strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of training. This chapter has been organized under the following main headings: training the Aquatic professional, employee development and benefits, and evaluation of training effectiveness.

#### Training the Aquatic Professional

Drowning and spinal injuries at swimming pools and aquatic areas are some of the most traumatic and costly incidents any program can face (Markel Insurance Company, 2004). According to Markel Insurance Company;

The typical medical costs for a drowning victim who survives the event can range from \$75,000 for initial emergency room treatment to \$180,000 a year for long-term care. Costs for caring for a drowning victim who suffers brain damage can be more than \$4.5 million (2004, p. 1).

In the United States, over 1000 children ages 0-18 are killed each year as a result of drowning (Schwebel, Jones, Holder, & Marciani, 2010). As many as 20% of near-

drowning survivors suffer severe, permanent neurological disability. The approximate medical costs for a near-drowning victim can range from \$75,000 for preliminary emergency room treatment, to \$180,000 per year for long-term care (Foundation for Aquatic Injury Prevention, 2013). Additionally, the Foundation for Aquatic Injury Prevention (2013) indicates the total cost of drownings and near-drownings is approximately \$6.2 billion per year. A small – but still alarming – number of these drowning related deaths unfortunately occur at public swimming areas that are supervised by professional lifeguards (Schwebel et al., 2010). Lifeguards are entrusted with the important responsibility of supervising aquatic facilities and areas; however, they did not receive the job without qualifications. In order to be deemed a lifeguard they must first receive training from one of several certifying organizations such as the American Red Cross, the YMCA, or Ellis and Associates (Clayton & Thomas, 1989).

#### Lifeguard Certifications

Many different facets go into the job requirements of being a lifeguard. An individual must first be able to obtain the lifeguarding certification from one of several certifying outfits. The American Red Cross (ARC), the YMCA, and Ellis and Associates are all organizations a young professional can go to in order to become lifeguard certified. In the certification courses, individuals learn specific competencies (i.e. CPR and water rescues) to respond appropriately to aquatic emergencies (Ellis & Associates, 2007). They also learn to be proactive and take preventative measures to ensure the wellbeing of the patrons who visit their facilities. All three organizations have specific standards which they use to certify lifeguards.

Table 1 provides an overview of the different requirements and competencies the American Red Cross, the YMCA, and Ellis and Associates' lifeguard training programs entail in order to obtain the lifeguard certification. The table breaks down each organization's prerequisites, certification requirements, how long the certificate is valid and approximate course time.

#### Required Competencies for Lifeguards

Lifeguarding is a demanding, serious task requiring mature, adequately trained personnel to carry out their required duties (YMCA of the USA, 2001). According to Clayton and Thomas (1989), "a good lifeguard is characterized both by attitudes and by actions" (p. 79).

Attitudes of competent lifeguards. Clayton and Thomas (1989) believe there are three main attitudes that contribute to a competent lifeguard: emotional maturity, dependability, and judgement and tact. Due to the responsibility that is required of lifeguards, it is important individuals are able to demonstrate a level of emotional maturity. Lifeguards are put in life or death situations and they need to have the emotional maturity to be able to respond appropriately. Having an individual who is not dependable would potentially make a life or death situation even more costly. An aquatic facility must hire employees who are dependable (Clayton & Thomas, 1989). Individuals

Table 1. *Requirements of Lifeguard Certification for the American Red Cross, YMCA, and Ellis and Associates.*

Certifying Organization	Course Time & Certificate Validity	Pre- Requisites	Certification Requirements
The American Red Cross	25 Hours: 20 Minutes Valid: 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum age: 15 years</li> <li>• Swim 300 yards continuously</li> <li>• Tread water for 2 minutes using only legs</li> <li>• Complete a timed event within 1 minute, 40 seconds:</li> <li>• Starting in water, swim 20 yards</li> <li>• Surface dive a depth of 7 to 10 feet to retrieve a 10-pound brick</li> <li>• Return to the surface and swim 20 yards on the back to return to the starting point</li> <li>• Exit water without using ladder or steps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend and participate in all classes</li> <li>• Demonstrate competency in all required skills and activities.</li> <li>• Demonstrate competency in the following required final rescue skill scenarios                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Head, Neck or Spinal Injury in Shallow Water</li> <li>○ Active Victim in Deep Water</li> <li>○ Submerged Victim in Deep Water – Timed Response</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pass both the Section 1 and Section 2 exams with a minimum grade of 80 percent</li> </ul>
Ellis and Associates	23 Hours Valid: 1 Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum age: 15 Years</li> <li>• Swim distance using front crawl or breaststroke without resting: 100 yards</li> <li>• Feet first surface dive, retrieve a 10-pound brick, and bring it to the surface from a minimum depth of 8 feet.</li> <li>• Tread water without using arms for 1 minute</li> <li>• Training valid at facilities with flat water pools with depths to 16ft and only to the depth at which training was conducted (excludes open water and wave environments an facilities with depths greater than 16 ft.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet all course prerequisites</li> <li>• Attend all class periods</li> <li>• Execute all rescue skills and all First Aid, CPR and AED Skills to “test ready” levels</li> <li>• Pass all written an water practical examinations with 80 percent or better</li> </ul>
YMCA	29 Hours Valid: 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum age: 16 years</li> <li>• Have and maintain current CPR and first aid certifications. The following certifying organizations will be accepted: American Heart Association, American Red Cross, National Safety Council, and American Safety and Health Institute.</li> <li>• Have and maintain current certifications in oxygen administration</li> <li>• Have and maintain current certification in AED</li> <li>• Pass the following swim test:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Perform a long, shallow front dive, swim 500 yards: 100 yards each of sidestroke, front crawl, breaststroke, sidestroke kick one arm forward, inverted breaststroke kick arms on the stomach</li> <li>○ Tread water for at least 2 minutes with legs only</li> <li>○ Surface dive head first and feet first in 8 to 10 feet of water and swim under water for 15 feet</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the course in full</li> <li>• Score 80 percent or better on each section of written or oral knowledge test</li> <li>• Correctly perform skills in a practical skills test</li> </ul> <p>Certification may also include instructors’ subjective judgement about maturity, attitude, and classroom participation during the course.</p>

Note: Data for Requirements of Lifeguard Certification from American Red Cross (2012), Ellis and Associates (2007), YMCA (2001)

who are consistently late and who do not pay attention when they are on stand could make the facility unsafe for the patrons. Finally, a lifeguard must remain consistent, polite and positive when enforcing the rules and regulations at the facility (Ellis & Associates, 2007). An individual needs to be strict enough to ensure a staff facility but be lenient enough so patrons still have an enjoyable time.

Actions of competent lifeguards. According to Clayton and Thomas (1989), there are six actions that are important for a competent lifeguard: maintenance of physical strength, periodic review of technical skill, constant alertness, education of the public, prompt and accurate reporting of accidents, and careful maintenance of equipment. Maintaining physical fitness is important. Lifeguards must not only make sure they are able to swim the required laps but they must also make sure they are staying hydrated, protected from the sun, and getting plenty of rest before their shift (American Red Cross, 2012). Lifeguards must also make sure they review the skills learned in the certification courses and maintain a level of constant alertness while on duty. Lifeguards must be able to respond quickly and correctly in the event of danger, in or around the water. This can only be done if the individual is remaining constantly alert and refreshed on their technical skills (Clayton & Thomas, 1989).

Since many drowning and near drowning cases happen in areas that are not supervised by lifeguards, it is important that lifeguards educate the public on certain aspects related to aquatic that will keep them safe (Clayton & Thomas, 1989). Finally, a lifeguard must be prompt and accurate when reporting accidents, and ensure careful maintenance of equipment in order to help prevent accidents.

Technical skills of competent lifeguards. Lifeguards not only need to have the mental and physical prowess in order to successfully complete the job, they also need to understand the technical skill that are taught within the certification courses. Each certifying organization ensures an individual is trained on several different aspects of the job from water rescue skills, to spinal injuries, to activating the Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Each organization teaches these skills differently but the end result is that an individual is certified as a lifeguard and has been taught the skills in order to handle these situations. Table 2 shows the different ways each certifying organization breaks down the content instructors cover in lifeguard courses.

Table 2. *Certification Course Content*

The American Red Cross	<p>The Professional Lifeguard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Responsibilities and Characteristics of a professional lifeguard / decision making / legal considerations /being a part of a team</li> </ul> <p>Facility Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rescue equipment/ safety checks/ weather conditions/ rules and regulations/ management and safety</li> </ul> <p>Surveillance and Recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The process of drowning/ effective surveillance</li> </ul> <p>Injury Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How injuries happen/ injury-prevention strategies/ effective guarding-injury prevention challenges</li> </ul> <p>Emergency Action Plans (EAP's)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Types of EAP's/ implementing of EAP's/ emergencies outside of your zone</li> </ul> <p>Water Rescue Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– General procedures for a water emergency/rescue skills/ when things don't go as practiced</li> </ul> <p>Before Providing Care and Victim Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Bloodborne Pathogens/ how pathogens spread/ if you are exposed/ procedures for injury or sudden illness on land</li> </ul> <p>Breathing Emergencies on Land</p>
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(table continues)



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recognizing and caring for breathing emergencies/ giving ventilations/ airway obstruction/ emergency oxygen</li> </ul>
	<p>Cardiac Emergencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cardiac chain of survival/ heart attack/ cardiac arrest/ CPR/ AEDs/ multiple rescuer response</li> </ul>
	<p>First Aid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Responding to injuries and illnesses/ secondary assessment/ sudden illness/ skin and soft tissue injuries/ bites and stings/ poisoning/ heat related illnesses and col related emergencies/ injuries to muscles, bones and joints</li> </ul>
	<p>Caring for Head, Neck and Spinal Injuries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Causes for head, neck and spinal injuries/ caring for head, neck and spinal injuries</li> </ul>
<hr/>	
Ellis and Associates	<p>Lifeguarding Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lifeguard Responsibility and professionalism/ awareness and recognition/ reacting to an emergency/ rule enforcement and guest relations, and additional responsibilities/ reacting to an emergency</li> </ul> <p>Responding to Emergencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Guest on the surface – breathing/ rescue breathing and airway management/ CPR and AED/ supplemental oxygen support/ guest on surface – not breathing/ submerged guest/ spinal injury management/</li> </ul> <p>Lifeguards as First Responders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Handling risks/ injuries and medical emergencies</li> </ul> <p>Open Water Lifeguarding</p>
<hr/>	
The YMCA	<p>Aquatic Personal Safety and Survival Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Physical conditions that may endanger swimmers/ strokes for survival situations/ surface dives/ off duty rescues/ boating, personal watercraft, rafting and tubing safety/ aquatic safety near a low-head dam/ beach safety/ emergency situations</li> </ul> <p>Lifeguarding Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The successful lifeguard/ responsibilities and professionalism/ child abuse prevention guidelines/ legal responsibilities</li> </ul> <p>Lifeguarding Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Decision making/ how to guard</li> </ul> <p>Rules and Regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Establishing and communicating rules/ common rules for high-risk locations/ special situations/ enforcing the rules</li> </ul>
<hr/>	

(table continues)

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## Victim Recognition and Drowning

### Rescue Skills

- Rescue Equipment/ non-swimming assists/ water entries/ approaches/ rescues using a rescue floatation device (RFD)/

multiple-victim rescues/ rescue towing/ removing victims from the water

### Emergency Systems

- Types of emergencies/ preparing for emergencies/ emergency policy guidelines/ emergency plans/ accident and incident reports/ crisis control

### First Aid in Aquatic Environments

- First aid kits/ medical alert tags/ protecting yourself from hepatitis and HIV/ how to contact and activate the emergency medical system/ first aid devices/ heart attacks/ sever bleeding/ hypothermia/ allergic reactions/ asthma/ epileptic seizures/ hyperventilation

### Spinal Injury Management

- Causes of aquatic spinal injuries/ design related spinal injury hazards/ facility and equipment hazards in swimming pools/ no diving signs/ recognizing spinal injuries/ reaching a spinal injury victim/ spinal injury rescue techniques/ backboarding equipment/ backboarding procedures/ rescue breathing and CPR/ special spinal injury conditions/ strapping the victim to the backboard on deck or shore/ preparing for spinal injury management

### Hazards of the Outdoor Environment

- Weather conditions/ open water conditions

### Lifeguarding Water Recreation Attractions

- How to guard water recreation attractions/ causes of accidents and water recreation attractions/ lifeguarding tips for individual attractions/ Operational safety guidelines for lifeguards/ communication at water recreation attractions/ inflatables

### Pool Management Basics

Safety inspections/ safety and sanitation precautions/ fecal contamination of pool water/ signage/ filtration/ pool chemistry/ water testing/ common water problem/ spas

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*Note:* Data for certification course content for from American Red Cross (2012), Ellis and Associates (2007), YMCA (2001)

### Facility Specific Training After Receiving Required Certifications

According to Clayton and Thomas (1989), “It is difficult for swimming pool lifeguards to maintain their rescue skills simply because situations in which the skills are needed occur so infrequently” (p. 88). Let us examine the task the lifeguards have when they are on stand. He or she must sit for long hours, in most cases in extreme weather, constantly scanning for an incident that seldom happens, all the while making sure patrons around their area are being safe and following the rules. It is a rare occurrence that a lifeguard actually needs to jump in to perform a rescue and unfortunately if lifeguards do not find what they are looking for regularly, they often fail to notice it when it does appear (Wolfe, Horowitz, & Kenner, 2005).

According to Schwebel and colleagues (2010) and Wolfe and researchers (2005), there is strong evidence – primarily involving screening baggage for explosives by Transportation Security Administration (TSA) agents – that humans are simply not good at noticing rare events while completing a monotonous, humdrum task. The situation with lifeguards is made worse by the fact that the vast majority of lifeguards are quite young, inexperienced, and poorly paid. Some communities will hire lifeguards as young as 15 years old. Managers expect them to have the mentality and foresight to stay constantly vigilant for a rare event, while performing a tedious task, day in and day out. There is a solution however, according to Cable (1993): Lifeguards need more extensive training than ever as aquatic programs get more diverse and open to persons with all levels of water skills.

### Lifeguard In-services

Aquatic managers need to prepare their employees for the rare event that might only happen to them once while they are working during the operating season. It is possible that rare occurrence could be a matter of life and death. Ellis (1987) noted that no public pool had more than 10 rescues in an operating season and the majority of those pools had less than four rescues in any given year. Effective in-service trainings prepare lifeguards to perform during an emergency and that preparation translates into confident response and performance while enabling the individual to continue with his or her personal and professional life after an incident (Cable, 1993).

Staffing qualified lifeguards and training them to follow an organization's specific procedures is the first step toward a successful aquatic program. Aquatic administrators should address two separate areas of training (1) lifeguard certification by an outside organization (i.e. American Red Cross, Ellis and Associates, and the YMCA), and (2) In-service, facility-specific training designed to verify and improve lifeguards' skills and teamwork (Markel Insurance Company, 2004).

Due to the variety and quality in the different lifeguard certifying organizations, an aquatic manager should make sure his or her employees are all working together as a team when it comes to emergency action plans, or EAP's. During orientation and in-service trainings an aquatic manager should spend time making sure their employees understand exactly what is required of them during emergencies.

It is important that aquatic directors fully comprehend the procedures their lifeguards understand from their certification courses. With the differentiating courses

and standards, aquatic managers need to be able to connect what their lifeguards learned with the policies and procedures of the EAP at their facility. Effective lifeguard in-service training integrates experience, judgement and rescue skills (Cable, 1993).

There are many different aspects to training a lifeguard and making sure they are ready to react in confidence to a potentially life-threatening situation. According to Cable (1993), to be effective and realistic, an in-service lifeguard training must:

- “Require the lifeguard team to anticipate, recognize and manage a variety of incidents” (para. 7).
- “Break down the lifeguard’s natural self-consciousness and reluctance to initiate action” (para. 11).
- “Include the benefits of an element unique and central to our profession” (para. 12).
- “Induce stress or place the lifeguard under pressure to perform” (para. 13).
- “Place the lifeguard in unique, unusual or unanticipated situations” (para. 14).

In-services training should be held often and should, as much as possible, emulate real life scenarios (Cable, 1993). A drowning victim is going to be trying as much as possible to keep his or her mouth above water. Therefore, they will not be able to call out for help and their arms will most likely be extended to the sides instead of above them (American Red Cross, 2012). Aquatic managers need to make sure the lifeguards are prepared to recognize the silent emergencies as well as the obvious ones. In addition, if a patron is suffering from a spinal injury, the first responder may not always find them in a perfect position for inline stabilization (Cable, 1993). Lifeguards need to train in order to

assist patrons who require first aid and who are found in a variety of positions. Some first aid protocols, such as injuries to muscles, bones, and joints, require the first responder to provide care while leaving the injured area in the position they find it (American Red Cross, 2012).

In-service trainings should also be realistic in the timing of when things should and do happen. If a lifeguard finds a victim at the bottom of the pool, the lifeguard team must work quickly and diligently in order to get that victim oxygen (American Red Cross, 2012). Similarly, lifeguards should be able to anticipate and operate accordingly until EMS personnel arrive. It could take anywhere from five to 10 minutes for them to arrive on the scene (Ludwig, 2004). Finally, Cable (1993) indicates lifeguards should be exposed to having an audience while they perform a rescue. There is going to come a time when guards need to react to a situation and they should be fully prepared and confident in their abilities to do so in front of a pool/deck full of onlookers. They should not hesitate just because they are self-conscious in front of large groups.

Although lifeguards play a critical role in the operation of an aquatic facility, they are not the only employees present. “Every aquatic facility should have emergency and operational procedures that address the hazards, activities, and patrons specific to their organization” (Markel Insurance Company, 2004, p. 2). Cashiers, concession workers and maintenance staff all contribute to the overall operations of an aquatic facility and therefore must also be trained accordingly. Employees must operate as a team and be able to provide the patrons with the best experience possible (Fawcett, 2005). Aquatic managers could also be tasked with the job of training all employees of the organization,

not just the lifeguards. The next section will discuss the topics related to employee training and development for employees of all job titles.

### Employee Development

When an organization decides to implement staff training they are generally doing so to remedy one of two situations: the gap between actual performance and desired performance or the gap between the current abilities of the employee and the job requirements needed for the position (McConnell, 2003). Furthermore, McConnell (2003) indicates there are two categories in which training generally falls: needs of the organization and needs of the individual employee.

### Organizational Training Needs

According to McConnell (2003), the training needs of the organization have to do with the requirements to meet the organization's objectives. Such objectives could include new employee orientation or unique skills required for jobs that new employees cannot be assumed to have learned elsewhere. Training needs of the organization can also be placed into two categories: recognized training needs and requested training needs.

Recognized training needs are the needs identified as required by all of the employees in a particular organization (McConnell, 2003). These are items that the organization knows every employee must understand in order to work for the company and therefore can be planned for in advance. These elements of training include:

- The organization's structure, policies, procedures, and benefits (p. 67)
- The specific department's policies, rules, operating procedures, and personnel

- Specific job skills and knowledge not generally possessed by most new employees in their jobs (p. 68)

Some training needs are not always as obvious as others and therefore, cannot be planned for in advance. These needs usually result from activities such as department performance, operating and job changes, and employee and organizational morale (McConnell, 2003). These requested needs become apparent as they occur, and are typically brought to the employer's attention by the follow situations:

- Changes in jobs or systems,
- Addition of new equipment,
- Department performance reviews,
- New and revised government requirements,
- Employee opinion surveys, organizational studies, department meetings and focus groups,
- Exit interview conducted with departing employees (p.72).

### Individual Training Needs

Individual employee training needs are those not required by every single employee. According to McConnell (2003), individual training needs have more to do with training requirements for a specific employee to improve their overall performance, to be eligible for other jobs, or to acquire specific skills or abilities that most employees already have.



Since individual training needs are specific to each circumstance, unlike organizational training needs, it is harder to plan ahead to meet these in advance of the need. McConnell (2003) conveys that needs are introduced through actions such as:

- Performance reviews,
- Selection process,
- Testing and assessment,
- Employee career objectives,
- Succession plans (p. 75).

There are several different reasons an organization will train their employees, whether it is to fulfill the needs of the organization or the specific needs of the employee. Once the organization realizes they need to train their employees for one reason or another, the organization will need to choose the method in which the training will be carried out.

#### Training and Development Methods

Training and development methods include developing steps to examine exactly how and what course of action should be taken for training. As Olaniyan and Ojo (2008) indicate there are several methods to train employees:

- On the job training/coaching – formal training when a worker becomes experienced on the job over time due to modification of job behaviors at the point of training or acquisition of skills.

- Induction/orientation – carried out for new employees on the job to teach them the job requirements such as norms, ethics, values, rules, and regulations.
- Apprenticeship – this is when an employee learns the required skills needed by understudying an employee who is in the position currently.
- Demonstration – teaching by example, employees learn the required skill by observing a skilled worker perform the specified task.
- Vestibule – this is done through industrial attachment for the purpose of skills and technology transfer. It is therefore achieved through placement of an individual within another area of relevant work or organization. The effect is the acquisition of practical and specialized skills.
- Formal Training – this is a practical and theoretical teaching process that can be done within (in-house) or outside (off-house) of the organization. Off-house training is typically conducted in professionalized training facilities such as universities, polytechnics and professional institutes (p. 328).

It can be a difficult task for any organization to correctly understand their specific training needs, and then select the appropriate method in which to train their employees. However, when an organization takes the time to examine their employees' development, it can lead to several benefits for the widespread resources used in implementing the training (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

### Benefits of Staff Training and Development

Staff training and development can yield positive benefits for employees, teams and organizations as a whole. Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) outline several benefits staff training can have for individuals and teams related to job performance, such as tacit skills, innovation, and communication, and other benefits such as empowerment and self-efficacy. Furthermore, benefits for the organization may include improving organizational performance effectiveness, profitability, and sales, and employee and customer satisfaction.

#### Individual and Team Training Benefits

Jehanzeb and Ahmed Bashir (2013) state it is the responsibility of the employee to participate in professional development. However, Jehanzeb and Ahmed Bashir also indicate it is the organization's responsibility to provide opportunities for their staff to grow professionally. An organization can entice their employees to participate in trainings by laying out the personal benefits for attending.

According to Jehanzeb and Ahmed Bashir (2013), one benefit an employee might gain from trainings is career competencies. Some organizations hold trainings in order to set their staff up for success by continuously building on what they already know. Therefore, it would be more beneficial to keep someone hired on for a longer period, than it would be to hire someone new and train him or her from the ground up. Another benefit to the individual would be employee satisfaction. If an organization is willing to spend the time and money to invest in their employees continued professional development and training, then they will be gaining, in return, a high level of employee

satisfaction and low turnover (Jehanzeb & Ahmed Bashir, 2013). Employees will not care about their organizations if they feel their employers do not care about them. Finally, training positively affects employee performance (Jehanzeb & Ahmed Bashir, 2013) and individuals who see their performance increasing due to their newly learned skills will therefore have a greater level of self-efficacy while on the job.

### Organizational Benefits

Market growth, organizational performance, and employee retention are all ways in which staff training and development can benefit an organization that implements the opportunities for their employees. Employee development programs are key for any organization to stay on top of today's ever changing and competitive market (Jehanzeb & Ahmed Bashir, 2013). Even though it can be costly for an organization to train their staff, there are many benefits of the investment. The policies, regulations, and trends are ever changing in our society and companies need to stay on top of them in order to rival the top competitors.

Results from a study performed by Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) indicated that some types of training activities, including on-the-job training and training inside the organization using in-house training were positively related to most dimensions of organizational effectiveness and profitability. Likewise, organizations that invest in their employees' training and development will see greater success in their employee retention. Organizations that are not only offering employee training, but effective employee development trainings are yielding an increased number of employee retention (Jehanzeb

& Ahmed Bashir, 2013). Employee retention is key for any organization because it can limit the overall costs related to the hiring and new employee training processes.

### Evaluating Effective Employee Development

According to Smith and Mazin (2004), the measures of success for the program should be identified before training begins. Organizations should know what they want their end results to be before starting the programs or sessions. Some information will be easy to evaluate such as reduction in errors or cost savings that are a direct result of the training. Others such as reduction in turnover, or cost per hire will take more time to see the effects (Smith & Mazin, 2004).

There have been models of training evaluation that have been used to gauge training effectiveness. According to Arthur Jr., Bennett Jr., Edens, and Bell (2003), Kirkpatrick's four-level model of training evaluation and criteria continues to be the most popular. Kirkpatrick's evaluation looks at four dimensions: reaction, learning, behavior, and results (Kirkpatrick, 1979).

Reaction is defined as how well the trainees liked a particular training program; this type of evaluation, although important, does not gauge how much an employee actually learned from the experience only if they enjoyed it. Learning is defined by what principles, facts and techniques were understood and absorbed by the trainees. Behavior is defined by how a trainee changes their actual working techniques to include their newfound knowledge they gained from the training sessions. Finally, results are defined with things such as reduction of costs, reduction of turn over and absenteeism, reduction

of grievances, increase in quality and quantity of production, or improved moral can lead to a better working environment (Kirkpatrick, 1979).

As the literature shows, there is a need for organizations to continually train and develop their staff. Society is ever changing and whether the training is geared towards the employees' individual needs or the organizational needs, training and development is something that needs to take place in order to stay ahead of the changing trends. Employees working at an aquatic facility need to continuously be retrained on their skills and competencies related to the technical aspects of lifeguarding. If employees are not getting the proper training and review of the technical skills involved with lifeguard certifications, there is a potential it can lead to costly mistakes in and out of the water. Finally, because there is has not been a study similar to this in the past that has examined aquatic staff training and development, this study will help fill this gap in the literature.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe how aquatic managers implement aquatic staff training and development. What professional development content is being covered in aquatic staff training? How often is training being implemented for aquatic competencies? How do aquatic managers evaluate whether or not an aquatic employee is competent?

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the methodology of the study. The first section outlines the research design and the procedure utilized for the research. The second section details the participants and demographics of their facility. The third section covers the methods used for data collection and the last section covers the method used for data analysis.

#### Research Design

The descriptive qualitative design of this study provided the researcher with a greater understanding of the current trends of staff training and development in aquatic facilities in Northeast Iowa. The research protocol was originally submitted, and approved by the University of Northern Iowa's Institutional Review Board (IRB). This chapter presents the methodologies used to perform this study, including the selection process and description of the subjects, the study design, procedure, and the analysis plan for the data collected.

This qualitative study explores strategies and attempt to understand what competencies aquatic managers are covering during their staff training and development

in Northeast Iowa. Qualitative data analysis is defined as “the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 153). Qualitative data can be produced from three different forms of research: (1) in-depth open ended interviewing; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents (Patton, 2002). Additionally, Kvale (1996) states qualitative interviewing attempts to understand the participants’ point of view of the world, to unfold the meaning of their experiences prior to scientific explanations. Furthermore, “an interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose” (p. 6).

A primary reason for using qualitative interviewing in this study is to allow the researcher to gain a better understanding of what aquatic managers are actually implementing in staff training and development as it relates to competencies of aquatic professionals. Therefore, the researcher can identify and describe the current practices of aquatic managers in Northeast Iowa and provide possible recommendations for future practice and study.

### Procedure

This study design was based on qualitative interviewing. This study was assisted and governed by the regulations of the University of Northern Iowa’s Institutional Review Board (Appendix A). The guidelines included the following:

- the subjects were informed of the nature of the study being conducted prior to their consent to participate,



- a signed letter of informed consent was obtained from each of the participants,
- the subjects identity remained completely confidential,
- permission to audiotape face-to-face interviews was requested and all subjects were informed in advance when such an audiotape recorder was going to be used.

After obtaining approval from the IRB, the researcher made initial contact with the aquatic managers in Northeast Iowa. The criteria for the participants were that individuals had to be the direct managers of the aquatic staff, including lifeguards, at their local facilities. The manager had to have worked at the facility for at least one operating season. Their facility had to serve a community with 50,000 residents or less, and the participant had to be willing to participate in the study.

Once the participants were recruited and agreed to participate, the researcher set a time, date, and location for the face-to-face interview. The researcher conducted all interviews during the months of February 2017 and March 2017. Interviews were conducted in the current workplace of the participants. However, if the participant did not wish to hold the interview at their place of employment, the interview was held at a local coffee shop or restaurant. Consent forms provided all information relating to the study such as procedures, benefits, and any potential risk concerning this type of interview. All participants volunteered their time and compensation was not offered.

### Participants

The primary objective when selecting sample size for qualitative research is to find out what you need to know. Therefore, you must interview as many participants as needed (Kvale, 1996). According to Patton (2002), “qualitative inquiry typically focuses

in depth on relatively small samples, even single case (N=1), selected purposefully” (p. 230). Additionally, Patton continues to note that for many audiences, the credibility of the results was greatly increased with small samples of random sampling.

The sample size depends on what you gain to know, the purpose of your research, and what useful materials will have credibility (Patton, 2002). Therefore, six individuals were chosen after a framework of criteria was created. This study included the following predetermined criteria for participation:

1. The participant must be considered at manager at his or her aquatic facility,
2. The participant must be the direct manager of the aquatic staff including the lifeguards,
3. The participant must have worked at their respective facilities for at least one operating season,
4. The participant must agree to participate in the study.

The participants who were interviewed had a range of diverse educational and aquatic backgrounds, held various positions within their respective recreation facilities, and had their own unique take on training and development. The following sections give a description of each individual’s professional and aquatic background, current job responsibilities, and facility they manage. All names of participants and aquatic facilities have been changed in order to keep the anonymity of the individual.

Max

“Max” is 28 years old and is employed as teacher in his community school district. During the summer, he manages the “Waves” Aquatic Center. The Waves is in a community serving a population of roughly 40,000 residents. The Waves is a seasonal facility open from Memorial Day to Labor Day. This aquatic facility has quite a few amenities for the local residents to enjoy including a zero-depth entry, interactive play structures and floatables, several waterslides of varying sizes, 50-meter lap swim area and diving well, along with a lazy river.

Max has 10 years of professional recreation experience as well as ten years of aquatic experience. Max started lifeguarding during the summer of his freshman year of college at his hometown pool. During the interview, Max shared “I fell into it...and then just loved it” When Max went back to college after that first summer lifeguarding, he applied for a lifeguarding position at his campus recreation center. During his time in college, he was able to get training and his certification for Lifeguard Instructor. Max graduated from college with a bachelors in Social Sciences Education with an emphasis in aquatics. He has also received his masters’ degree in Educational Leadership. When he was looking for jobs outside of the university, he applied for a position at the Waves. At the Waves, Max was able to slowly work his way up the managing ladder. He became assistant manager one summer and then the following summer of 2012 became the manager and has held the position of aquatic manager ever since.

The aquatic manager position is a seasonal full time position working roughly 40-45 hours per week. Max supervises approximately 80-90 seasonal employees during the operating season. His primary responsibilities are:

- Hiring and training employees,
- Ensuring deposits are correct,
- General maintenance,
- Concession stand is clean and stocked,
- Scheduling of employees,
- Scheduling lessons,
- Setting up and breaking down pool

Throughout his time at The Waves, Max was able to maintain his lifeguarding and lifeguarding instructor certification.

### Maggie

“Maggie” is 25 years old and is employed at “The Iowa College Recreation Center” as the Aquatics and Certifications Coordinator. The Iowa College Aquatic Facility serves roughly 10,000 college students per year and is open year-round. The aquatic facility is an indoor facility equipped with a 25-yard lap pool, diving well, and zero-depth entry leisure pool with interactive water features, a basketball hoop, water slide and spa.

Maggie has three and half years of professional recreation experience and ten years of aquatics experience. She started lifeguarding and teaching swim lessons when she was 15 years old in her hometown and during her high school summers. When

Maggie went to college, she transferred to her current place of employment and applied to be a lifeguard and swim instructor. Soon she became a program assistant, so she gained a little more responsibility working in the aquatic office. The semester after that, she became head guard and the master's swim coach. Maggie received her training and certifications in lifeguard instructing and began teaching the certification classes at the college and she indicated during the interview she "dove in from there" (Maggie).

When Maggie graduated from Iowa College with a degree in Public Relations, her supervisor was leaving the college. Therefore, she applied for the job and is currently hired on as a temp-employee for 30 hours per week supervising roughly 45 college students. Her primary responsibilities are:

- Planning, assigning, directing, training, motivating, and evaluating the work of subordinate staff,
- Establishing and maintaining effective relationships with those contacted in course of work,
- Recommending, interpreting, explaining, and enforcing program policies and procedures,
- Communicating effectively both orally and in writing to all individuals involved,
- Preparing reports and correspondence for the college.

During her time as the Aquatics and Certifications Coordinator, Maggie has maintained her lifeguarding, lifeguarding instructor, and her water safety instructor certifications.

## Tyler

“Tyler” is 61 years old and he is currently the Leisure Services Director at the city of “Beaumont” and had held this position for 31 years. The Beaumont Pool serves a community of roughly 10,000 residents and is open Memorial Day through Labor Day. The Beaumont Pool is a smaller outdoor aquatic facility with a wading area, lap lane area and a water slide.

Tyler has 38 years of professional recreation experience and 40 years of aquatic experience. Tyler first started lifeguarding when he was in high school. In college, he received his degree in Recreation Education and Sociology. Once Tyler graduated, he received a job working at a local parks and recreation department, but for the first time he was not working in aquatics, he was centered in sports recreation. Three years later, the aquatic manager left the city and Tyler was hired to take over the vacant position. During his time as the aquatic manager for the city, Tyler taught the very first Certified Pool Operator class.

After three years in that community, there was a job opening in Beaumont, as the sports, recreation, and aquatic supervisor. Tyler applied for the position and was hired full time for that position. Finally, he moved his way in to the current position he holds, Leisure Services Director. As the Leisure Services Director, Tyler manages and oversees the following aspects of the city:

- Outdoor swimming pool,

- Park system (including; 12 play units, skate park, dog park, amphitheater, municipal cemetery, municipal golf course and pro shop, trail system, and civic center and City Hall),
- Forestry,
- Nuisance complaints,
- City council meetings,
- 2 Commissions,
- Four advisory volunteer groups.

Tyler also supervises six full-time employees, two part-time employees, and 60 seasonal employees throughout the course of one year. During his time in Beaumont he has maintained his Certified Pool Operator certification and is a part of the Iowa Parks and Recreation Association Aquatics Roundtable group.

### Hailey

“Hailey” is 34 years old and is currently the Aquatics and Facility Director at “Pine Ridge” College. The Pine Ridge Aquatic Facility serves roughly 1,500 college students per year and is open year-round. The Pine Ridge Aquatic Facility is an indoor facility and includes a 25-yard lap swim area, wading area, water slide and spa.

Hailey is a 2004 alumna of Pine Ridge College, with a bachelor’s degree in Communication Arts with an emphasis in Public Relations. She has also received her master’s degree in Leisure Youth and Human Services. Hailey has 17 years of professional recreation experience and 10 years of aquatic experience. During the time

Hailey was working on her master's degree, Pine Ridge College was working on the idea of building a sports and wellness center.

When the city was working on plans for the Pine Ridge fitness facility, they knew they wanted to have a pool available for the community as well. Since Hailey had always been interested in sports and wellness, she knew she wanted to apply for the job. It was at this time she took an interest in aquatics and gained all the necessary certifications for the job. She eventually interviewed for the position and was hired on. When Hailey was first hired for the position, she was taking care of only the aquatic aspects of the program. She has been there now for 10 years.

Since she has started, Hailey has taken on a much bigger role as the facility has grown and adapted to the community. Since its development, the Pine Ridge fitness facility has taken over all of the recreation programming from the city. They provide swim lessons, a swimming club, triathlon courses, and aqua classes including lifeguarding. Pine Ridge also has several fitness classes, special events such as proms and birthdays, while also hosting day cares from around the city for various activities during school breaks.

As the facilities director, Hailey supervises 57 student employees. She is also in charge of scheduling out the entire facility for the different classes, events and programs they hold. This also includes helping to schedule out the facility and recreational spaces for when other colleges want to come and play at Pine Ridge against the college's various sport teams. Therefore, Hailey coordinates with the Pine Ridge coaches to make sure everything is taken care of for games and tournaments. As Aquatics Director and Facility



Director at Pine Ridge College, Hailey has maintained her lifeguarding, water safety instructor, certified pool operator, and first aid/ CPR/ AED instructor certifications.

### Heidi

“Heidi” is 26 years old and is currently the Marketing Operations Supervisor at the “Findale Aquatic Center.” The Findale Aquatic Center serves a community of roughly 24,000 residents. The Findale Aquatic Center is divided into three sections: the lazy river, rec pool, and lap pool and diving well. The lazy river is equipped with zero-depth entry, two tube slides, and an orange swirl bowl slide. The rec pool is equipped with zero depth entry, current channel, and water and play features. The lap pool and diving well is equipped with two slides, a low and a high dive, two basketball hoops, and six lap lanes.

Heidi has eight years of professional recreation experience and two years of aquatics experience. The Findale Aquatic Center was the first location Heidi has been exposed to aquatics professionally. Her supervisor – the current Parks and Recreation Director – was the aquatic supervisor for about 30 years. When the Director wanted to pass on the aquatic duties, Heidi took an interest and loved it, so she agreed to take on the full-time position.

As the Marketing and Operations Supervisor, Heidi supervises roughly 100 part-time employees. Heidi’s main oversight responsibilities are:

- the aquatic center (swim lessons, concessions, cashiers, lifeguards, payroll, rules, water aerobics, scheduling, memberships, special events, and billing),

- the baseball and softball complex (11 fields, 3 concession stands, cashiers, payroll, tournaments, billing, scheduling, and hosting a large state-wide tournament every year),
- marketing (ads with local newspapers and schools, updates on the website and Facebook, and as head of the social media committee, creating any marketing materials needed in the department).

Heidi has held this position for the past two years. During her time at the Findale Aquatic Center, Heidi has maintained her lifeguarding, first aid, CPR, AED, lifeguarding instructor, water safety instructor and certified pool operator certifications.

#### Amber

“Amber” is 28 years old and is currently the Aquatics Supervisor at the “North Bay Shore” Recreation Center. North Bay Shore aquatic facility is in a community serving roughly 15,000 residents. This particular aquatic facility has an indoor and outdoor pool. The indoor facility is open year-round and is equipped with six lap lanes, a diving board, a basketball hoop and a zero-depth entry. The outdoor facility is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day and is equipped with a zero-depth entry, play structure, floatables, two waterslides, a high and low dive, and a ropes course.

Amber has eight years of professional recreation experience and been in the aquatics field for 13 years. She first started lifeguarding in high school for her hometown aquatic center. After high school, she attended college at a state University. She graduated with her bachelors double majoring in Psychology and Sociology. During her time in college she worked at the local recreation center pool.

After college Amber left Iowa and became an aquatic assistant manager for a well-known fitness franchise outside the state of Iowa. When her boss left that company, she then became the aquatic manager. She held that position for three years before applying and being hired for the Aquatics Supervisor position at the North Bay Shore Recreation Center.

As the Aquatics Supervisor she typically works between 40-45 hours per week, supervising roughly 50 employees throughout the year and up to 80 employees during the summer. Her main responsibilities are:

- Coordinating and supervising all functions of indoor and outdoor pool,
- Plan, budget, and facilitate all aquatic special events,
- Oversee all functions of swim lessons and water fitness classes,
- Develop and expand aquatic programming,
- Hiring, training, and scheduling all employees,
- Ensuring all employees are certified and have formal evaluations,
- Plan all employee trainings and monthly in-services,
- Accountable for daily operations and maintenance of both indoor and outdoor pools,
- Maintain pool chemicals and safety standards to comply within state codes,
- Manage all aquatic purchases within budget,
- Ensure thorough records of chemical tests, jump reports, first-aid reports, and incident reports.

Throughout her time at the North Bay Shore Recreation Center, Amber has maintained her lifeguarding, CPR, first aid, and lifeguard instructor certifications.

The six individuals interviewed provided sufficient data for the necessary research analysis. Each interview was voice recorded and transcribed. The interview transcriptions can be found in Appendix C.

### Data Collection

There are two primary forms of qualitative data collection: interviewing and observations. Patton (2002) states: “we interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe” (p. 340). We can learn how people perceive the world around them and how they interpret their perceptions (Weiss, 1994). The present study used qualitative, standardized open-ended interviewing in order to collect data. This method was chosen because the researcher sought to find what aquatic competencies were being implemented during aquatic staff training and how the aquatic managers evaluated whether or not their employees were competent.

As specified by Patton (2002), standardized open-ended interviews involve the same predetermined, fixed questions that every interviewee will be asked. The questions should be open-ended to allow interviewees to answer based on their own experiences. Additionally, Patton (2002) articulates that doing standardized open-ended interview, the researcher will be more likely to notice comparability in responses and it increases validity and reduces bias when a number of interviews are used.

Interviews were conducted in the participant’s place of employment; if the participant did not wish to hold the interview where they work, a coffee shop was

suggested. The interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes. With consent of each participant, the interviews were voice recorded and transcribed. The interviewer took handwritten notes during the interview to ensure the interviewer could review the responses to completely understand the participants' meaning.

### Data Analysis

During the course of the interviews, the researcher voice recorded the conversation with a digital flash voice recorder as well as wrote down field notes. Data analysis began by transcribing the voice recording and hand-written notes. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), "transcripts are the main data of many interview studies" (p. 128).

While interviewing, the researcher asked the participants the same questions, and the researcher sought to identify patterns in the participants' responses. According to Patton (2002), since a standard interviewing format was used, the interviews can be organized question by question. The researcher used inductive analysis in order to interpret the data collected. Patton (2002) defines inductive analysis as "discovering patterns, themes and categories in one's data" (p. 453). The results of the study's data analysis are described in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of this study based on interviews with professional managers in the aquatic field. This study was approved and governed by the University of Northern Iowa's Institutional Review Board. The descriptive qualitative design of this study provided the researcher with a greater understanding of the current trends of staff training and development in aquatic facilities in Northeast Iowa. This qualitative study explored the strategies and attempted to understand what competencies aquatic managers are covering during their staff training, how often they are holding their staff training sessions, and how they evaluate that their staff are competent in required skills.

The researcher interviewed six current professional aquatic managers regarding their training and development practices. All interviews were conducted in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the University of Northern Iowa's Institutional Review Board. The participants who were interviewed had a range of diverse educational and aquatic backgrounds, held various positions within their respective recreation facilities, and had their own unique take on training and development.

During the interview, each participant shared their professional and aquatic background, their practices and implementation of aquatic staff training, and method of evaluating whether or not their staff are competent in required skills. Their accounts included descriptions of the following:

- their background,

- their aquatic training (how often, who attends, and if they are compensated),
- the aquatic content that is implemented during training,
- certifications they required of their employees and how often they retrain for specific certifications,
- their evaluation of their employees,
- how well they believe their employees would do if they retook the lifeguarding test that day or at the end of the operation season,
- insights into what the Red Cross, or any other certifying organization, can do to help them as a manager.

The six participants who were interviewed gave the researcher enough information for data analysis. This chapter is organized by, and describes, the data collected pertaining to each specific research question.

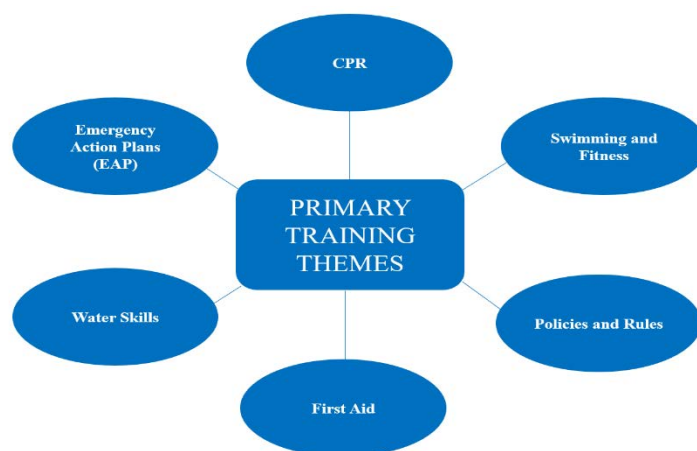
### Research Questions

For this qualitative study, the researcher examined three separate research questions pertaining to aquatic training and development. These questions provided the researcher with a greater understanding of what aquatic managers are implementing in the field in Northeast Iowa. The next sections breakdown the results the researcher found related to each individual question.

#### What aquatic competencies do aquatic managers implement during staff training?

When analyzing the data regarding the competencies aquatic managers implement in staff training and development, two overarching trends emerged. The first trend that was identified was the competencies covered in every single facility's aquatic in-service

or orientation training. Therefore, the researcher has labeled these competencies as: The Primary Themes of Aquatic Competencies Covered in Training. Figure 1 illustrates the six topics that were identified as primary training themes of aquatic staff training.



*Figure 1: Primary Training themes of Aquatic Competencies*

#### Primary Training Theme 1: Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

Every facility manager that was interviewed had an emergency action plan put in place for various scenarios. Some EAP's are simple and only required the direct attention of few people to implement, such as someone who falls and skins their knee or an active save. However, some scenarios required more extensive training and personnel to ensure the plan was implemented smoothly.

In the course of the interview, Heidi described the Findale Aquatic Center's all-staff training they schedule in May.

In May, we have a pretty intensive summer training where we have two weeks so a total of eight days...we do a night that's solely dedicated to practicing our emergency action plan over and over and over again, for different scenarios (Heidi, personal communication, March 14, 2017).



Hailey at Pine Ridge College explained their fall semester training that includes not only her lifeguards but also the entire recreation center staff.

In the fall [I] require each of my employees, regardless if they've been here forever, or if they're just new to the job, they have to participate in a skill review session. And, we do that in conjunction with our front desk. It's mainly to cover, like our emergency action plan, and how the lifeguard staff works with the front desk staff, and that's usually a three-hour training where we review CPR...then the lifeguarding to go through our rescues and our saves and backboarding and, you know, what role our front desk staff plays in an emergency situation (Hailey, personal communication, March 15, 2017).

Tyler discussed how he invites several different organizations to help with his in-services and emergency action plan training.

We invite the Boy Scouts to a free swim. And then it's a two-hour-long things. So they swim, we 'drown' one of them, and then we have the ambulance come, by calling 911. We've got that all pre-arranged, so 911 is aware of it, the cops are aware of it, the fire and rescue folks are aware of it, the hospital ambulance service are aware of it. We do that once a year on a Saturday morning... We pull the kid out, they put him on the stretcher they take him to the ambulance, drive around the block and then done. It kind cross-trains lots of people (Tyler, personal communication, February 13, 2017).

Emergency action plans can be very extensive and require the aid of multiple people throughout the course of the operating season. Therefore, the managers interviewed regarded their EAP training as an important aspect of the training and orientation process.

#### Primary Training Theme 2 and 3: Swimming, Fitness and Water Skills.

Along with emergency action plans, the consistency of fitness and water skills training was a familiar topic between all participants. Maggie talked about the importance of skills training during her in-services at the Iowa College Aquatic Center: "I highly, highly believe in practicing skills and going over anything that's being

miscommunicated...we always do pool skills. I always aim to do 20-minute talk and the rest of the time (1.5 hours) in the pool” (personal communication, February 2, 2017)

Tyler also shared similar thoughts on the subject of fitness and skills review.

We always have a swimming element and we practice skills. That’s consistent throughout. We always have a fitness element and a skills element. We try to do something fun...like, our fitness might be water polo instead of swimming laps (Tyler, personal communication, February 13, 2017).

Max also requires his guards to swim 500 yards before every shift. “Each shift they start, they have a 500...it was something the center had before I was there. I mean, I’ve always liked it” (personal communication, February 17, 2017). Hailey expressed how she really stresses fitness and backboarding at her facility with her lifeguards. She believes these two elements are important aspects to the training of her guards.

In the fall, September, we’ll review backboarding and the saves and escapes, and CPR, we’ll hit everything. Then monthly, we’ll just pick a few topics and, you know, talk about them each time...every in-service we’ll get in and we’ll do some type of swimming and then, backboarding (Hailey, personal communication, March 15, 2017).

Tyler, discussed his own unique way to keep his lifeguards up to par on their skills,

We do an emergency procedure a couple of times. We move the victim around so it’s in different parts of the pool, so people can see that. You know, anything from a active victim in the deep end to someone who’s fallen down the stairs to the slide, those types of things (Tyler, personal communication, February 13, 2017).

When asked about the aquatic content implemented at the North Bay Shore Aquatic Center, Amber stated she and her employees always do activities in the water, out of the water, and related to fitness: “We’ll get in the water and practice one or two skills, depending on the month, splitting up anything, you know, spinal, deep water,

actives. And we'll usually do a fitness activity as well" (Amber, personal communication, March 24, 2017).

The fitness and water skills aspect of training are important lifeguards to maintain. The managers interviewed sought to make those skills a priority in their regular training. Some managers have their lifeguards swim laps for fitness while other have them play water games or do in-water relays. Likewise, the training on water skills vary from facility to facility. However, backboarding and running different save scenarios are a common theme.

#### Primary Training Theme 4 and 5: CPR and First Aid.

According to the American Red Cross, "as a professional lifeguard, you should be able to recognize and respond to cardiac emergencies, including heart attack, and cardiac arrest. To do this you must understand the importance of the four links of the Cardiac Chain of Survival" (American Red Cross, 2012, p. 206). Therefore, the practice and training on CPR is critical to any lifeguard in-service. Similarly, with first aid, the American Red Cross stresses the importance of lifeguards being well versed in providing care for a variety of scenarios: "As a professional lifeguard, you may need to care for patrons with a variety of injuries and illnesses. An important part of your job is to provide these victims with effective care" (American Red Cross, 2012, p. 238).

Maggie discussed how she emphasizes CPR due to the large population of elderly that utilize her aquatic facility.

I'm very big on CPR just because in the lap pool there is always a lot of older patrons coming in with aqua-zumba, or aerobics. That's something that could occur...so I keeping up to date on those skills and just EAP of just how to respond to that skill (Maggie, personal communication, February 2, 2017).

Along with an elderly population, Hailey has a unique situation where they have a girl who is prone to seizures who is on the swim team that utilizes their pool. She reflected on how she gears her in-services to her population specifically.

We've had some special cases here. Like we have a girl that's in our swim club that is, she's epileptic. So we know, like, 'Hey, we could have a seizure.' And she actually did, in the pool, during swimming lessons. But it was one of those, you know, like, you can talk about all this stuff, but then until you have to do it, it's like 'Oh my god. This is how it goes.

We have a very elderly population that uses the facility...there is fair amount that come in, and you know, swim and walk in our vortex. So we talk about, you know, the aging population as well. If we do have special circumstances like, you know, the gal that's prone to seizures, you know we do talk about that like this could happen very easily, and the one day it did. And so we just kind of dealt with it, did what we needed to do (Hailey, personal communication, March 15, 2017).

Max shared how he covers CPR and first aid during the first week of training. He devotes one night specifically to cover what is needed for CPR and first aid.

Thursday is gonna be first aid and CPR, so we invite all the people back again, and we set up about a dozen different stations for like splints, wrapping for first aid, ice packet, paperwork sudden illness, unconscious-, conscious-choking, CPT, rescue breathing, AED (Max, personal communication, February 17, 2017).

Finally, Amber from the North Bay Shore Recreation Center described the details of her training on CPR and first aid: "We'll go in to an out-of-water section, or CPR, whether that's CPR for adults, two person, one person, choking, infant...usually we'll do some first aid too. Or just kind of review sudden illnesses, or heart attacks" (Amber, personal communication, March 24, 2017).

CPR and first aid are skills that every manager practice during their in-service and orientation. However, some managers stress the importance a little more due to the population they serve. Since some facilities serve and older population more than other, those manager emphasize CPR and first aid more often in their training and orientation.

### Primary Training Theme 6: Policies and Rules.

The rules and policies at an aquatic facility help keep patrons safe while visiting the center. At the Waves aquatic facility, Max discussed how he covers city policies and rules with his aquatic employees:

What we have is a week-long in-service training before the season even begins. And, what I try to do is, on the first day the city has requirements to go through like the tax forms...then the city policies that they need covered to cover their end and sexual harassment (personal communication, February 17, 2017).

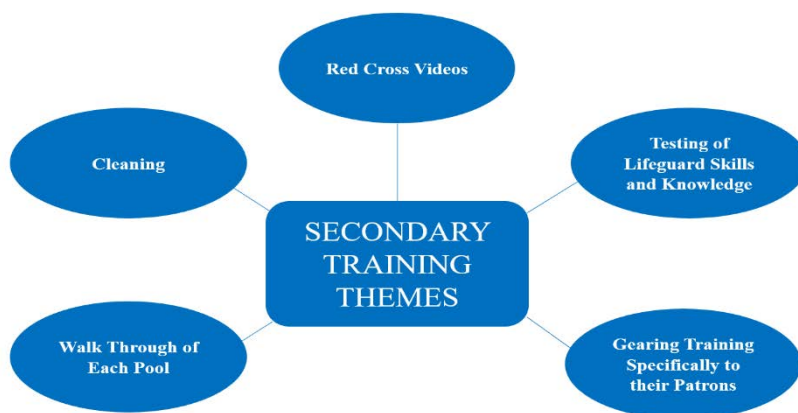
Then he goes on to explain how he covers the specific rules that the aquatics facility has established for their patrons.

I give them a giant rules packet. It's about 100 plus rules of what each thing can have and it goes beyond what we have at the signage at the Waves, and they have to justify each rule. So, then we as the managers know that they have at least looked over it, and they can justify each thing...so, like we'll put, like, one team in the lap pool and one team at the lazy river, and they just kind of rotate through. Then they go clean bathrooms, break rules, enforce rules, so then they can kind of see, this is what everything is (personal communication, February 17, 2017).

Tyler goes over all of the facilities rules and regulations during the first week of orientation. He combines his policies talk with a walk through of facilities: "We have a couple days of PowerPoints I go through just to show them policies, procedures, rotations, all that kind of stuff. Then we walk through it when we get to the facility" (personal communication, February 13, 2017).

The researcher found there were six primary themes that emerged throughout the course of this study, pertaining to aquatic competencies in staff training and orientation. These six themes were discussed though the course of the interviews, by each manager and viewed as important aspects in the success of their lifeguards.

The second trend that emerged relating to aquatic competencies covered in staff training was the competencies that were discussed in two or more facility interviews. Therefore, the researcher has labeled these competencies as: The Secondary Themes of Aquatic Competencies Covered in Training. Figure 2 illustrates the five topics that were identified as secondary themes discussed throughout aquatic training and development.



*Figure 2: Secondary Training Themes of Aquatic Competencies*

#### Secondary Training Theme 1: Red Cross Videos.

During the course of the interviews a couple of the participants described how they have their lifeguards re-watch the Red Cross skills videos throughout their training sessions: “I spend an hour going through all the Red Cross videos, kind of getting back up to snuff on what they forgot” (Max, personal communication, February 17, 2017).

Heidi schedules her time with viewing the Red Cross videos a little differently:

They [the lifeguards] have to come and attend videos before boot camp. I do hold a couple of night classes and videos for both your water skills and then also CPR and first aid...everybody has to watch the lifeguarding videos again. Everybody has to watch the CPR and first aid videos again (personal communication, March 14, 2017).

The Red Cross videos are a way for the aquatic managers to make sure their lifeguards are getting the correct information regarding the skills needed to perform particular rescues. Similarly re-watching the Red Cross videos can help clarify and reaffirm the essential technique of rescues for lifeguards from an organization who provides a certifying course.

#### Secondary Training Theme 2: Testing of Lifeguard Skills and Knowledge.

Along with showing the Red Cross video as a means to assist in the training of their lifeguards, Heidi and Max also test their guards periodically throughout their orientation and in-services.

Everybody has to do all of the boot camp skills. Everybody passes does the final skills test, so it's the written test. The only difference is if you actually need to get recertified this year, is you have to take the written test (Heidi, personal communication, March 14, 2017).

During orientation week, Max issues quizzes to his lifeguards over several of the topics he discusses throughout the week: "The teacher in me, I do make them take quizzes after all these. Especially with the EAPs and everything. I mean they're not rigorous tests, it's just more like matching and multiple choice kind of things" (personal communication, February 17, 2017).

Hailey and Maggie discussed how they use the actual lifeguard test to help train and keep their guards on par with their skills: "You know once in a while, I honestly will throw in there, 'Hey we're going to take the lifeguard test tonight.' And they're always like, 'Oh. Great.' You know, that test" (Hailey, personal communication, March 15, 2017). Likewise, Maggie has her guards take the written tests as well. "We've done a lot

of written tests of CPR and first aid, so that's testing their competency" (Maggie, personal communication, February 2, 2017).

As the Maggie states, having the lifeguards retake the written lifeguarding, CPR, and first aid tests is one way the managers can test their competencies. Furthermore, it is a technique some of the managers use in their orientation and in-services to make sure their lifeguards are refreshed in the required aspects of the job.

#### Secondary Training Theme 3 and 4: Walk-through of Pools and Cleaning Duties.

In the course of orientation and in-service training several managers discussed the topics of taking their guards on walk-through of their pools while also talking about the cleaning duties they have to do every day: "Initially, it's all orientation. We start off at the indoor pool and orient people to that in terms of policies, procedures, cleaning, those types of things, and then...we walk through it when we get to the facility" (Tyler, personal communication, February 13, 2017).

Hailey talked about how she includes going over cleaning procedures while she is talking about other auxiliary tasks: "You know, some people they forget, or they don't like to test [for chemicals]. So we make everybody go through that, or cleaning. I mean kind of some other auxiliary type stuff" (personal communication, March 14, 2017).

Finally, Max spoke about how he dedicates one day of his orientation to teaching his guards their cleaning responsibilities: "Friday is doing bathrooms. This is our big, pain-in-the-butt job. Going through what we expect, what is a clean bathroom. So going through that" (Max, personal communication, February 13, 2017).



### Secondary Training Theme 5: Gearing Training Towards the Needs of Patrons.

The last topic that emerged regarding the aquatic competencies covered in training and development was a need to gear the trainings towards the needs of the patrons or what the managers were seeing regularly in their pool. Maggie and Hailey described the uniqueness of their patrons and how they prepare their guards for anything that could happen.

Maggie described how they have an older population that participates in their different exercising classes and utilizes their lap pool: “I’m very big on CPR just because in the lap pool there is always a lot of older patrons coming in with aqua-Zumba, or aerobics. That’s something that could occur” (personal communication, February 2, 2017). She also explains how many of the incidents they see at her facility are active saves and first aid therefore; she would like her guards to be more versed in those skills.

’cause in our pools the main things we see are first aid, and then active saves, that’s pretty much it. So we kind of gear our in-services as in, ‘what are we seeing at the pools that occurs most often?’ because we want to be prepared for those rather than something that is less than likely going to happen (Maggie, personal communication, February 2, 2017).

Hailey describes how she has one patron who is on her club swimming team who is epileptic and prone to having seizures. Therefore, she makes sure her guards are trained on what to do if she would have a seizure while in their care:

We’ve had some special cases here. Like we have girl that’s in our swim club that is, she’s epileptic. So we know, like, ‘Hey, we could have a seizure.’ And she actually did, in the pool, during swimming lessons...we just kind of dealt with it, did what we needed to do and Ok (Hailey, personal communication, March 15, 2017).

Similarly, Hailey discussed how she covers topics related to the elderly population that utilizes their facility. “We have a very elderly population that uses the facility, not only, the track, but there’s a fair amount that come in and swim and walk in our vortex. So we talk about the aging population as well” (personal communication, March 15, 2017).

Throughout the interviews, the researcher discovered that each manager views the content they implement during staff training and development differently. The ways in which they cover the different topics needed for their guards vary. However, the common themes that emerged from the research were the six primary training themes that all the managers viewed as important and discussed, and the five secondary training themes discussed by two or more managers. These themes are the training and development topics these managers viewed as the most important in the effort to keeping their guards trained and ready for all their job entails.

#### How often is training being implemented for aquatic competencies?

A second aspect of training and development that is important is the frequency of how often managers are implanting training and development. While examining the data collected, the researcher realized that the common theme among the managers related to the frequency of their training is they all have an orientation training and they all have in-service trainings. Apart from orientation and in-services, each manager makes their training unique to what their facility and lifeguards need. Therefore, this section is organized by each manager and how they implement their orientation and in-service.

Maggie - Iowa College Aquatic Facility. The Iowa College Recreation Center is another year round facility and during the interview, Maggie explains her orientation and in-service training process.

So we do, at the beginning of the fall, we always do a fall training, which a lot of [colleges] do, and that's mandatory. It's an all-day thing, and then, from there on, we have monthly in-services. So they are required to attend an in-service once a month, and we have those on Sunday nights from 8:00-10:00 and then Tuesday morning from 6:00-7:30. A lot of people try and do the 8:00-10:00 because they don't want to wake up early on Tuesday morning. And the only excuse I tell them is that they could be sleeping because what class project would you have at 6 a.m.?

So those are mandatory. I highly, highly believe in practicing skills and going over anything that's being miscommunicated. If there's something on the staff that our head guards are seeing that, 'Hey some people are doing this or some people are doing this that needs to be this way.' Just re-collaborating and communicating our policies and rules and what they need to be doing 'cause they are college students, and they sometimes do not listen.

So, to go along with that we always have in-service from 7:30-8:00 or 7:15-8:00 for the head guards and that's kind of collaboration of, 'What have you guys been seeing? What do I need to tell you guys?' Any events that are coming up that they need to be informed of, what we can improve on, we set goals at the beginning of the semester, so if we're meeting those goals, if we aren't. And then we have, we've had a lot of freshmen come in, so always encouraging that they're doing their job, but encouraging the freshmen too, talk while on break, just engaging with the staff. So at 8:00, we always do a talk, a discussion, a PowerPoint, a video, and then we always have attendance sheets. So we always have a record of what we do, who attended, the date, the time – all that stuff (Maggie, personal communication, February 2, 2017).

The Iowa College Aquatic Facility has their in-services very regularly and Maggie makes sure her guards are staying on top of their required skills. For the orientation, Maggie schedules one day in which her guards are required to attend. From there, Maggie schedules two, two-hour in-services every month. Her guards are only required to attend one of those in-services. On top of those her head guards attend an in-

service before the scheduled time for the rest of the lifeguards, and they go over any important items or topics that will be discussed later as a group.

Tyler – Beaumont Aquatic Center. As the Leisure Services Director for the City of Beaumont, Tyler oversees several different aspects of city. One aspect that he manages is the training and facilitating of the outdoor pool during the summer operating season. He shared their orientation and in-service schedules throughout the interview.

Initially it's all orientation. We start off at the indoor pool and orient people to that in terms of policies, procedures, cleaning, those types of things, and then we always have a swimming element and we practice skills. That's consistent throughout. We always have a fitness element and a skills element.

Then we basically alternate during the summer between — I have an orientation meeting as well, at the pool. As well as we have a couple days of PowerPoints I go through just to show them policies, procedures, rotations, all that kind of stuff. Then we walk through it when we get to the facility.

Then, we put out a schedule of staff meetings and then about two more times at the indoor pool, and I usually have at least four at the outdoor pool about every two or three weeks. Just to update people what's going on. Tell them what's going to happen, again fitness and skills. We try to do something fun. Like, our fitness might be water polo instead of swimming laps (Tyler, personal communication, February, 13, 2017).

Before the operating season Tyler requires his guards to attend two to three days of training which are about an hour and half long. Then throughout the operating season he schedules them to attend an hour in-service ever two weeks.

Max – The Waves Aquatic Center. The Waves Aquatic Center is open three months out of the year, Memorial Day to Labor Day. In his interview, Max described how he prepares his lifeguards and keeps their skills sharp throughout the summer season. First, Max explained how his pre-season orientation is organized.

What we have is a week-long in-service training before the season even begins. And, what I try to do is, on the first day, the city has requirements to go through like the tax forms, HEPs, and then the city policies that they need covered to

cover their end and sexual harassment. We have a city attorney that comes in and talks, too...they just want to make sure they're — all the bases are covered, especially with teenagers, bathing suits, all that.

During the first meeting we also get all their social security cards, drivers licenses, we get all that copied. And, with the older kids it's not a really big deal, college kids, because they've had the job process. But like 15-year-olds, it can be a cumbersome process. And then we also get all the copies of their certifications, and what-have-you for health inspections, and with all this information I do keep a giant binder at The Waves so when we do get inspected, the inspector can just go right up there and find Lifeguard A has certifications, everything, and Lifeguard B and so on and so forth.

Some of the videos that we watch is like 'Over the SDS,' 'Sexual Harassment,' 'Blood borne Pathogens,' 'Dumpster Diving,' which is a city one...and then I've pulled some YouTube videos, and other things that are more for like customer service, or the dangers of not watching the water. And it's better than showing them the same lifeguard videos that they've seen the last four years. And, the teacher in me, I do make them take quizzes after all these. I mean, they're not rigorous tests, it's just more like matching and multiple choice kind of things. And then, the first day at The Waves I like to go over a little bit more of the life guarding kind of things, like the clothing requirement they can have.

I go over — I give them a giant rules packet. It's about 100-plus rules of what each thing can have and it goes beyond what we have at the signage at The Waves, and they have to justify each rule. And they have to turn it in. So, then we as the managers know that they have at least looked over it, and they can justify each thing. And, as we go through the week, they have to go to each different position, say, 'You can do this. You can't do this. You can do this. You can't do this.'

Then we also go through the rotations because we have three pools so we walk them through and each group leader kind of talks about, 'This is what you should look for. This is what you shouldn't look for.' And that kind of stuff. And it's just keeping up the exposure. So by the time they get to that first day, they're kind of almost battle-tested, but not really.

Then we go over opening jobs, and we have about a dozen jobs that they do. They're not anything that takes a long time. But each shift they start, they have a 500, and they have an opening job and the rest of the half hour is theirs before we open.

Then, closing jobs. Then at the end of the first meeting we talk about all of the Emergency Action Plans. Then I warn them, 'Hey we're going to have a quiz over this.' They never think that I'm serious. Then the next day we walk through our Emergency Action Plans, and I've done different variations off of it.

So I've broken it [emergency action plan] down by pool by pool. And then, with this, I can involve the concession cashiers. They are involved in the process. They're supposed to shut down and help, you know, crowd control and

get witness statements. And with this, since that's their job, they kind of have that process locked down. They're like victims in the water [during the practice run] being saved and a part of the process from the inside, so that helps with that and then they're not just standing around.

Wednesday is just all the aquatics certified, and we go through each skill and really mark down who needs work, so our first few in-services that we have during the season we can say, 'Lifeguard A really sucked at primary, so this is something that we said we'd work on with them, and that's what we're going to do.' Or if collectively we noticed that a lot of the instructors were having problems with breast stroke, we can say, 'Hey, head instructor, this is what you should be focused on when you have that extra time working with them on that.'

Thursday is gonna be first aid and CPR, so we invite all the people back again, and we set up about a dozen different stations for like splints, wrapping for first aid, ice packet, paperwork, sudden illness, unconscious-, conscious-choking, CPR, rescue breathing, AED. And I spend about an hour going through all the Red Cross videos, kind of getting back up to snuff, what they forgot.

Friday is doing bathrooms. This is our big, pain-in-the-butt job. Going through what we expect, what is a cleanly bathroom...and then, while one team is going doing bathrooms...other two teams are out breaking rules and enforcing rules (Max, personal communication, February 17, 2017).

After explaining his orientation process, he went on to explain how his in-services are scheduled and organized.

When I first started out there was only every Sunday, so you get four a month. And, I noticed as I was a team leader, lifeguard, going into the assistant manager, that people were still having issues making that [the in-service] because the punishment was you would get your hours cut. Which then doesn't benefit anybody because you still have to cover those shifts, but that was like the only real punishment we had...so, I've tried to be more lenient in adding more in-services, so we're up to eight now [a month].

There's every Wednesday night and every Sunday. No. Every Tuesday. Those people that usually miss kind of give you the reason that they were out too late on Saturday or they had church, so I wanted to give Tuesday night to kind of counteract any of those kind of things. And it's just right after their shift and Sunday it's just right before their shift.

We don't require, like you have to come to one a week, but it's just three a month. So, we have some people that are just really proactive that just do three right away because they know they're going to forget. Or they wait until the end, and are like 'Oh crap.' And with that, I've really tried to be proactive with it. So we have a document that we mark who's all gone to one. So as we get down to the last four, or five or three, whatever number. We start having the cashiers call the lifeguards on their down time saying, 'Hey, you need these meetings.'

Otherwise, there will be punishments, etcetera. If you have any questions, you can call one of the managers.' And, that seems to help.

What I've done [in the past] is, you get a strike for every in-service day you don't make. So I've only had once incidence where somebody's gotten three strikes. And that's kind of out policy. And I've only had once incidence where a lifeguard just blew it completely off, and it was July into August, so I had to make that, you know, that kind of phone call where I had to say, 'You have to come in, we have to talk about this. I have to let you go.' Otherwise it's usually only one that they miss, and then I say, 'You have to go to the next one otherwise your hours are going to start to be cut.' And that's usually...enough motivation (Max, personal communication, February 17, 2017).

Max goes on to discuss the content he covers during the in-services but as for the frequency of training, he schedules a week long (six days, 20 hours) pre-season orientation which everyone is required to attend. During the season, Max schedules two, hour-long, in-services every week. From those eight in-services scheduled, his lifeguards are required to attend at least three of them.

Heidi – Findale Aquatic Center. The Findale Aquatic Center is open three months out of the years as well, Memorial Day to Labor Day. While conversing with Heidi, she described how detailed and consistent her training and orientation tactics are for her lifeguards.

So basically, right now we do a big, it's called our boot camp. And that is a Saturday training from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It's all water skills...they have to come and attend videos before boot camp. I do hold a couple of night classes and videos for both your water skills and then also CPR, first aid skills...Then we have, we have to go to one of the video nights for both CPR/First Aid and then do skills, take the test, and then they have their water skills for boot camp. Then after that, then if they can't attend boot camp, they have to make up the trainings on our time that works for us. I only had one person who couldn't make it last year. So they all know it's very important to make it.

And we do that at our — at the high school pool. So a lot of our, we don't run over our EAP right then, because it's obviously completely different facility, it's only a lap lane pool, compared to our three different pool facility, that we have at the outdoor pool. But then we have an orientation night, which is usually, I think it's, two Wednesdays before we open. It's a Wednesday evening, and

that's where we go over the entire emergency action plan with concessions and cashiers. They're all there. We're telling everybody what your long whistle means. What your air horn means. What everybody's doing. We go through like a practice run that night, too. Of what to do. Who's grabbing the key to unlock the gate, and that type of thing.

Then throughout the summer, we do run little huddles every day. Actually, it's just Monday through Saturday. We run, it's about 30-minute huddles, and that's where we go over, we do back boarding, you know, your front saves, your back rescues, your submerged. We go over our emergency action plan, that type of thing. We don't necessarily do in-services like your monthly in-services that a lot of other facilities do where you have to attend four-hours of monthly in-service training. Because we do, everybody who works Monday through Friday or Saturday gets 30-minutes of training every single day.

It takes place right at lunch time. Because we do the swim lessons and then morning fitness swim, and that all gets over at noon, or you know, right at 11:45 to noon, depending on the thing [class], and then they [huddles] take place from 12:15 to 12:45. And then they have 15 minutes to, kind of, you know, refill their water bottle, go to the bathroom, put some more sun screen on, and then get out to their spot by 12:55 for opening at 1:00 pm (Heidi, personal communication, March 14, 2017).

Heidi continues to explain the content that is implemented in her orientation and in-services. However, in relation to the frequency of training for her lifeguards, Heidi schedules one large preseason orientation and huddles every day. The pre-season orientation, titled boot camp, is scheduled for one day and is six hours long. Every employee must attend the boot camp and if they are unable to for some reason, then they are required to make it up. The huddles on the other hand are scheduled before each shift Monday through Saturday and are a half hour long. Every lifeguard who is scheduled to work that day is required to attend the huddle.

Hailey – Pine Ridge College. Pine Ridge College is another facility that is open year round and is uniquely staffed by college and high school students. During the interview, Hailey described how she keeps her lifeguards ready for anything that might come up during the year.



We're a unique situation that I employ both college students, and this is specifically the academic year I'm talking about – so September to May – college students and community, mainly high school employees. Typically, how our calendar year goes is when Pine Ridge — we don't start classes until September, but we'll have our all-staff trainings for a few different days. You know, I'll bring my new staff in on completely different times than my returning staff to, you know, go over, you know, changes, policies, procedures, you know, skill review, and work those groups separately. Just because the kids that have been here and worked for me...I know their skills. It's more of like a refresher, 'Hey, welcome back to Pine Ridge, you know, we're here for another year.'

New employees, it's a more vigorous, training to get them up to speed with our facility and how I want them to go about policies and procedures. So that's about, the first week or two of May. I also, in the fall require each of my employees, regardless if they've been here forever, or if they're just new to the job, they have to participate in a skill review session. And, we do that in conjunction with our front desk. It's mainly to cover, like our emergency action plan, and how like the lifeguard staff works with the front desk staff. And that's usually a three-hour training where we review CPR, 'cause both staffs need to be CPR-trained, and then the lifeguarding to go through our rescues and our saves and backboarding and, what role our front desk staff plays in an emergency situation. So, everyone on staff has to sign up for one of the days that we designated to do that in order to, I guess get checked off to be able to work in our facility. And then from there it goes to monthly training.

So we'll have an in-service every month. October, November, December, and then in January, we'll come back and we'll have a bigger in-service just with the Christmas break to, you know, kind of everybody's brains get them back on working in the facility. And then we'll go January through May, and then, at the end of May, we will start training for our summer staff.

And my summer staff, I'm fortunate that the outdoor pool manager and I, we work closely together. This is our third year that we do a joint staff, so instead of, you know, me trying to hire, to cover for the indoor and him trying to cover for the outdoor, we just have one staff and they're trained at both facilities, and they get scheduled, you know, either indoors or outdoors. You know, some in one area more than the other.

And then, we do again, you know, kind of like we do at the beginning of the academic year, a more extensive, multiple sessions of orientation in-water stuff, classroom review, policies and procedures. The nice thing is a lot of the kids that work for me, high school-wise, that work at the outdoor pool, work for me during the academic year, so it's a lot of review for indoor training, and then more intense on the outdoor. So that works out nice that these kids aren't just lifeguarding June, July and August and then forgetting about, all of their skills. They're constantly, trained throughout the year. That way when it's back in the summer, it's like, ok, 'you know, Pine Ridge, we understand that, it's just remember all the, you know, points of the outdoor pool.'

And then in the summer, we meet more frequently as well...we'll go instead of monthly in-services, we're meeting anywhere from two to four times. Right away in May [we meet] to kind of get everybody geared up for the summer, and then we're meeting every two weeks, we have in-services. And we'll alternate between the outdoor pool and the indoor pool, with our training schedule (Hailey, personal communication, March 15, 2017).

Pine Ridge has a unique set up with not only their lifeguards but also their outdoor pool. Both the manager at the outdoor pool and Hailey work together to hire and keep their lifeguards trained throughout the summer. For the summer in-services, they have one big orientation in May, where the new guards are required to attend four, two-hour training days, and the returning lifeguards are required to attend three, two-hour training days. Once the summer season starts everyone is required to attend an hour and half of in-service every two weeks.

During the school year, Hailey holds an orientation in September and her guards are required to attend two, two hour training days. Then throughout the year, they meet once a month for an hour and half.

Amber - North Bay Shore Aquatic Center. The North Bay Shore Aquatic Center is open year round and is an indoor facility. Therefore, training at North Bay Shore is a little different from The Waves and Findale Aquatic Center. Amber gave details on how she keeps her lifeguards trained throughout the entire year.

So we require lifeguards to attend a two-hour in-service from the month of August through April. Typically they have, during the school year – so like from September through April – they have two choices: usually a Sunday evening and a Monday evening [in-service] in different weeks. In August, we keep kind of what our summer schedule is, we offer [an] in-service every single Sunday for an hour and then two Fridays of the month we offer a two-hour in-service. So for June and July, we require four hours worth of in-services. They can choose if they want to do two two-hours, or, you know, four one-hours, or however they want to do it. I do not care, I just, at the end of the month make sure that they attend four hours.

And then in May, we have a pretty intensive summer training where we have two weeks: so a total of eight days. And, we offer a rules and policies night, one week on one day, and the next week on a different day. We offer CPR skills training one week and then the next week on a different day, lifeguard skills. And then we do a night that's solely dedicated to practicing our emergency action plan over and over and over again, for different scenarios (Amber, personal communication, March 24, 2017).

Since the Findale Aquatic Center is open year round, Amber schedules her training and in-services accordingly to keep her lifeguards on top of their skills. At the beginning of the summer season, the Findale Aquatic Center has one large orientation training that is eight days long. Every employee is required to attend the pre-season orientation training.

Then, throughout the summer she offers an hour of in-service on Sunday nights and two hours of in-service on two Fridays of every month. From there her guards are then required to attend at least four hours of in-service a month. Finally, during the school year, Amber offers her lifeguards in-services on Sunday and Monday nights, and of those scheduled in-services her guards are required to attend at least two hours of in-service training per month.

As the researcher discovered, the frequency of training and development for the various facilities differs widely. The managers in charge of facilitating the training and development tailor the schedule and content to what is best suited to their employees and facility. However, the two common themes were orientation training and in-service training. First, the managers all have an orientation training to introduce their lifeguards to the facility and upcoming season. Second, the managers all schedule regular in-services throughout the operating season.

How do aquatic managers evaluate whether or not an aquatic employee is competent?

The final question the researcher sought to understand is how, once training and orientation are finished; aquatic managers know whether their aquatic employees are competent in their required skills. The researcher discovered that the answers to this question were similar to the previous in that each manager used their own system of evaluation. Some managers would use the lifeguard manual from the Red Cross as guide, some have a checklist that they have received from other professionals in the field, and some rely on the watchful of their head guards, lifeguard instructors, as well as their own during training.

Several of the aquatic managers who were interviewed, have extensive training in the field and a few of them hold the water safety instructor trainer certification in addition to their lifeguard instructor certification. Similarly, the aquatic managers have help from their own employees who also hold the lifeguard instructor certification. Therefore, they are able to evaluate their lifeguards based on their own knowledge of the certifications.

Maggie. At the Iowa College Recreation Facility, Maggie relies heavily on the variety of content implemented at their monthly in-service training as well as the watchful eye of her lifeguard instructors and head guards to make sure her guards are competent in the required skills for the job.

I do monthly in-services that last approximately two hours. During this in-service they're required to do stations, drills, one on one testing, and other types of skill sessions. My employees do a variety of trainings that involve CPR, first aid, blood borne pathogen, and water skills. This shows confidence and ability in my employees' ability to perform skills either by themselves or working with team members.

Also, this shows their understanding of the skill and how efficiently they can complete the skill. If they do not pass the skill or it is showing that they are

not competent on the skill we redo it until they complete it successfully. If they still need more time they are required to make it up on their own time and have an Aquatic Supervisor check it off.

There's a wide variety [of training]. Or doing type of races always gets people going. So like a submerged, and then pull them up, and then race to the other side, or the end of the lane, and then tow them back. Or we've done putting on gloves in the pool, and then having a mannequin at the end of the pool, and then doing CPR. We've done a lot of written tests of CPR and first aid, so that's testing their competency (Maggie, personal communication, February 2, 2017).

Tyler. At the Beaumont Aquatic Center, Tyler has a checklist that he has used over the years to help him keep track of his lifeguards' competencies. He acquired this checklist from another community and attends every staff meeting to observe the work of the lifeguards.

I attend every staff meeting, and I observe, and I have a management team, and they see them every day. So we usually do a — well, we see them, so we can talk to them immediately if we need to, like if someone hasn't swam for nine months or something like that, and they're kind of lacking skills that way, strength wise or if they aren't quite observant enough or something like that. We would talk to them right away. But we also do a mid-year evaluation so that kind of, hopefully is done by the end of June so we can catch things in the very beginning, and then we do an end-of-the-year evaluation... I've got, it's basically a checklist, and you're graded one to five (Tyler, personal communication, February 13, 2017).

Max. Max describes his interview process and how he makes sure the guards he hired are knowledgeable of the required skills right from the start. Max also relies on his head guards and strong communication between all the managers throughout the summer to ensure his lifeguards are competent on the necessary skills.

For lifeguarding kind of what I look for is how well they can do their strokes, if they're going to sign up to be an instructor. And, like a 15, 16, 17-year-old, since this is their first job, if their strokes are not 100 percent perfect, I can work with them...if they're not amenable to what I'm looking for —. So, if they just have a plus — middle-ground and then this is a kind of another failure then based off that, I can kind of judge who's going to be like an instructor, who's going to be an aide, and so on and so forth.

And then I get into the actual life guarding skills. I have them do just a regular assist, an unconscious, on-top-of-the-water assist, and then a deep-water assist. And, then I want them to be both a primary and secondary for getting out the backboard. And, just kind of going once-through for seeing where their skills are at. This helps me also determine, like, if it's a new guard that's guarded somewhere else, what kind of skills they had. Especially when we're in like a transition period, 'cause I was there when they switched to the old style about four years ago, and it took about three years before I finally noticed that everybody was on the same playing field. Otherwise, I knew that I would have to go back to the basics that first week of staff training to go make sure that everybody was on the same page, path. Because a lot of people are still doing the head-chin support versus the arm splint. And it's surprising that people still go for that.

Then, for actual interviewing, it's more of kind of like a 'what if,' especially with 15-year-olds where they don't — they've never been through that interview process. They don't know exactly what they're expecting...I mean, it's kind of guessing what they would do and going from there. So...basic...questions about them...and then getting into guarding questions. Like, 'What do you think the most important aspects of life guarding are?' So...I can see, what they actually think of the job.

And then I try to give them some examples of life guarding scenarios, so I can see how they would react, and I don't hold them accountable if they haven't taken the course or not. I mean, some of these are just innate skills. Do you jump in and help the person, or do you try to assist them from the side? What would you do as a person? Then I give them kind of like a map of The Waves so they can envision that there are other guards around them, and if they are willing to get them to help out, or see what they are doing with that.

Then I do have other areas I'm responsible for, so like swim lessons, the same kind of thing. What would they do with a kid that's crying versus the rest of the class. Or like maintenance, what would you do if you walked into the facility, and you saw XYZ? What would you take care of first? So, we do give them that, questions and that like as well.

Besides that first week and interviews, we don't have a check-off system. That is something that I've noticed... I do have a general idea of how everybody is, so besides that there is nothing written in stone, besides that first meeting where we have written down like, "This person swims this 500 time, they're this good at this, this and this.

Otherwise, we don't have, 'This is the lifeguard that we need to target.' The other thing that kind of helps with that is the head guards that bring up. One good example would be last year we had an older guard who has guarded for seven, eight years. She was really lackadaisical, not really enforcing the rules, so her name kept coming up, in the first two or three head guard meetings in the minutes. We had noticed that her skills were there, they just weren't like anything spectacular for the amount of years that she had guarded. That was something that

we had already noted, and we were watching for and then as her not enforcing every rule, kind of causing a general pain for her co-workers, we started hounding her a little more, and then we did notice a little bit of a 180 on that. So, with the head guard meetings that we have, it kind of balances that out, but I don't know how often other pools meet on a weekly basis (Max, personal communication, February 17, 2017).

Heidi. Heidi describes how she relies heavily on her boot camp at the beginning of the season and her seasoned aquatic managers to make sure that her lifeguards are all proficient and competent in required skills going in to the summer season.

I guess when I do my, when we do boot camp, it's me, and then we have another, she, another highly trained aquatics person but only just does a couple swim lessons for us. It's her and then my two pool managers and then I have two other lead guards, I guess you would call them that basically. If my pool managers are gone, they're going to be the managers. So then, there are six or seven of us there at boot camp, and I'm usually just walking around, and then they take a group of seven to 10 kids and they all, so then they focus on that group of kids for all of the skills, and I'm just usually walking around, making sure everybody's doing stuff right.

I guess it's just kind of, you know, what they feel is comfortable with. I am comfortable with all of their [head guard] skills; so I feel like they know what they're looking for; they know what to point out to all of the guards. If they need to change something up, if they're not doing something right, otherwise it just comes back to the Red Cross proficient, versus non-proficient. Can they do the skill? Can they not do the skill? That's kind of, I guess what it comes down to (Heidi, personal communication, March 14, 2017).

Hailey. When evaluating whether or not her lifeguards are competent in required skills, Hailey utilizes a pre-employment test before she hires them. Therefore, she knows their skill level before getting hired and then she knows what she needs to work on with each of her lifeguards.

That's where that pre-employment test right away when they start their freshman year or whenever they start as a high schooler, we go through that. We're very fortunate at Pine Ridge, that any new high school student that we hire, they've been certified for us. So that's a huge comfort, because one, I'm hiring the LGIs to teach the life guarding classes, so I know like, yep, you've been certified, I know that they're not just going to pass you to pass you.

Where there's some maybe first year Pine Ridge College students that come in and I'm like, looking at some of their skills like, 'How did you get certified? Like, who certified you?' And, then, that's where we need to spend a little bit more time. But I always feel confident if I'm hiring, high schoolers, we're hiring high schoolers at the outdoor pool that they've been, 90 percent of them have been have been certified by Pine Ridge, that they know their stuff. And that my LGIs went through a thorough job, you know, in complying to the Red Cross standard (Hailey, personal communication, March 15, 2017).

Amber. Similarly, Amber relies on the watchful eye of all her managers and the lifeguard instructors to make sure the skills are being done accurately throughout all the trainings. She describes how she has a skills checklist that she got from the lifeguard manual that she uses for each of her lifeguards throughout the year.

I really use the assistance of all of the managers, especially the lifeguard instructor managers to watch them, you know, during the CPR night and during the lifeguard skills night. Then even during the EAP night when they're practicing their skills, you know, each time that someone makes a rescue, to make sure that everyone is competent. I am lucky that there is enough staff who are certified in that that between all of us we can watch, at — you know, similar to a lifeguard class, everyone's practicing their skills, and we're watching for anybody's who's weak or not weak. Or, I shouldn't say not weak, anybody who needs a little more practice, with their skills.

But, evaluation-wise, I mean, that's how we do it, to watch, I mean, it's very similar to a lifeguard class. We have the skills checklist, and stuff that they have in there and we just, you know, go through make sure we know what's on it and make sure that everybody marks off as competent for those skills.

Same thing even during the in-services. Obviously, it's not as intensive. It's there to practice, but if there's anyone that any of the pool managers feels maybe needs a little more practice, I mean, we've done it before where we've scheduled, you know, a time for a couple of those people. Like, I've tried to get a time that works for everyone, and they came in, you know, that group practiced their skills with an LGI, and just made themselves a little more confident (Amber, personal communication, March 24, 2017).

From the data collected, the researcher found the aquatic managers all evaluate the competencies of their lifeguards differently. Some managers use a checklist from either the lifeguarding manual or other aquatic managers in the field, and some rely on



their pool managers and lifeguard instructors to observe the lifeguards during training. Each manager uses techniques that are unique to their pool and their employees. These varying techniques, along with the hours spent training on skills, ensure that all their lifeguards are competent in the required skills for the position.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the findings of this study based on interviews with professional managers in the aquatic field. This qualitative study explored the strategies and attempted to understand what competencies aquatic managers are covering during their staff training, how often they are holding their staff training sessions, and how they evaluate that their staff are competent in required skills.

The researcher interviewed six current professional aquatic managers regarding their training and development practices. The participants interviewed had their own unique experience on training and development. During the interview, each participant shared their professional and aquatic background, their practices and implementation of aquatic staff training, and method of evaluating whether or not their staff are competent in required skills.

Their accounts included two themes pertaining to aquatic competencies covered in staff training and development. The first theme that emerged were the six primary training themes that every aquatic manager discussed during their interview. These primary themes were; emergency action plans, fitness, water skills, CPR, first aid, and rule and policies. The second theme that emerged was the five secondary training themes covered in staff training and orientation. These five themes were; reviewing the Red

Cross videos, testing of lifeguard skills and knowledge, cleaning, walk through of each pool, and gearing their training specifically to their patrons.

The managers' accounts also included information regarding the frequency of their staff training. There was one theme that emerged regarding the frequency of their staff training and that was each manager provided their staff with some sort of orientation training and some type of in-service. The managers would hold their orientation training either before the summer season or in the fall before school started. From there, the managers would hold in-services at least once a month. Other than holding an orientation and in-service training, the managers were very diverse in regards to the frequency of training. Some managers held their training once a month, some once a week, and some every day. The aquatic managers interviewed adapted their training and orientation to their facility and employees.

Finally, the aquatic managers interviewed detailed their methods of evaluating whether their lifeguards are competent in required skills for their position. Similar to the frequency of their training, each manager had their own unique way of evaluation. Some managers used a checklist they borrowed either from the lifeguard manual or other managers in the field, while some relied upon the watchful eye of their head guards and lifeguard instructors.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe how aquatic managers implement aquatic staff training and development. What professional development content is being covered in aquatic staff training? How often is training being implemented for aquatic competencies? How do aquatic managers evaluate whether or not an aquatic employee is competent?

The descriptive qualitative design of this study provided the researcher with a greater understanding of the current trends of staff training and development in aquatic facilities in Northeast Iowa. The research protocol was originally submitted and approved by the University of Northern Iowa's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the results of the researchers' findings as well as the researchers' recommendations for future practice and study.

#### Summary of Findings

The recommendations based on the findings of the study related aquatic managers strategies for implementing aquatic staff training and development includes, the roll and importance of aquatic materials that are available and published in the field. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the content as well as the recommendations pertaining to each of the three research questions. Following the specific research question discussion the researcher will discuss her overall recommendation for current practice and future studies.

### First Recommendation

According to the American Red Cross (2012), Ellis and Associates (2007), and the YMCA (2001), there are several critical content pieces that describe lifeguard training. These major themes are considered required in order to obtain the lifeguard certification. Table 3 identifies each certifying organization and the breakdown of their themes related to required content.

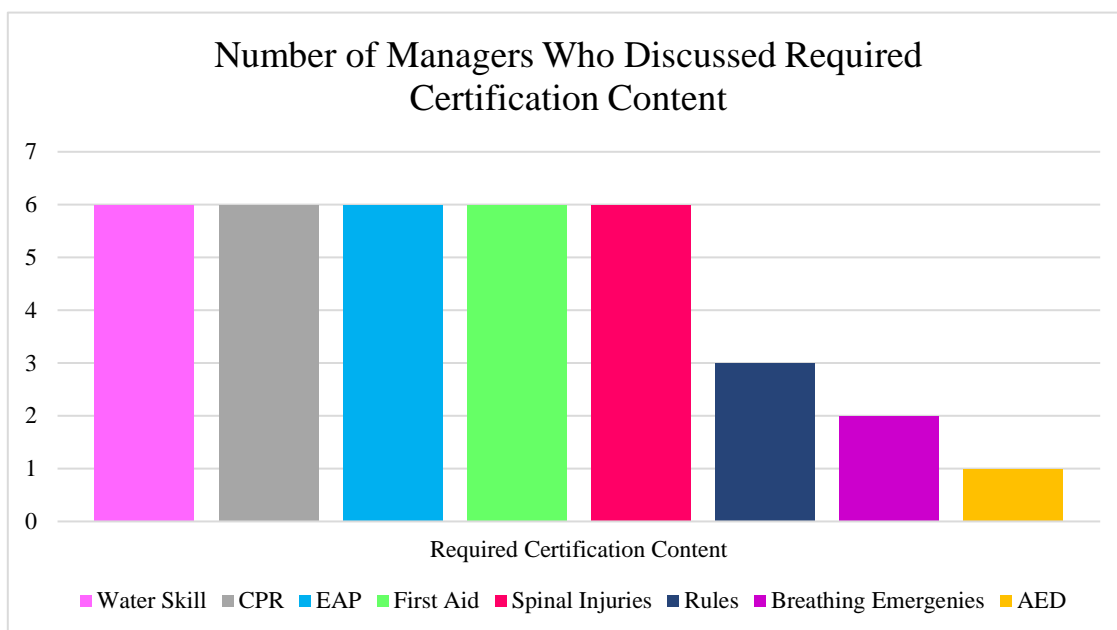
Table 3. *Required Content for Lifeguard Certification*

American Red Cross	Ellis and Associates	YMCA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Professional Lifeguard,</li> <li>• Facility Safety,</li> <li>• Surveillance and Recognition,</li> <li>• Injury Prevention,</li> <li>• Emergency Action Plans,</li> <li>• Water Rescue Skills,</li> <li>• Before Providing Care and Victim Assessment,</li> <li>• Breathing Emergencies,</li> <li>• Cardiac Emergencies,</li> <li>• First Aid,</li> <li>• Caring for Head, Neck and Spinal Injuries (p. vi – vii).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifeguard Accountability and Professionalism,</li> <li>• Awareness and Recognition,</li> <li>• Reacting to an Emergency,</li> <li>• Rule Enforcement, Guest Relations, and Additional Responsibilities,</li> <li>• Guest on the Surface – Breathing</li> <li>• Rescue Breathing and Airway Management,</li> <li>• CPR and AED,</li> <li>• Supplemental Oxygen Support</li> <li>• Guest on the Surface – Not Breathing</li> <li>• Submerged Guest</li> <li>• Spinal Injury Management</li> <li>• Handling Risks,</li> <li>• Injuries and Medical Emergencies,</li> <li>• Open Water Lifeguarding (p. iii-iv).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aquatic Personal Safety and Survival,</li> <li>• Lifeguarding Responsibilities,</li> <li>• Lifeguarding Procedure,</li> <li>• Rules and Regulations,</li> <li>• Victim Recognition and Drowning,</li> <li>• Rescue Skills,</li> <li>• Emergency Systems,</li> <li>• First Aid in Aquatic Environments,</li> <li>• Spinal Injury Management,</li> <li>• Hazards of the Outdoor Environment,</li> <li>• Lifeguarding on the Waterfront,</li> <li>• Lifeguarding Water Recreation Attractions,</li> <li>• Pool Management Basics,</li> <li>• Job Training and opportunities (p. iii-iv).</li> </ul>

*Note:* Data for required content for lifeguard certification from American Red Cross (2012), Ellis and Associates (2007), YMCA (2001)

During the interviews, the researcher discovered that several of these themes were also present in the training and development plan for lifeguards at local recreation

facilities. Figure 3 displays a breakdown of the number of managers who discussed those critical content pieces as a part of their training.



*Figure 3:* Number of managers who discussed required certification content

Within all six aquatic facilities, the aquatic managers focus their training on; EAP's, swimming and fitness, water skills, CPR, and First Aid. These five themes emerged as topics that every facility covers during their in-services and viewed as important for their staff to know. These five topics were also present in the lifeguard training course through the American Red Cross, Ellis and Associates, and the YMCA.

The researcher found that other important topics such as rules, breathing emergencies, and AED training, were either not discussed by the aquatic manager or only talked about briefly by one or two of the managers. These topics were all discussed in the lifeguard training certification courses implemented by the American Red Cross, Ellis

and Associates, and the YMCA. Therefore, the researcher's suggestion for current practice would be to have a template or guideline for aquatic managers to follow detailing the content that should be covered during staff training and development. If a template was designed that contained the important topics in regards to lifeguard training, then the aquatic managers would be able to provide a more standardized in-service training for their employees.

The researcher recommends the template detailing training content, should cover topics that are related to rescue skills as well as, professional characteristics of lifeguarding (i.e. customer service, risk management, and facility up-keep). As the research shows, there are topics of training and development that the American Red Cross, Ellis and Associates, and the YMCA view as important for lifeguards to learn during their lifeguarding certification course. However, from the data collected during the interviews, there is a disconnect in the topics that are required for the certification and the topics that were discussed as being implanted in the field.

The rescue skill for using an AED, for example, is taught in all three certifying organizations lifeguarding courses, however, only one manager in the field mentioned training on using the AED. The use of the AED is critical in an emergency situation and individuals using one need to be trained on how to operate it. The YMCA (2001) stresses the importance of the AED:

It has been determined that the most important factor for survival from cardiac arrest is early defibrillation... While not all cardiac arrest victims will need defibrillation, most adults in cardiac arrest will be in ventricular fibrillation, which can be corrected by defibrillation. For this reason national efforts have been made to advocate the placement of...automated defibrillators in the hands of

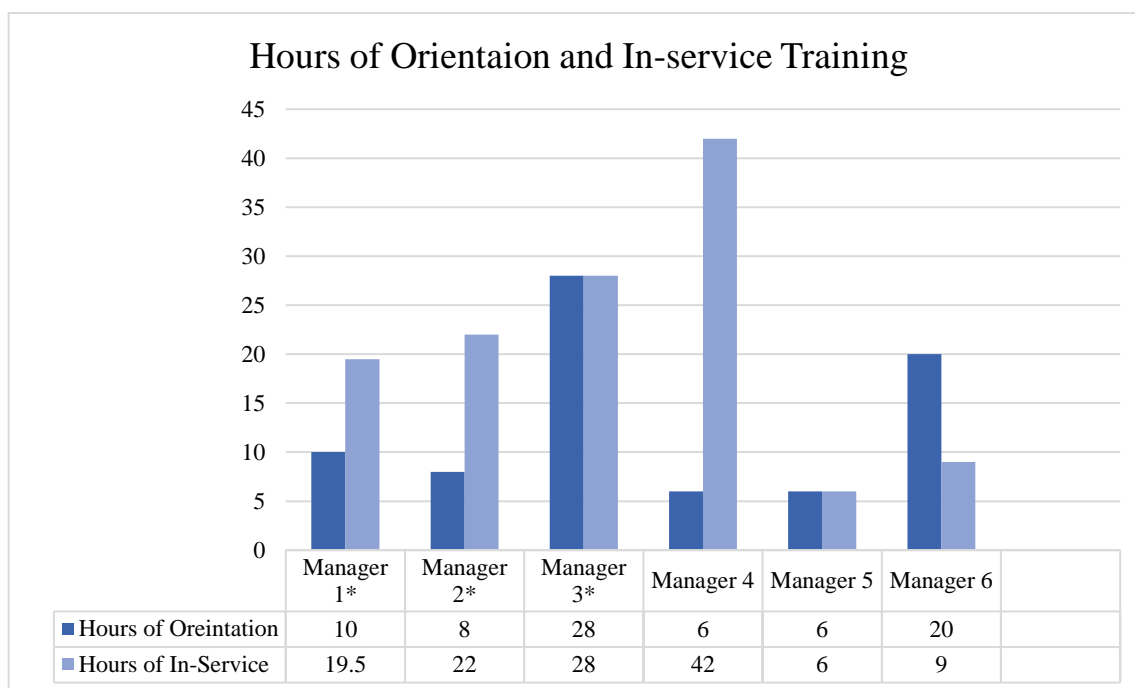
the people most likely to be at the scene when victims need them. (YMCA of the USA, 2001, p. 177)

The skills covered in the lifeguard training course are all essential to training a competent lifeguard and should be continuously refreshed in in-service training throughout the operating season. Therefore, the researcher believes a template detailing the skills that should be covered during in-services would be helpful for aquatic managers in the field.

### Second Recommendation

The second research question the researcher sought to answer was how often is training being implemented for aquatic competencies. While examining the data collected, the researcher realized that the common theme among the managers related to the frequency of their training is they all have an orientation training and a system for in-service training throughout the operating season. Apart from orientation and in-services, each manager makes their training unique to what their facility and lifeguards need. Figure 4 shows how many hours each facility devotes to orientation and in-service training per year.

According to the American Red Cross (2007), “by scheduling, developing and conducting in-service training on a regular basis, you can improve your lifeguards’ skills and ability to respond in an emergency” (p. 53). From the data collected, the number of hours dedicated to orientation and in-service is not consistent. Therefore, the



*Figure 4: Hours of orientation and in-service training per operating season per manager (\* denotes a facility that is open year round)*

*Sources: Personal communication with participants, 2017*

researchers' recommendation for practice would be to have a standard set number of hours that should be devoted to orientation and in-service training. Having a standard would help guide aquatic managers to devote the right amount of time to their in-servicing and orientation training so they are not left questioning if they are doing too much or too little training.

### Third Recommendation

The final question the researcher sought to answer was how each of the aquatic managers evaluates whether or not their employees are competent in required skills and knowledge. The data collected in the study explained each manager had their own system for evaluation and different methods to evaluate their employees. Specifically, some



managers would use the lifeguard manual from the American Red Cross. Whereas, others relied on using a watchful eye from their head guards and lifeguard instructors.

Although these methods are efficient for the aquatic managers' interviewed, the researcher's recommendation for practice would be that specific guidelines regarding evaluation on lifeguarding competency should be established. One participant explained how it is difficult for a lifeguard who is new to her facility, and has been trained at a different aquatic center, to work through the evaluation process while they are interviewing.

In the fall, those employees that are coming to me that are new, mainly the college students that are coming from different facilities... and they're like, 'We never review any of this.' And that's scary. I'm like, 'How do you work all summer and never have an in-service?' ...So then I will be like, 'You're not working until we feel, my managers and I, feel like you, you know, are up to speed and to the competency of the rest of our staff' (Hailey, personal communication, March 15, 2017).

There should be an evaluation outline that defines what a proficient and capable lifeguard looks like while testing out in required skill. Therefore, when it comes time to evaluate the competency of lifeguards, there is consistency in the field and managers know that if they are training lifeguards in Iowa, they are doing it the exact same way as the managers in California.

#### Fourth Recommendation

Throughout the course of this study, the researcher has realized there is information pertaining to how to be a lifeguard as well as how to be a lifeguard instructor. However, besides the one course and book from the American Red Cross,

there is a lack of information on how to manage an aquatic facility and the aquatic employees needed to operate it.

During the interview, Maggie talked about how it would be helpful to have more information in regards to how she should do her job as the aquatic coordinator.

I feel like there could be more information as of, pertaining to me, not just those certifications... So if they had like aquatic coordinator tab that had like here is a layout of like an in-service, that would be like a really good, how to implement an in-service, or techniques of how to organize an in-service or, that, that would be great. That would be wonderful. Just because every pool is different. Not every pool can train the people the way other pools train them. So it's a wide variety. I feel like that would be helpful (Maggie, personal communication, February 2, 2017).

Therefore, the researcher recommends there should be a manual constructed detailing different aspects regarding the aquatic manager coordinator position. Some of the topics this manual should cover would be, in-services schedules and content, orientation content, personnel management, and customer service. These are all topics the researcher believes are important for the aquatic manager to know.

### Conclusion

As Cable (1993) indicates "lifeguards need more extensive training than ever as aquatic programs get more diverse and open to persons with all levels of water skills" (para. 1). Unfortunately, there has not been a significant number of research devoted to aquatic training and implementation. This study sought to describe at how aquatic managers implement aquatic staff training and development. Therefore, it will help to bridge the gap in lack of research while, helping future aquatic managers and aquatic employees in training and development.

Overall, after reviewing all the data collected, the researcher has several recommendations for current practices.

1. A template should be created detailing all the content that should be covered in both in-services and orientation training,
2. There should be a standard number of hours established for orientation and in-service training throughout the course of an operating season,
3. An outline should be created detailing the evaluation process of aquatic employees,
4. There should be a manual created for aquatic managers in order to help them with managing lifeguards and their aquatic facility.

According to (Fawcett, 2005), operating an aquatic facility has become increasingly more complex in recent years due to new technology as well as differentiating certifications and facility regulations. Therefore, it is expected aquatic managers have a great deal of responsibility in terms of training and development with aquatic employees.

Throughout the course of this study, the data collected described six aquatic managers' strategies on the training and development of their aquatic employees. Each manager elaborated on topics relating to the aquatic content implemented during staff training, the frequency of their staff training, and the method of evaluation they use to determine competence of their employee in required skills. There is not scores of research concerning the training aspect of aquatics. There is research on employee training and

development in the general terms but not specific to the aquatic field. This study can now be added to the research pertaining to aquatic training and development.

There is a need for continued research pertaining to aquatic staff training and development. Hence, the researcher suggest this study should be taken further outside of Northeast Iowa. Similarly, this study only looks at four community aquatic centers and two university aquatic facilities serving 50,000 residents or less. Thus, expanding this study to cover private aquatic facilities as well as facilities that serve a larger population would be a possibility for future research. In summary, the questions, themes and outcomes from the present study were informative and provided valuable insight; however, they may warrant further exploration in the field.

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## APPENDIX A

## PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Will you tell me about your job, your background and your job responsibilities?
2. Can you explain your staff training? (often/attendance/content)
3. Are staff trainings paid? (on both sides) How does this make a difference in attendance?
4. What other organizations are invited to participate, if any? (EMS, city attorney, your boss, etc.)
5. What aquatic content do you implement during staff training?
6. What certifications do you require for an employee to work at your aquatics facility? Do you require a specific certifying organization?
7. Do you retrain for required certifications? Can you tell me about it?
8. How do you evaluate that your employees are competent in their required skills?
9. If your employees were to take the recertification test tomorrow do you feel they would be ready for it?
10. What can the Red Cross (or another certifying org.) do to help you as a manager?



## APPENDIX B

## HUMAN PARTICIPANTS REVIEW

**INFORMED CONSENT**

Project Title: Perceptions of Aquatic Managers on Aquatic Staff Training and Development in Northeast Iowa

Name of Investigator(s): Tracy Carey

**Invitation to Participate:** You are invited to participate in a research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate.

**Nature and Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to identify and describe how aquatic managers implement aquatic staff training.

**Explanation of Procedures:**

Once you provide informed consent you will be asked to take part in an interview which will include 10 questions and will take approximately 30-60 minutes. Once you complete the interview your participation is completed.

**Interview Questions:**

1. Will you tell me about your job, your background and your job responsibilities?
2. Can you explain your staff training? (often/attendance/content)
3. Are staff trainings paid? (on both sides) How does this make a difference in attendance?
4. What other organizations are invited to participate, if any? (EMS, city attorney, your boss, etc.)
5. What aquatic content do you implement during staff training?
6. What certifications do you require for an employee to work at your aquatics facility? Do you require a specific certifying organization?
7. Do you retrain for required certifications? Can you tell me about it?
8. How do you evaluate that your employees are competent in their required skills?
9. If your employees were to take the recertification test tomorrow do you feel they would be ready for it?
10. What can the Red Cross (or another certifying org.) do to help you as a manager?

The interview will take place one on one in order to maintain complete anonymity. No one outside of the researchers will know of your participation. All instruments used

during interviewing (i.e. voice recorder, laptop, field notes) will be kept in a secure location under lock and key and password protection.

The interviewing process is anticipated to take between 30-60 minutes. During the interview the principal investigator will be utilizing a voice recording device. The researcher will delete the voice recording as soon as they have been properly transcribed.

**Discomfort and Risks:**

Although participation in this study isn't likely to pose a risk greater than that of everyday life, you might experience some stress due to the questions being asked. The researcher will be asking questions about your current work as a professional. There is a potential for you to feel some stress if you believe you are being negative about your current place of employment.

**Benefits and Compensation:**

There are no benefits to participating in this study.

**Confidentiality:** Information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept confidential. The summarized findings with no identifying information may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference. All information related to identity will be kept under lock and key and in the possession of the researcher.

**Right to Refuse or Withdraw:** Your participation in this study will be completely voluntary. You may drop out of the study at any time if so you choose and you may refuse to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable answering.

**Questions:** If you have questions about the study you may contact Tracy Carey at 815-275-8619 or the Department of Kinesiology Allied Health and Human Services, University of Northern Iowa at 319-273-2313. For answers to questions about rights of research participants and the participant review process, you may contact the IRB Administrator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-6148.

**Agreement:**

**I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement. I am 18 years of age or older.**

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(Signature of participant)

---

(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed name of participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of investigator)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of instructor/advisor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## APPENDIX C

## TRANSCRIPTS

All names of participants and aquatic facilities have been changed in order to keep anonymity.

Transcript of interview on February 2, 2017 between Primary Investigator and Participant from Iowa College Recreation Center

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful. Ok. Again, thank you so much.

So, will you tell me a little bit about your job, your background, and, you know, your job responsibilities here at Iowa College Recreation Center?

**Participant**

We'll start with my background, because that's easier to gauge, too, right now. I started guarding when I was 15 years old, and then teaching lessons at the same time as well. So, I've been lifeguard certified and WSI certified for a long time. And then I worked in my hometown summer pool in my high school years. That was my primary job.

And then I went into college, and I transferred here. So I transferred here, and I applied for the job in the summer. That was in 2013. And so that summer I just taught lessons and lifeguarded. And then in the fall was part of the staff, and then that spring became program assistant, so I worked up here in the office. And then, was head guard, so kind of just took on more responsibilities, in the aquatics field here. We had a master's swim program at that time too, so I was a coach for that. I'm trying to think of all — ya. And then I my LGI after that. So then I started teaching certification classes a lot, so got even more into the aquatics field, and then just feel like I really dove in from there. 'Cause, having every certification that you can —.

And then, I graduated last May from PR. And then, my former supervisor left. So right now I'm temp hired for 30 hours a week, so not full time, and then going to grad school. But that doesn't really apply to aquatics, grad school.

**Interviewer**

Ok.

**Participant**

So my responsibilities right now, as aquatics coordinator?

**Interviewer**

Um-hm.

**Participant**

I would say, working in the office previously and handling a lot of the programs that we have. I thought I had a feel for what aquatics coordinator would do, and this past year I've learned a lot that, there's a lot of things, I was like, "Oh I didn't know that really fell into this role."

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Participant**

So there's a lot of student affairs things that I handle —

**Interviewer**

Can you elaborate on student affairs?

**Participant**

Ya. Like students coming to me with either personal problems or either, like resume or references, sorry. Anyway, that's helping them succeed, or if they're in trouble. So, that wasn't in my mindset, like going in that I would be dealing a lot with that side of it.

**Interviewer**

Right. Right.

**Participant**

So that's been really interesting and fun. And then, just the usual aquatics coordinator stuff that I'm sure you could think off the top of your head, like budget. A lot with that, with handling equipment that we order, materials that we need, our student wages, or anything that falls under that. Making sure, doing the annual budget, which I'll see if we need to shift money anywhere, if we're using less of this and more of that. And then also a big responsibility is the pools, so handling that and scheduling guards, also accommodating to their, since helping students a lot with their personal lives as well, while managing especially freshman that come in managing school, work, just a whole new environment, and all that stuff, so helping them with that, and along with working with other people that use the pool, so other relationships. That's a big part of the job. Maintenance with the pool if anything breaks. And then safety of the pool, so always being aware of who's opening and closing, so people can't get in if there's no lifeguard on duty.

We've had a big turnover this year, so a lot of hiring and finding new guards and then planning for in-services. So, making sure our staff is fully trained and knowledgeable. And then along with our two programs, certifications and Paddling Panthers swim lessons. So a lot of certifications of scheduling classes, getting people certified, and then running the swim lesson program of having children enrolled in swim lessons, coordinating that and all that fun stuff.

**Interviewer**

Nice. For your in-services, so you plan all that and schedule that. Do you actually implement those? Are you the one that's down there and running those in-services then along with your staff? Do you have, you know, a co-coordinator that kind of helps you with those? How does that work?

**Participant**

Ya. Good question. So I have three program assistants. I wouldn't be able to do this job without them. One helps with scheduling, one helps with our swim lesson program, and then one helps with certifications. So two are in the two other programs and the other one's scheduling.

So the one that helps with scheduling, she really helps me coordinate the in-services of reminder emails, reserving the pool, so we make sure we have it during that time. And, then she helps kind of prep, so printing off any paperwork that we need. If, we always do an icebreaker at the beginning, so her looking up different icebreakers to do. Any ideas to implement during the in-service, just because she is a guard, and she does see a lot more during the guard shifts than I do. I don't hear about anything unless I'm told, good or bad. So I get a lot of ideas from them because they actually are down in the pool working with other people. So she —

I'm always at in-services. I'm never not there, just because we do have five or six head guards, and a couple of them aren't LGI certified, so I'm not very confident in their skills that they could run the whole in-service themselves. So I'm always at them, attending.

**Interviewer**

Good. Wonderful. Great. Thank you.

So can you explain, go into a little bit more detail about your staff training. Like attendance, how often, what competencies you focus on and a little bit more about the content that is in your staff training and in-services and whatever?

**Participant**

Ya. So we do, at the beginning of the fall, we always do a fall training, which a lot of universities do, and that's mandatory. It's an all-day thing, and then, from there on, we have monthly in-services. So they are required to attend an in-service once a month, and we have those on Sunday nights from 8-10 and then Tuesday morning from 6-7:30. A lot

of people try and do the 8-10 because they don't want to wake up early on Tuesday morning. And the only excuse I tell them is that they could be sleeping because what class project would you have at 6 a.m.?

So those are mandatory. I highly, highly believe in practicing skills and going over anything that's being miscommunicated. If there's something on the staff that our head guards are seeing that, "Hey some people are doing this or some people are doing this that needs to be this way." Just re-collaborating and communicating our policies and rules and what they need to be doing 'cause they are college students, and they sometimes do not listen.

So, to go along with that we always have in-service from 7:30-8 or 7:15-8 for the head guards and that's kind of collaboration of, "What have you guys been seeing? What do I need to tell you guys?" Any events that are coming up that they need to be informed of, what we can improve on, we set goals at the beginning of the semester, so if we're meeting those goals, if we aren't. And then we have, we've had a lot of freshmen come in, so always encouraging that they're doing their job, but encouraging the freshmen too, talk while on break, just engaging with the staff. So at 8 we always do a talk, a discussion, a PowerPoint, a video, and then we always have attendance sheets. So we always have a record of what we do, who attended, the date, the time, all that stuff.

And then, we always do pool skills. There was one time last semester when we didn't get in the pool, but we did a lot of CPR and first aid. But I always aim to do 20-minute talk, the rest of the time in the pool. I don't like to go over 30 minutes for talk. And then in the pool, we always do, I always want to make sure that they can meet the objective of getting down to the pool, bottom of the pool. So we always try and do a passive-submerged type of scenario or skill. We have Bob, which is like 90 pounds, and we usually throw him down. So that's a skill we always do. We usually practice backboarding, CPR, and then first aid scenarios. Those are the majority of — er, and then EAP scenarios as well. So those are kind of the main things we really focus on.

And then, if we see, 'cause in our pools the main things we see are first aid, and then active saves, that's pretty much it. So we kind of gear our in-services as in, "What are we seeing at the pool that occurs most often?" Because we want to be prepared for those rather than that something that is less than likely going to happen, but we still need to review those skills. If that makes sense.

**Interviewer**

Right. Yep.

**Participant**

So that the whole semester, I would say we go over everything, but the stuff that occurs more than often we practice that more.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Makes sense.

**Participant**

And I'm very — I'm very big on CPR just because in the lap pool there is always a lot of older patrons coming in with aqua-zumba, or aerobics. That's something that could occur.

**Interviewer**

Yep.

**Participant**

So keeping up to date on those skills and just EAP of just how to respond to that skill, so.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful.

So are staff trainings paid on both sides, so when they come in and they do the training with the in-services for the guards who are going through the in-service, plus the staff that are implementing the services, are they paid? And how does this make a difference in attendance? Like you said it was mandatory, but I know that sometimes things come up unexpectedly, you know.

**Participant**

Oh ya. Definitely. It is paid. So, any in-service they do is paid, cause we do have other in-services for other, for other programs, so WSI in-services, and certifications in-service. So that kind of helps, I think that kind of helps the stigma of, "Well, I'm getting paid for this. So I'm not just coming and doing this on my time. That is two hours out of my Sunday night."

**Interviewer**

Right. Right.

**Participant**

And at the beginning of the semester we really set that stigma of, "This isn't something that you should dread. This is something that you should be like, " ya, I need to practice these skills once a month." Or, "Oh ya, I really wasn't confident on that skill, so I'm really glad we went over that."

So that's why I have my A. S's there, four, two-year, head guards is that they're really, when they get to in-service, they're really engaged and they're really positive that, "Hey, we need to be here." Not, "Oh, I'd rather be doing my homework."



And, I come across on the interview, I would say, that I make it very stern, that that's something I, that is mandatory and it's part — I'm sorry going off to your question.

For the head guards, they do get paid more, just because they are head guards, and they are doing more of a leadership role.

**Interviewer**

Yep.

**Participant**

So that kind of helps them that, this is part of their requirement of being a head guard is helping out these in-services and knowing what they're doing and help leading stations or anything like that.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Participant**

I don't know if I answered your question.

**Interviewer**

No. Ya. It does.

And kind of a side note on that: when it is time for them to get recertified, do you offer within your training or extra supplemental trainings for them to get recertified? And then do you guys pay for that? How does the recertification process work?

**Participant**

Ya, for recertification we provide, we pay for at least half or more than half of their certification. Just because they are working for us and they are putting in all those hours of being our guard. So, a lot of them do go through and recertify with us just because they get that stipend or perk.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful.

So what other organizations, if any, are invited to participate in your in-services, such as, you know, EMS, city attorney, things like that, so you make sure that you're covering all your bases both with what needs to be provided for them, but also what — make sure you're checking things off your list of things that need to be provided on up your chain?

**Participant**

(laughs) This might be bad, 'Cause we haven't had anyone come in for our in-services. Like when we do them, it's just our staff.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Ya.

**Participant**

The idea in the back of my head has been like, “Oh, we really should have like a fac man here and run that scenario.” Like if we really did have to radio a fac man for a life-threatening injury that they would be used to practicing that. But we’ve never actually pulled anyone in, so as of like the police on campus or anything like that, which would be a really good idea.

**Interviewer**

Just so you know, it’s not uncommon. I had that question a lot this summer when I was overseas. And they were all like, no, we haven’t done that. I was like, “Ok.”

**Participant**

I really — especially like the fall training day, because the whole building’s here. It’s like, that would be the perfect time, where it’s like, “Hey, we’re all here, like, why don’t we do each scenario? Like there’s a tornado or just one relating to aquatics. Like what would that actually look like?” You know, I have thought of it, it just hasn’t been implemented.

**Interviewer**

Implemented yet, to be determined.

So, we kind of touched on this in the previous question, but what aquatic content do you implement during staff training? And you kind of mentioned about the submerged, and backboarding and CPR and things like that, and I’m going to add just a little bit more onto this. For their certifications like do you make them do laps and things like that? ’Cause I know for the certification you have to swim so often. How do you keep them current with their skills, you know?

**Participant**

So are you one: asking what are the prerequisites for lifeguards?

**Interviewer**

No. Just how, how do you, how do you kind of monitor that they are keeping up on their prerequisites, I guess, and up on their skills?

**Participant**

Ok, that makes sense. So we always do swimming, and some kind of conditioning and that’s a prerequisite, for a lifeguarding course. So that we either do, like a catch-up-300 swim, where one person starts and then the other person goes in and tries to catch up to

that person. Or we do relays that implement skills with it. So, our last in-service we had a relay where you towed someone for 25 yards, they switched, towed back. The next one was 50-yard swim, 50 yard — oh wow, I'm drawing a blank, I don't know, I can't think.

**Interviewer**

That's ok.

**Participant**

Something implementing lifeguarding, but then swimming, so we always require 300 of something, or it's just swimming. And then, one time we did treading with the brick, or treading with the ball, and they would pass the ball. They're in a circle of four or five, they would pass it around. Each person would swim down and do two minutes of CPR, so that was very challenging for them, because that was a lot of treading, that implemented.

**Interviewer**

Yep.

**Participant**

And then others are, like I said, we always do something with submerged so that coming up, either doing different techniques or, sorry —

**Interviewer**

No, you're fine.

**Participant**

Or like type of like, I'm just trying to think back on all of our in-services since there's a wide variety. Or doing type of races always gets people going. So like a submerged, and then pull them up, and then race to the other side, or the end of the lane, and then tow them back. Or we've done putting on gloves in the pool, and then having a mannequin at the end of the pool, and then doing CPR.

We've done a lot of written tests of CPR and first aid, so that's testing their competency. We've done, like I said a lot of backboarding, two-person removal.

**Interviewer**

So, for your, for somebody to be an employee with The Rec, what certifications do you require for them to be here and to work here for just a standard lifeguard, and then maybe for your head lifeguards?

**Participant**

So, they need to have lifeguard certification. So we prefer Red Cross just because that's what a majority of our lifeguards are. We do have one person that is through Ellis. So he's not Red Cross certified, but he is certified in lifeguarding. But we just try and keep it

to be Red Cross, just 'cause everyone's following then the same procedure, and they're getting trained on the same thing of ways to do things. So, they have to be lifeguard certified. For my applicants, I really look for experience.

**Interviewer**

Ok.

**Participant**

Because, if you come in here and just getting your certification and have never had it, that's — One, that's kind of risky on my side. But, not that I turn them away because of that because that's not fair. But I just look for experience, that someone that has at least guarded for a summer or a couple months just so they have that training.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Participant**

And then that's just for lifeguard. I do require an in-person interview, and then a skills test in the water.

**Interviewer**

Ok.

**Participant**

That hasn't been implemented. I just started implementing that last semester, I believe, or the beginning of this semester, one of those. Just because if you do an interview, that's saying nothing about their skills. People come from all different types of pools, and some pools never practice skills. So I want to know that they know what they're doing.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Of course.

**Participant**

And then also, part of the skills is getting down to our 14-foot deep and or 13, and lap pool, so just making sure they can get down to the bottom, and that they are refreshed on first aid and CPR. So that's just for standard lifeguard.

For, if they want to be W, er, Water Safety Instructor, we highly recommend they have that certification just because we do advertise that we do have Red Cross certified instructors. So that is for WSI.

For LGI, that they have their LGI certification, a lot of it is that they have their certification then based on the interview and water skills. I don't do in-water skills for LGI and WSI, just lifeguard.

**Interviewer**

Oh. Ok. And then, so you don't, you don't require the WSI, you just highly recommend it for the lifeguards?

**Participant**

Yes.

**Interviewer**

Sounds good.

**Participant**

They do, I've been realizing WSIs and LGIs are really hard to find. I feel like the stigma for guarding and just those certifications are really going down. That's not as popular as before. And so, LGI is extremely difficult. But WSI, we have had, especially in the summer, pickles where we have to pull someone in that isn't WSI and train them, and then have them teach, just so we have instructors, that are, that can teach.

**Interviewer**

And then to go on to the one student who is Ellis-certified, how do you make sure that he or she syncs up with everyone else who's Red Cross certified?

**Participant**

Yep. So, looking at his certification and then Red Cross, it's very similar. It's just a different form. So at our last in-service we went over all the things that were different and how to follow our — 'cause for example, backboarding, that's different in Ellis than it is in Red Cross. And Red Cross just updated recently, and from my standpoint it looks like they, it's more matched, those two different certifications. So, our last in-service we went over all the, how we do our skills and our protocols. So, for example, EAP may be different in Ellis than it is in Red Cross, so we went over how we would our EAP here rather than what he was trained on.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Great.

So. Final question, what can the Red Cross or any certifying organization do to help you as a manager? So what's something that they can — and I know this is something that kind of puts you on the spot with this question. But what do you think is something that they can either put forth in the manual, or training videos, or training or whatever to help you as a manager?

**Participant**

I'll have to think a second on that one. 'Cause Red Cross does provide I think, I think at least abundant amount of information on — so starting with LGI, sorry that's in my head.

They do provide abundant information on how to teach it, what you need to teach, the objectives, they do, all that information. And the same with WSI, they provide an abundant amount of information of each skill, what's required, block plans, lesson plans, teaching strategies, teaching questions, questions to help parents, advertising.

And then for lifeguarding, they provide, I'm using abundant a lot, but they provide a lot of information on skills and testing those techniques and making sure they're fitting the objective and frequently asked questions that people are confused about, either with the certification, all that stuff.

But as for, so saying me, as aquatics coordinator, I feel like there could be more information as of, pertaining to me, not just those certifications.

**Interviewer**

How to do your job?

**Participant**

Yes.

So if they had like aquatic coordinator tab that had like here is a layout of like an in-service, that would be like a really good, how to implement an in-service, or techniques of how to organize an in-service or, that, that would be great. That would be wonderful. Just because every pool is different. Not every pool can train the people the way other pools train them. So it's a wide variety. I feel like that would be helpful.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful.

And do you have anything else that, you know, you could add to this interview in aquatic techniques and things from your job that you see that you think could enrich this interview more?

**Participant**

I just had a thought and I lost it. It's a good and hard job.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Ya.

**Participant**

I can't think of anything at the moment.

**Interviewer**

That's fine.

**Participant**

Do you have any more questions that I could elaborate on?

**Interviewer**

I think we've got it pretty much.

Tape ends

Transcript of interview on February 13, 2017 between Primary Investigator and Participant from Beaumont Aquatic Center.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful. Again, thank you so much for meeting with me this morning. So we'll just dive right in. Will you tell me a little bit about your job, your background and some of your job responsibilities?

**Participant**

Sure. I was a lifeguard in high school and became pool manager, was a pool manager in my hometown and then in Iowa City, and got my degree in what was called Recreation Education back then at Iowa City and became a full-time person at Iowa City Park and Rec. However, for the first time I wasn't in aquatics, I was centered in sports, but three years later the aquatics guy moved on, and I became in charge of two outdoor pools and one indoor pool in Iowa City. I did that for three years, a job opening came up here, so I applied and got that, and I was Sports and Recreation and Aquatics Supervisor, and then I became Director.

My background is that I was in the first — I taught the first CPO class in Iowa City back 100 years ago, and am currently a CPO. I let my life guarding expire many years ago because I used to be called for subbing all the time, and I figured I don't want to do that any more. I was a WSI as well.

Otherwise, I am in the aquatics roundtable group of Iowa Park and Recreation Association. We consistently shoot out questions to each other and meet on a monthly basis, so we kind of are updated on what's going on. Their problems is everyone else's problems. Like one of the last things we talked about was policy on service dogs. You know, all of a sudden we have service dogs all over the place, and no one has had a policy on them. So we have to figure out something to do with them.

**Interviewer**

Right. And then, if you can describe some of your responsibilities here and what you do here?

**Participant**

I am responsible for the outdoor pool and that includes hiring and training staff. We have evolved just recently in the past three to four years to joint staffing with Pine Ridge College, which is the Pine Ridge Wellness Center. Are you going to talk to them as well?

**Interviewer**

For right now I'm going to keep colleges out of it and just do city parks. It might evolve into something.



**Participant**

Ok. So we cross-train. We joint hire. We have managers at both our places. We don't do — we have consistent people in charge all the time. They do all the learn-to-swim. I don't do any learn-to-swim. And, I think it's been very good.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful. Wonderful. Can you explain your staff training? How often you do staff training, the attendance, kind of the content that's involved with that?

**Participant**

Sure. Initially it's all orientation. We start off at the indoor pool and orient people to that in terms of policies, procedures, cleaning, those types of things, and then we always have a swimming element and we practice skills. That's consistent throughout. We always have a fitness element and a skills element. Then we basically alternate during the summer between — I have an orientation meeting as well, at the pool. As well as we have a couple days of PowerPoints I go through just to show them policies, procedures, rotations, all that kind of stuff. Then we walk through it when we get to the facility. I can send you my PowerPoint if you want me to. Do you want me to?

**Interviewer**

Maybe, ya, that would be great.

**Participant**

And then, we put out a schedule of staff meetings and then about two more times at the indoor pool, and I usually have at least four at the outdoor pool about every two or three weeks. Just to update people what's going on. Tell them what's going to happen, again fitness and skills. We try to do something fun. Like, our fitness might be water polo instead of swimming laps. And then I always have food, too.

**Interviewer**

So then, you said you do that every two to three weeks?

**Participant**

Right.

**Interviewer**

You talked about indoor and outdoor pools. So in the summer you have the outdoor pool.

**Participant**

Right.

**Interviewer**

And in the off-season, winter time, you have the indoor facility at The Pine Ridge Recreation Center?

**Participant**

I don't run the indoor pool. I just run the outdoor pool. They've got their own aquatics staff. They run that year-round, but we combine staffs in the summer.

**Interviewer**

Ok. I see. I see.

**Participant**

For instance, a schedule could be they work two days outside, go one day inside, then they're off a day type thing.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful.

So. For your staff trainings, are they paid?

**Participant**

Yes.

**Interviewer**

Are they paid on both sides so the facilitators of it and the ones going?

**Participant**

Yes.

**Interviewer**

How does that affect attendance? Therefore is it required to come to every single training?

**Participant**

It is required to come, and it seems like it doesn't make any difference if they're paid or not. Attendance is supposed to be mandatory. But we have some issues with some people not being able to make it. One of the issues is that they may be working at Pine Ridge College, you know working inside. It seems lots of people have other jobs, too. But, we probably get 80 percent attendance, maybe 70 percent at all. But we have a make-up system where they have to go through the content with a manager, and then they have to swim.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful.

**Participant**

And, some people don't care, they just don't show up. Usually we don't hire them back.

**Interviewer**

Makes sense.

**Participant**

The problem is, lifeguards are really tough to find.

**Interviewer**

Ya. It's difficult.

**Participant**

Were you a lifeguard at one time?

**Interviewer**

I am. I am currently a lifeguard.

**Participant**

You know, you get paid just barely over minimum wage. You have 20-25 hours of training, plus you're expected to continue being in shape and all that sort of thing, and when you could go to McDonalds and make more money.

**Interviewer**

Yep. Nope. I feel ya.

What other organizations are invited to participate in your trainings, if any, such as EMS, you know, city attorney, your bosses, so on, so forth?

**Participant**

We always do a event where we have the ambulance come to the outdoor pool and we do a dry-run-type thing. We invite the Boy Scouts to a free swim. And then it's a two-hour-long thing, so they swim. We "drown" one of them. And then we have the ambulance come by calling 911. We've got that all pre-arranged, so 911 is aware of it, the cops are aware of it, the fire and rescue folks are aware of it, the hospital ambulance services are aware of it. We do that once a year on Saturday morning. And then obviously, the Boy Scouts can work on their merit badges after we're done with that. We pull the kid out, they put him on the stretcher they take him to the ambulance, drive around the block and then done. It kind of cross-trains lots of people.

**Interviewer**

That's good. So with that, do your lifeguards — it's every year and your lifeguards know that it's going to happen. Do they know when it's going to happen? Or is it kind of like, "OK, the boys are here some time within the next two hours?"

**Participant**

Exactly. It's not a complete surprise, because we always do it within the first hour, but we don't tell them exactly when. Because we usually find an older scout. Then I kind of give them a sign and then they "drown."

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful.

**Participant**

It's really important for the younger ones to see that because then they haven't gone through the emergency procedure that often so that they can — they can kind of see how everything works, and I usually have my best guards up, too. Because you gotta impress the ambulance folks, plus I had a mayor that was involved with the Boy Scouts so he was always there. And, I've got a city council member right now that's with the Boy Scouts so —

**Interviewer**

Yep. Wonderful.

What aquatic content do you implement during your staff training? So you said you do skills and the fitness part of it, but skills do you actually implement?

**Participant**

We do a emergency procedure a couple times. We move the victim around so it's in different parts of the pool, so people can see that. You know, anything from a active victim in the deep end to someone who's fallen down the stairs of the slide, those types of things. Obviously at the beginning of the year, a lifeguard recertification is basically my staff training at the beginning of the year. So they have to pass everything for lifeguard recertification. Plus, we have the CPR part of it for the folks who have expired, and that's always a review, too.

**Interviewer**

Is there one point, is there one skill that you kind of stress more?

**Participant**

Preventative life guarding. We don't want to have wet lifeguards. We want to have dry lifeguards.

**Interviewer**

What kind of certifications do you require for employees to work at your facility?

**Participant**

We hire every certified lifeguard that walks through the door. (chuckles) Just not that many choices and we usually just get enough.

**Interviewer**

Is that Red Cross, Ellis, YMCA?

**Participant**

We have had Red Cross in the past. We've had Boy Scout, and we've trained them so they're up to snuff with Red Cross. We've never had an Ellis. I think I've had some Y in the past. But 99 percent of them are Red Cross. That's what we teach here.

**Interviewer**

OK. And then how, so, when you have guards that are on — that are certified through two different organizations, how do you keep them on the same level? Like how do you retrain them specifically, or —?

**Participant**

Right. We retrain them specifically. Like I said. Boy Scout life guarding is really different. They get the basics, but it's not Red Cross so we —. But that's only happened like a couple times over the last 30 years. So it's not like — like I said, 99 percent of them are all Red Cross. But, Boy Scout life guarding is an acceptable life guarding to the state health department.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful.

Do you retrain for required certifications? You kind talked, touched a little bit about how you retrain for that. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

**Participant**

At the indoor pool, because it's an indoor pool, and my water's really cold or something like that at the beginning of the year we do a — we offer recertification. Actually, they offer recertification. And then we basically do the same thing at our first staff meeting. We have everybody do rescues. We have everybody do skills. We go through CPR with them.

**Interviewer**

For that, if they do need to get the actual certification card?

**Participant**

There's a class we offer at the indoor pool during May.

**Interviewer**

And how is that compensated? Do you help compensate for that, or do they pay for it?

**Participant**

We pay for their recertification. They have to pay for their own life guarding, but we pay for their recertification as part of the staff. You've got to work for us.

**Interviewer**

I know that can be something that is tough for younger kids to take care of.  
Wonderful.

How do you evaluate that your employees are competent in required skills? How do you know that your staff, you know, halfway through the season is competent?

**Participant**

I attend every staff meeting, and I observe, and I have a management team, and they see them every day. So we usually do a — well, we see them, so we can talk to them immediately if we need to, like if someone hasn't swam for nine months or something like that, and they're kind of lacking skills that way, strength wise or if they aren't quite observant enough or something like that. We would talk to them right away. But we also do a mid-year evaluation so that kind of, hopefully is done by the end of June so we can catch things in the very beginning, and then we do an end-of-the-year evaluation.

**Interviewer**

When you're doing those evaluations, do you have a checklist or something that you —?

**Participant**

Right. I've got, it's basically a checklist, and you're graded one to five.

**Interviewer**

Where did you find this checklist? Did you come up with it or —?

**Participant**

No. It's from some other community, I'm sure. Everything's shared in our business.

**Interviewer**

Right.

If your employees were to take their recertification, like if you had your employees at the end of the season last year, or right now, if they were to take a test, a recertification test how do you feel they would do on it?

**Participant**

Right now before the season?

The ones that have been active would be just fine.

The ones that have been inactive probably would need some work.

Not everybody's a really good swimmer, and not everybody has life guarded for several years.

There are some young ones I would think would need to have some work. You know, we provide that. That's part of the reason why we do it.

**Interviewer**

And then at the end of the season?

**Participant**

I think they'd all be fine. (pause) If they don't know it by then —

**Interviewer**

And then finally, what can the Red Cross or any other certifying organization do to help you as a manager?

**Participant**

Well, they got change things to upgrade them. Things are always getting better, supposedly. It's completely different from when I was life guarding. If there was a way to get younger kids interested. Is there a — I don't even know if there's a younger life guarding program? What's it called? There is, but it just doesn't seem like it's very popular. Because if you get people in the pipeline, the more likely they would maybe remain, if they kind of liked doing it.

**Interviewer**

Great.

Then, is there anything else you wanted to add to the content of this interview?

**Participant**

We try to impress goals and objectives. Years ago I had a staff that — we walked through our goals and objectives with our staff of the pool experience and it was stuff like "Gotta keep it clean, gotta keep it safe, blah, blah, blah," that kind of stuff. But the experience was people need to have fun, and it's got to be safe, and the staff has to be friendly. I try to impress that stuff on them. I usually have some sort of a — I preach a little bit to them each time. Some sort of philosophical story. They probably hate it, right? But that's the way I do it anyway.

So, I printed some of these off. Like this one is reputation. If anybody has a crappy — not personal reputation — but a reputation of being a bad guard then that spreads all over the place, and you know, that's just an example.

But I think it's real important for people to have values and goals and objectives, and I try to impress that on folks.

I just read something today, it was just three points. Parents expect their kids to be safe, to have a good time and to — shoot I can't remember the third one. But it's just simple stuff like that they can relate to. It's just how I do it.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful. Thank you very much... (tape ends)



Transcript of interview on February 17, 2017 between Primary Investigator and Participant from The Waves Aquatic Center

**Interviewer**

We'll go ahead and get started. Will you tell me a little bit about your job, your background and your responsibilities?

**Participant**

Do you want like the entire, like back when I first started, or just with The Waves?

**Interviewer**

You know what, you can start with how you got into the aquatics, and then end with The Waves and your job responsibilities.

**Participant**

I started life guarding my freshman into sophomore year of college summer, so 2008, and it happened to be something I just fell into. There was — I'm originally from Waukon, Iowa, and they were opening — they were looking for lifeguards. So that was a little bit more responsible. So I decided to apply. And then I just loved it. And when I came back to school I went to UNI to see if I could get into life guarding there because I really wanted to do like the LGI like all that, and the only way I could really do that was if I could get a job life guarding. So, they eventually gave me a job. But, it was doing the early bird shift, something that nobody really wanted.

**Interviewer**

Yep.

**Participant**

Then, fast-forward to the summer, I was looking for an outside job, and The Waves was hiring, and I just kind of applied there, and I had a wonky schedule, and they really did accommodate me. So I'm like, "Yes, I'm going to do it then." And then, from there, I've just slowly worked up the ladder.

There was a — we — they pseudo-made it a position for, because they had older management staff that they knew were going to leave that following summer. So they made a pseudo-manager, kind of below, so they could kind of get some training, and they put me and another lifeguard in that position. And then that following summer, I was the assistant manager, and then I've been the manager ever since.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful.

**Participant**

So, do you want general responsibilities?

**Interviewer**

Ya. Just kind of what you do at The Waves with being a manager, and all that entails.

**Participant**

Ok. I can kind of break it down. We do interviews, and I have, like, what I look for, for like swimming. We do a basic interview, and I can show you kind of like some of the questions, and I can show you some of the manager questions that I use as well. And, this is based off of the last life guarding, not anything from January, I haven't updated it for this year's skills test.

**Interviewer**

Ya. That's ok.

**Participant**

So what, I'm just going to go with the interview process, and then get into the summer.

For life guarding kind of what I look for is how well they can do their strokes, if they're going to sign up to be an instructor. And, like a 15-16-17-year-old, since this is their first job, if their strokes are not 100 percent perfect, I can work with them. It's the other, like, the 23-year-olds that think this is going to be a cake-walk kind of job here for a tan. That's when it starts to get, you know, if they're not amenable to what I'm looking for — . So, if they just have a plus — middle-ground and then this is a kind of another failure then based off that, I can kind of judge who's going to be like an instructor, who's going to be an aide, and so on and so forth.

And then I get into the actual life guarding skills. I have them do just a regular assist, an unconscious, on-top-of-the-water assist, and then a deep-water assist. And, then I want them to be both a primary and secondary for getting out the backboard. And, just kind of going once-through for seeing where their skills are at. This helps me also determine, like, if it's a new guard that's guarded somewhere else, what kind of skills they had, especially when we're in like a transition period, 'cause I was there when they switched to the old style about four years ago, and it took about three years before I finally noticed that everybody was on the same playing field. Otherwise, I knew that I would have to go back to the basics that first week of staff training to go make sure that everybody was on the same page, path. Because a lot of people are still doing the head-chin support versus the arm splint. And it's surprising that people still go for that.

Then, for actual interviewing, it's more of kind of like a "what if," especially with 15-year-olds where they don't — they've never been through that interview process. They don't know exactly what they're expecting. They've just kind of been coaxed into they should be a lifeguard by either their friends or parents. I mean, it's kind of guessing what

they would do and going from there. So, kind of basic, what's — you know — questions about them. What are their — you know — kind of loosening them up, and then getting into guarding questions. Like, "What do you think the most important aspects of life guarding are?" So they can, I can see, what they actually think of the job.

**Interviewer**

Right. Whether it's the suntan, or —

**Participant**

Yep. And then I try to give them some examples of life guarding scenarios, so I can see how they would react, and I don't hold them accountable if they haven't taken the course or not. I mean, some of these are just innate skills. Do you jump in and help the person, or do you try to assist them from the side? What would you do as a person?

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Participant**

Then I give them kind of like a map of The Waves so they can envision that there are other guards around them, and if they are willing to get them to help out, or see what they are doing with that.

Then I do have other areas I'm responsible for, so like swim lessons, the same kind of thing. What would they do with a kid that's crying versus the rest of the class. Or like maintenance, what would you do if you walked into the facility, and you saw XYZ? What would you take care of first? Same with concessions, if somebody, your cash register's broken? What do you do with those kind of people, and what do you do with the money? So, we do give them that, questions and that like as well.

Some of the qualities that we look for in a cashier and then, with some of the money positions, I've tossed in things that have happened. Like, we have an ID scanner, and one of the first years I was an assistant manager, we had somebody that wasn't really looking at the passes. So, we had a Caucasian that was using an African-American's pass. It was very cut-and-dried. She ended up being eventually caught, but it's one of those things that we expected the cashier to do.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Participant**

Is there anything you want to know about this?

**Interviewer**

More about, so once you have them hired, and, like your role as — Obviously, you do the interviewing and things like that. But what else do you do as the manager? Are you, you know, in the trainings? Are you walking around the pool deck? How do you do all of that?

**Participant**

I will get that up. First, I schedule everybody out. And I like everything in just giant blocks, and then from there — that's the wrong thing — oh come on, where's a better example? Here it is. I try to break everything up for the schedule, so that I don't have to deal with it on a weekly basis 'cause that's the days they need off. That's a big document. I'm sorry.

**Interviewer**

No. You're fine.

**Participant**

So, the first week or so — they're still — the high schoolers are still in school, so I don't have like a full rotation in place. I try to get them to pick it out, and then we have two rotations at The Waves an A and a B. So they work three days on and then they work three days on and so on and so forth for the rest of the summer.

**Interviewer**

Ok.

**Participant**

And as I ask for all their days off. My supervisor's supervisor, when the pool was created, came up with the idea that they get seven days off. I try to be a little bit more amenable than that. I just usually give them all of it because they're going to ask for it off anyway. And then with the other rotation and swim lessons, besides the end of the summer, I'm usually able to get everything pretty much built, way in advance.

So I do all that scheduling with the managers and indoor lessons and outdoor lessons as well, and the same kind of thing. I ask for all their days off. And that's the color-coding system. I can try to send you a later one, so you can see a full summer. Outdoor lessons and then concessions, same kind of thing, give them their full hours all up front, and do that.

I handle all their pay rates for the year. My supervisor gives me a range that I can work within, so based off their interviewing skills — from their — that I saw or based off their previous year's experience that they worked with us, I try to fit it in there. And, I try to keep it in that middle ground so, if it's between \$9 and \$9.30, not everybody's going to get \$9.30.

And, I give everybody, if it's a lifeguard, they can pretty much work all the positions. So, if we do have a cashier who's sick and a guard who's looking for hours, but I don't have any guard shifts I can say, "Hey, you can be a cashier." And then I don't have to go back to the city and say, "Hey give me a cashier rate." I try to set it all up so there's plenty of firewalls.

Going on through there I have that all set up, then I give it to my supervisor to check off on to make sure the city's not going to bleed money. And, I mean, it's usually a pretty easy process.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful.

**Participant**

Staff training-wise. This is from 2014. But, it's going to be the same idea. What we have is a week-long in-service training before the season even begins. And, what I try to do is, on the first day, the city has requirements to go through like the tax forms, SDS, and then the city policies that they need covered to cover their end and sexual harassment. We have a city attorney that comes in and talks, too. We don't actually have an issue or anything with that, they just want to make sure they're — all the bases are covered, especially with teenagers, bathing suits, all that.

During the first meeting we also get all their social security cards, drivers licenses, we get all that copied. And, with the older kids it's not a really big deal, college kids, because they've had the job process. But like 15-year-olds, it can be a cumbersome process. And then we also get all the copies of their certifications, and what-have-you for health inspections, and with all this information I do keep a giant binder at The Waves so when we do get inspected, the inspector can just go right up there and find Lifeguard A has certifications, everything, and Lifeguard B and so on and so forth.

Some of the videos that we watch is like "Over the SDS," "Sexual Harassment," "Bloodborne Pathogens," "Dumpster Diving," which is a city one. You can't take food or anything out of the dumpster once it's in there, otherwise you get a strike, or fired, depending on the thing. And then I've pulled some YouTube videos, and other things that are more for like customer service, or the dangers of not watching the water. And it's better than showing them the same lifeguard videos that they've seen the last four years. And, the teacher in me, I do make them take quizzes after all these, and I toss at them the thing, the health inspector lawsuit.

**Interviewer**

Ya. That's good.

**Participant**

Especially with the EAPs, and everything. I mean, they're not rigorous tests, it's just more like matching and multiple choice kind of things. I can show you some of those. And then, the first day at The Waves I like to go over a little bit more of the life guarding kind of things, like the clothing requirement they can have. We do have a jewelry policy. They can't have any body piercings except two stud earrings. Just because in years past they've had issues where it just gets yanked out. Yep.

So we have that, and I go over — I give them a giant rules packet. It's about 100-plus rules of what each thing can have and it goes beyond what we have at the signage at The Waves, and they have to justify each rule. And they have to turn it in. So, then we as the managers know that they have at least looked over it, and they can justify each thing. And, as we go through the week, they have to go to each different position, say, "You can do this. You can't do this. You can do this. You can't do this." And then we also go through the rotations because we have three pools so we walk them through and each group leader kind of talks about, "This is what you should look for. This is what you shouldn't look for. And that kind of stuff. And it's just keeping up the exposure. So by the time they get to that first day, they're kind of almost battle-tested, but not really.

Then we go over opening jobs, and we have about a dozen jobs that they do. They're not anything that takes a long time. But each shift they start, they have a 500, and they have an opening job and the rest of the half hour is theirs before we open.

**Interviewer**

So you make them swim every morning before their shift?

**Participant**

Yep. It was something the city had before I was there. I mean, I've always liked it.

Then, closing jobs. Then at the end of the first meeting we talk about all of the Emergency Action Plans. Then I warn them, "Hey we're going to have a quiz over this." They never think that I'm serious. Then the next day we walk through our Emergency Action Plans, and I've done different variations off of it. I've tried the whole facility, but then I don't feel like I get everybody's attention.

**Interviewer**

Right. Right.

**Participant**

So I've broken it down by pool by pool. And then, with this, I can involve the concession cashiers. They are involved in the process. They're supposed to shut down and help, you know, crowd control and get witness statements. And with this, since that's their job, they kind of have that process locked down. They're like victims in the water being saved and

a part of the process from the inside, so that helps with that and then they're not just standing around.

And then, afterwards, they all take a quiz. It takes a while to go through each pool, having done the Emergency Action Plan.

Wednesday is just all the aquatics certified, and we go through each skill and really mark down who needs work, so our first few in-services that we have during the season we can say, "Lifeguard A really sucked at primary, so this is something that we said we'd work on with them, and that's what we're going to do." Or if collectively we noticed that a lot of the instructors were having problems with breast stroke, we can say, "Hey, head instructor, this is what you should be focused on when you have that extra time working with them on that." And then we also talk about, because we have lifeguards at Billings and Waves, then we go through everything at Billings during that night. What their job is, EAPs with that pool, etcetera, etcetera, and there's quizzes with all that.

Thursday is gonna be first aid and CPR, so we invite all the people back again, and we set up about a dozen different stations for like splints, wrapping for first aid, ice packet, paperwork, sudden illness, unconscious-, conscious-choking, CPR, rescue breathing, AED. And I spend about an hour going through all the Red Cross videos, kind of getting back up to snuff, what they forgot.

Friday is doing bathrooms. This is our big, pain-in-the-butt job. Going through what we expect, what is a cleanly bathroom. So, going through that. And then, while one team is going doing bathrooms, two teams — it's going to be three teams — one team is doing bathrooms and the other two teams are out breaking rules and enforcing rules.

**Interviewer**

Ok.

**Participant**

So, like we'll put, like, one team in the lap pool and one team at the Lazy River, and they just kind of rotate through. Then they go clean bathrooms, break rules, enforce rules, so then they can kind of see, this is what everything is.

Then that Memorial Saturday, we open. And then, if we need to, I built in, "Oh, crap it rains? So what do we do?" Kind of day. It's — That's on Saturday morning. So far, in year's past I've used it as a, "this person missed because of track" or something like that, so we used it to catch up paperwork on that.

Do you want to see like quizzes or anything?

**Interviewer**

No. I'm ok with that.

**Participant**

In-services?

**Interviewer**

Yes. With your in-services, how, like how often do you do your in-services or your training? Like obviously you do a big training with your first one with all of your staff.

**Participant**

When I first started out there was only every Sunday, so you get four a month. And, I noticed as I was a team leader, lifeguard, going into the assistant manager, that people were still having issues making that because the punishment was you would get your hours cut, which then doesn't benefit anybody because you still have to cover those shifts, but that was like the only real punishment we had. So, if they didn't want to go to the in-services, they probably really didn't want to work, so it's not really a punishment for them. So, I've tried to be more lenient in adding more in-services, so we're up to eight now.

There's every Wednesday night and every Sunday. No. Every Tuesday. I'm sorry. Those people that usually miss kind of give you the reason that they were out too late on Saturday or they had church, so I wanted to give Tuesday night to kind of counteract any of those kind of things. And it's just right after their shift and Sunday it's just right before their shift.

**Interviewer**

So you have two scheduled a week, and they just have to come to one of them?

**Participant**

They have to come to three.

**Interviewer**

I mean one that week.

**Participant**

Essentially.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Ok.

**Participant**

I mean, we don't require, like you have to come to one a week, but it's just three a month. So, we have some people that are just really proactive that just do three right away because they know they're going to forget. Or they wait until the end, and are like "Oh crap." And with that, I've really tried to be proactive with it. So we have a document that



we mark who's all gone to one. So as we get down to the last four, or five or three, whatever number. We start having the cashiers call the lifeguards on their down time saying, "Hey, you need these meetings. Otherwise, there will be punishments, etcetera. If you have any questions, you can call one of the managers." And, that seems to help.

One thing I really wanted to do was an app called Remind. I don't know if you've ever heard of it.

**Interviewer**

Oh no. But I've kind of heard of these apps that do that.

**Participant**

It's a teaching thing where the teacher can say, an anonymous number, you don't get any of the students' numbers. It just sends a like a text from an anonymous number saying, "Hey make sure you do your assignment." They just sign up for it, so there's no actual interaction in between the person and the teacher, but that's getting into the whole teacher thing. But I was going to have the lifeguards sign up for that so you can set up the whole summer, and say, "Hey there's an in-service tomorrow night. Hey, there's an in-service." So it'll be a quick easy thing. We don't even have to sit down and text everybody. They just have to sign up for it.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Cool.

**Participant**

So that was something that I wanted to do last year, but by the time I really thought about it, it was July, and we only had three left. So it's something I want to try this year.

Do you want to know about actual in-services?

**Interviewer**

Ya. But one question with — You were saying there were consequences. So before we get to that. So the in-services, are they paid? Are they paid on both sides? So like obviously you get paid for it too, and then they get paid for it?

**Participant**

Um-hmm (affirmative)

**Interviewer**

And then you were talking about consequences. What are some of the consequences if you don't make it to your three?

**Participant**

What I've done is, you get a strike for every in-service day you don't make. So I've only had once incidence where somebody's gotten three strikes. And that's kind of out policy. And I've only had once incidence where a lifeguard just blew it completely off, and it was July into August, so I had to make that, you know, that kind of phone call where I had to say, "You have to come in, we have to talk about this. I have to let you go." Otherwise it's usually only one that they miss, and then I say, "You have to go to the next one otherwise your hours are going to start to be cut." And that's usually enough of a threat, if I can use that word. Or enough motivation.

**Interviewer**

Motivation.

**Participant**

There you go. To get your butt in line and get going. And I've never really had to go beyond that. Besides that one outlier.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Cool. Ok. Ya. So Let's go into some of your content about what you do during your in-service trainings, and how another question would be how do you evaluate at the end, you know, "How are my staff competent?"

**Participant**

One thing that we do is, we do have a weekly head guard meeting where the head guards, who are kind of supposed to be the watchdogs of the other guards, and the managers, and the aquatics supervisor, and the rec division manager all get together every week and kind of hash out what has happened this last week. They — if we say, if there is issues with the Lazy River rules, we'll kind of use that as fodder for in-services. Or, if we'll say, "People aren't noticing that if you swim in this certain area, you have to make sure that you're over there a little bit more." Because we do, you have walking positions. So, those kind of things, this is what drives our in-services.

Besides the beginning part of the year, where we can determine the lack of skill. So this is more, that's more for the end of June, July, August. So we use that as our: this-is-what-we-need-to-work-on. And then we do try to make sure that we do have life guarding aspects in there constantly, so whether it's assists, backboarding, lifeguard relays, so like swimming, anything like that.

Or, if we notice that there was a general slump in cleanliness for closing duties, we'll toss that in. This is one example that, where they are going to do 10 minutes of actually cleaning the locker rooms. Apparently, we had that issue brought up. And then, afterwards, depending on the time, covering the head guard meetings, cleaning the bathrooms and then I'm guessing the rest of the time was used for lifeguard skills. So, that's kind of how we go. Which is based on who's running the meeting at that time. Just

saying, this is good. But we do cut it off within that hour so if people work that day, they do have a little 15- 20-minute break to go get ready for their actual shift.

**Interviewer**

And you said, “Who’s running it that day.” Is it a different head guard that runs the meeting?

**Participant**

It’s assigned head guard at the meeting, or the beginning of the season. Let me take a step back. I tried different ways, where it’s assigned head guard, assistant manager, whether it’s me. And they kind of have this idea I’d say, running it past me to go with the rest of the meeting. So if we’ve really identified that we really need to work on, say, cleaning the bathrooms and assists, then that’s what we’re going to do. And we’ll have that mirror that Wednesday and Sunday. So, if you go to Wednesday, it will kind of be the same as Sunday, so even though you can skip it and go to next week if you want something new. We try to change it up a little bit, too, so it isn’t like — unless skills are just that awful. So there is some variation throughout it.

The head guard that we had kind of running most of our meetings last year did a really great job of doing a lot of kind of educational kind of games. So he had like a treading water game, where you had to hold the ball and toss it to somebody else and say a rule before you could toss it. And then he also did like lifeguard relays, like how quickly everybody could backboard out, and great the straps and everything were, otherwise you got docked points and time. So it depends on the person.

**Interviewer**

Right. Right. Ok. Nice.

And then how do you know? — So you do your in-services and your guard, so say, Suzie’s doing it this week, and she says, “Yes these 10 guards are competent in our skills.” How do you record that or how do you know that Suzie’s level of, “Yes they’re competent.” is the same across the board of everybody? Does that make sense?

**Participant**

Yes. Besides that first week and interviews, we don’t have a check-off system. That is something that I’ve noticed. That is going to sound incredibly nerdy. I was just talking with my wife, with administration, one of the things is an eye observation, and one of the things that you do with that is you go to different classrooms and the principal takes like a snapshot of your classroom, this is what you did right, this is what I’ve seen that you could work on, stuff like that. And I was just joking. I was not joking; I was serious about it. I was telling her I would like to do something with the lifeguards where you would go around and say, “Hey this is what you were watching,” and kind of using that as like a, “This is while you were guarding” and doing something similar with in-services as well where you do have some kind of —

I've never had like a concrete thing that said — I just know 'cause I try to be at a lot of the in-services. 'Cause my philosophy is if I'm making them do it, I should be a part of it too. 'Cause I do have my lifeguarding. I do have a general idea of how everybody is, so besides that there is nothing written in stone, besides that first meeting where we have written down like, "This person swims this 500 time, they're this good at this, this and this."

**Interviewer**

And then, throughout the summer do you revisit that list and make sure that they go back to or—?

**Participant**

No. The managers just say, "Suzie—"

**Interviewer**

Keep working on it?

**Participant**

Yep. This is what we need to work on collectively.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Gotcha.

**Participant**

Otherwise, we don't have, "This is the lifeguard that we need to target." The other thing that kind of helps with that is the head guards that bring up. One good example would be last year we had an older guard who has guarded for seven, eight years. She was really lackadaisical, not really enforcing the rules, so her name kept coming up, in the first two or three head guard meetings in the minutes. We had noticed that her skills were there, they just weren't like anything spectacular for the amount of years that she had guarded. That was something that we had already noted, and we were watching for and then as her not like enforcing every rule, kind of causing a general pain for her co-workers, we started hounding her a little more, and then we did notice a little bit of a 180 on that. So, with the head guard meetings that we have, it kind of balances that out, but I don't know how often other pools meet on a weekly basis.

**Interviewer**

Right. Right. Good.

What other organizations are invited to participate in your in-services, such as like EMS, city attorney, your bosses, what other organizations come?

**Participant**

Before Joe, who I think you originally contacted, before his position there was originally William. He did not want to be involved because he did not want to take the limelight. So he kind of stayed clear. He did, like my first couple of years, to make sure that I wasn't going to set anything on fire; he did kind of watch from afar. And then, once he realized I was competent enough; he kind of just let me go. Chris, since he's been here, he's kind of just let me keep running the show. So he's not really done it. I've tried inviting EMS or anything like that, but with how tight their schedule is and everything, it's really hard to coordinate something where we can meet up, like say, "7:00-7:15 this is what we want." The one year, my very first year, the manager did bring in EMS and they just kind of rambled on about they want this gate, and that's it. So it wasn't like anything that they really kind of wanted. We've had enough assists, rescue kind of thing where we can outline, kind of tell what they're going to do. What they're going to demand. And we can say, "Hey cashiers they're going to come park up here. But they're really going to come around here, so you're going to want to direct them that way." So, we have that experience between our management staff since we've been there three, four years. So, that I think helps out.

Our city attorney comes that first meeting to talk about sexual harassment, and I think it's more her trying to put out fires before they even happen. Otherwise, I don't really have too many other resources.

**Interviewer**

No. That's fine.

**Participant**

The only other thing would be the city videos, but I mean they're just given to me. Or, like the Red Cross materials. But I don't know if that gets your question.

**Interviewer**

No. No. I was more looking like EMS and how they interact, because I do know that at least when I've been running in-services and things like that I try to incorporate them as much as possible.

**Participant**

Well, the one thing with us and our location, the fire department is first responder for us. That makes it even — they get there, they try to assess the scene, and then they bring in the gurney and everything if you need it. Whereas, the paramedics, it seems are already there and trying take out everything and trying to get ready. It's kind of a "who gets there first and how do they handle it?"

Because we've had, I had one situation where a girl donated plasma, drank a bunch of Red Bull and then passed in the stadium lot. And the firefighters showed up and they kind of assessed it, but didn't really get hands-on with the situation. And then the

paramedics showed and then they are like, “We really want to take care of this stuff right away.”

**Interviewer**

Ya. I see.

So we kind of talked a little bit about your aquatic content that you implement. So every in-service you talk a little bit about, you know, housekeeping things and then you also do aquatic content and then do you, is there — does it just depend on what you guys talk about at that head guard meeting or is it just kind of like ok, “This is the schedule of what we’re doing?”

**Participant**

The first few weeks, where we don’t have any little issues popping up yet, it’s more like rules, assists, backboarding, those kind of things, and then as the issues come up where we can start narrowing down to fix our problems, like every year it seems like, tubes that we have on the Lazy River. We have very oddly specific rules, like you have to keep your feet up, you can’t do this, this, this. So then we can start to narrow and fix those issues. And by keeping up with the other basic skills, we can do that.

And then, if we do have like a rain day, on an in-service day, we try to save a little bit more of the random, like first aid stuff, like sudden illness or things like that, for that kind of thing, and it does happen pretty much once or twice a month with how often we do in-services. So, we can pepper in kind of the whole spectrum so we’re not just focused on water skills.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Ya. It makes sense.

**Participant**

And if we do notice a dry spell, like we’ll bring in the dummies, and we’ll do that or ’cause like 2013 where like we just had no rain at all, we started doing like CPR drills during their breaks. They weren’t happy about it, but we needed to get it in.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Right. Right.

So how often do you retrain for required certification? So obviously, they could have the certification for two years. How often do you retrain for that? Outside of them needing to recertify?

**Participant**

We essentially run through almost the full training during that first week. It’s very abridged, obviously because I’m not going to show like the whole 20 hours of video, but

minus some of the very basic stuff, like how to put on the gloves and everything that I'm hoping they already know. We do like the aquatics part, the CPR part, the first aid part. I just want to make sure they have the full refresher before they even get into the season.

**Interviewer**

And then, do you require a specific certifying organization? Do they all have to be Red Cross, or could somebody show up with an Ellis?

**Participant**

No to Ellis because that's very specific to their pool, so it's just Red Cross. Besides, we do have all of our concession cashier and maintenance with CPR and first aid, they do have to have that. And, I don't care where they get it from, from that. So if it's like Heart Guard, or anything like that, Heart Guard —

**Interviewer**

Heart Association?

**Participant**

Thank you.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Heart Guard is on the card.

So how do you? Let's say, you have two guards, two staff that, One's from American Heart Association, and one's from Red Cross, how do you make sure that they're on the same field when it comes to the skills and what the procedures are?

**Participant**

That will crop up during the first week of training. Like a perfect example would be when the last lifeguard switch where we went from head splint to arm splint, so making sure that we were all on the same page on that. So I knew that was probably going to be an issue coming right into it, and I just went through and said, "Hey, the Red Cross has just now switched to this, I realize your pool may not have trained like this, but this is what we're expecting from that point forward."

The manager before me was obsessed also about spider straps on backboards. They're like the hardcore EMS ones. So, he tried to implement that towards the end of the summer, so I had to retrain my first year as a manager how to do the regular back straps. So, it's little things like that. Otherwise, like, CPR, the initial switch, 'cause some of the different steps had changed so making sure everybody as a whole had that basic understanding going in. And, it was just bringing up a PowerPoint and saying, "Hey this is what we're looking for. I realize you may not have had that retraining." And, I mean, it'll be the same thing this year with the new switch. So, it's just noticing what people might have troubles on, and then as we get into the skills, saying, like if Lifeguard A

came from Dike and they just didn't have that, or they still don't get it, maybe pulling them aside and saying, "Hey, this is what we're expecting out of you. You need to step up."

I've never had this issue, but if they can't get there, it would probably be an issue of pulling them from the schedule until they do. Because we can't put you out there then.

**Interviewer**

Right. Right. Good.

So we kind of talked about, you know, taking — you walked through all the skills and stuff like that. At the end of the season, last season, the last day, let's say, they all had to retake the certification test, both the skills and the written, how do you feel that your guards would do on that last day?

**Participant**

We're talking like the Red Cross one?

**Interviewer**

Um-hum. (affirmative)

**Participant**

Minus some of their very specific questions, I feel like they would pass it. I'm not a big fan of the Red Cross test. Overall, I feel like they should be competent enough to do it, and you know, pass it. Especially since we do emphasize a lot of the Red Cross skills. Now the other organizations, since I've never really worked with their material, as long as they have the same skills, which have never really been a problem, so—

**Interviewer**

So, kind of my last question for you, and then we can get to anything else you might want to add to this interview, is, what can the Red Cross or any certifying organization do for you as a manager? Or do you feel that they can do for you?

**Participant**

Since I'm on their email blast, I get everything that they have. One thing that I kind of would have liked especially at the last shift, and they did start pumping out the material, was kind of like a break down of the new skills. Where, this time around — I don't know if you got the email — it had like everything that was completely changed. And, that was nice, so I knew exactly, like, this is what I'm going to have to identify for this upcoming summer. Where last switch I felt like it was kind of in the dark. 'Cause I remember at the LGI meetings at UNI, and we were like, "Is this new?" So, checking with the old with the new, and it was kind of just feeling it out from there. Where this time around they were very on point, "Here's where we are."



And then I guess pictures of the new changes if they do do anything dramatic. 'Cause, especially with the CPR, it's been so many times with the new stuff I don't remember. It's been something with the unconscious choking, I want to say, that they changed. Yes. Where there was a different step or something like that. So, having a breakdown of that. So we have visualization. I know they do have that material, but having it right away.

I know it's them implementing a new program, and that's already tough enough as it is.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Participant**

And, I mean, really not much. I feel like they do a pretty good job with what they do, and how much they don't have to help them out. They're a pretty tight organization being what they are. Since I've been there they've cut down to just one person for a large chunk of Iowa. So, I mean, for what they do, they're running pretty good, for what they have.

I mean talking with some of the other Red Cross higher-ups, like the instructors, they do a really good job of connecting with the other organizations so they're kind of on the same lines, as just the other water programs don't seem to be on board, but I really don't have to deal with them too much.

And, surprisingly, with Lost Island in the area, I mean, we really don't — I've never really crossed paths too much with them. Where it's more UNI.

**Interviewer**

Lost Island, actually, I just found out they are Ellis. They do Ellis, which I thought was strange, but —

**Participant**

And it's frustrating, because I teach over at West, so if I try to poach any of their lifeguards, their main concern is, "I've already done this training. Now I have to do completely new training to be certified to your pool? Why should I do that?"

And I can completely understand that. That's one downfall I don't like about Ellis. And I'm assuming — I mean, they like it because they're not going to lose their guard, then.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Participant**

I don't think that's going to change any time soon.

**Interviewer**

No. But, what can you do?

Wonderful. Do you have anything — anything else that you think would add to you know, sort of the content of this interview?

**Participant**

I can show you a couple of things. “Lifeguard Jeopardy” for like a rainy day.

**Interviewer**

Oh cool.

**Participant**

That kind of idea, and that.

Let’s see if I have it.

We do have swim lesson in-services, specifically for them. And we try to do that once a month. So the head instructor for indoors, they’ll — I usually handle the outdoor lessons, so they’ll ask me like, “Hey, is this something that we can work on? Do you notice this down there?”

And it can be like customer service. How do you deal with, like. a problem kid, strokes? Surprisingly — not really — a lot of our instructors come in not knowing the butterfly. Yep. I’ve even been in aquatics 10 years and I can’t do it. So they try to figure that out, or get it enough where they can teach it. That kind of stuff.

Anything that you would want, I guess?

My job duty. We do have job descriptions of what we expect every guard or every position to do. And at the beginning of the season we do mail out all the things. So a lifeguard, you know, could be asked to do maintenance, etcetera, etcetera, so they know exactly what they’re getting into.

**Interviewer**

Right. Right.

**Participant**

And what they get for guarding. What they expect to do with patrons. Now, will a 15- to 23-year-old sit down and read all these documents? No. Probably not.

So, we do kind of go over this. But not like in-depth or anything. We kind of say, “Hey, here’s this. If you’re asking about your job and the whole down to the nitty gritty, this is kind of what you can look at.”

I haven’t had the issue of like, “This isn’t my job description.” Usually everybody is pretty compliant about doing things.

We do have a giant swim lessons manual of kind of what we expect out of everybody. We do not have Red Cross swim lessons, which is kind of odd. So, I’ve never had to teach like a WSI kind of class or anything like that. So I kind of let all that expire, and I just have my LGI at this point.

They did this back before I was ever here, there’s a local swim organization called LAST, and they partnered up, and they came up with everything so we have this and this has just been a slow work in process since I’ve been there. They have how they can teach every skill, and then like helpful games or anything they can do. So I’ve stolen a lot from the Red Cross especially with the younger classes about like, you know, all the games. Beforehand, it was just somebody awkwardly standing outside saying, “Hey, big arms.” And no singing or real interaction. So I really wanted to fix that up. And then gets into all the other things.

**Interviewer**

Cool.

**Participant**

Let’s see here.

This is all the Emergency Action Plans. This is just Billings and Russel where there’s only three guards working, so one’s the cashier breaking down. And we try to make sure it’s broken down enough where it’s simple-stupid. And especially with The Waves one, it’s a giant document, so we really wanted to make sure like, “What’s the difference between an assist and rescue?” And what different ways can you announce it?

We have like the starter air horns that officials use at all the chairs, but if you’re at like a walking position, what can you do? And that kind of thing.

We have that broken down, and we do go over this, really much in depth.

This is one of the things that I’ve been fortunate enough that it just clicks. Like they get it.

I’ve gotten that the Red Cross Association really has focused on the EAPs or who’s teaching it has. So that’s been really nice.

Every rescue that we've had, it's been pretty clean. Like, it's never been a doubt or what to do.

A good example would be, this past summer, we had a boy who kind of slipped at the end of the slide out of his tube and hit his head, and the lifeguard that was right there, instantly just held the head, and then they kind of figured out like by the time I got there they were talking about how they could still backboard him without losing the head control. So they worked out that they should do the head splint, and it was just smooth sailing from there.

It was a good, proud moment.

So, I mean, it was just they kind of all got, I mean — It was all locked down.

**Interviewer**

Good.

**Participant**

Is there any documents specifically that I could give you, kind of on the training aspect that you might need? Or anything that you might want to look at?

**Interviewer**

You know, maybe the outline of your in-service trainings, and the beginning training, that first orientation. That would be nice.

**Participant**

Ok.

**Interviewer**

That would be nice, so I could reference that as I go along. At this point, I have my first three chapters written, but when chapter four and five comes, I don't know how to write those yet. So, I'm going to sit down with my committee and let them know here's all the information I got from my interviews, now what?

**Participant**

So you want in-service training, so should I send you like a couple of the old in-services that we had? Do you want maybe guard minutes?

**Interviewer**

Maybe not minutes per se, but maybe you could just do like the out— just do like your schedule, and then the, that orientation, that week orientation schedule that you had too.

**Participant**

Thank you for saying that. For whatever reason I can never reference it as orientation.

I'll have to look for 2016, it might be in The Waves computer, and that will be the last thing. It's been a work in progress throughout the years. That will be the most in-depth one.

I'll send you a couple examples of the in-services. Do you need anything else, like EAPs or anything like that?

**Interviewer**

I don't thing so at this point. If I need to, I can always email you, too, and get in contact with you again.

**Participant**

I'm just seeing if there is anything else. Because you're probably more focused on the skills and all of that, not so much like, "You're following city policy."

**Interviewer**

Right. Right.

And just kind of how you implement with the skills and keep everybody on the same page and how you —

**Participant**

And I'll send you this. This is kind of the check off thing that we use on what we're looking for on all these. This is everybody that was aquatics certified so we get a rough idea, we just have a clock going and as they finish, we right down the time that they finish with the 500, so that we can see where their aquatic swimming ability is, and then from there it's just good, bad, horrible skill.

**Interviewer**

Right. Right. And this is just that first week, orientation week?

**Participant**

Yep. This is that first Wednesday.

So I'll send you this as well. Is it ok that names and stuff are on there, I'm assuming?

**Interviewer**

Ya. That's fine. I won't use the names. If I do use it, I won't use any names.

**Participant**

I mean, a lot of these people don't work with us any more because they've moved on to better things.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Ya. Ya.

**Participant**

So I have made a note for that, and I will look for the most updated examples and I send it to you.

**Interviewer**

Perfect.

(Tape ends)

Transcript of interview on March 14, 2017 between Primary Investigator and Participant from Findale Aquatic Center

**Interviewer**

Recording that now. I'm going to turn up the volume on you just a little bit. Ok. Again, thank you so much. We'll dive right into the questions, and feel free to, you know, ask any questions that you might have as well. But we'll start off, you know — can you tell me a little bit about your job at Findale, and then your background and your responsibilities?

**Participant**

Ya, and so my title is marketing operations supervisor, which doesn't necessarily state a lot of what I do. I've been here now for two years. This is actually going to be my second year in aquatics. I didn't do aquatics before I moved here. My boss, the director of our parks and rec was the aquatics person since she started with the department for like 30 years, and so she's kind of getting out of it now. So I am in charge of the aquatics here. We do have only a seasonal facility, which is only an outdoor, parks — or an outdoor aquatics center. So, that is, just opens Memorial Day and closes Labor Day.

We do have an indoor facility in town, but we don't run it. It's the old YMCA runs that.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful. Wonderful.

And you said this was your first job doing aquatics? So how did you kind of get into being in charge of the aquatics, besides, you know, your boss trying to get out of it?

**Participant**

It literally just kind of fell into my lap. It was kind of on the job description that, you know, potentially, moving forward into aquatics, but didn't start it right away, and then I showed interest in it, and I really liked it, so I said I would dive right on in and take it over.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful. Wonderful.

So can you explain a little bit about your aquatics staff training for the summer time and kind of what you do during that time, such as, you know, how often, attendance, and content that you cover during your training?

**Participant**

Ya. So basically, right now we do a big, it's called our boot camp. And that is a Saturday training from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. It's all water skills. That is — and we do kind of differently with like a recertification period. We don't — I don't certify my guards the first time. But

if they work for us, and then they are working for us the summer before, and the summer, the current summer, they get their recertification for free through us.

**Interviewer**

Ok.

**Participant**

So we do — they have to come and attend videos before boot camp. I do hold a couple of night classes and videos for both your water skills and then also CPR, first aid skills, and then during — So then, basically then after that, then we have, we have to go to one of the video nights for both CPR/First Aid and then do skills, take the test, and then they have their water skills for boot camp. Then after that, then if they can't attend boot camp, they have to make up the trainings on our time that works for us. I only had one person who couldn't make it last year. So they all know it's very important to make it.

Then throughout the summer, we do run little huddles every day. Actually it's just Monday through Saturday. We run, it's about 30-minute huddles, and that's where we go over, we do backboarding, you know, your front saves, your back rescues, your submerged. We go over our emergency action plan, that type of thing. We don't necessarily do in-services like your monthly in-services that a lot of other facilities do where you have to attend four-hours of monthly in-service training. Because we do, everybody who works Monday through Friday or Saturday gets 30-minutes of training every single day.

**Interviewer**

Every day. Ok.

So the boot camp, that takes place before the summer?

**Participant**

Yep. It takes place at the beginning of May.

**Interviewer**

Ok.

**Participant**

Yep. And we do that at our — at the high school pool, so a lot of our, we don't run over our EAP right then, because it's obviously completely different facility, it's only a lap lane pool, compared to our three different pool facility, that we have at the outdoor pool. But then we have an orientation night, which is usually, I think it's two Wednesdays before we open. It's a Wednesday evening, and that's where we go over the entire emergency action plan with concessions and cashiers. They're all there. We're telling everybody what your long whistle means. What your air horn means. What everybody's



doing. We go through like a practice run that night, too. Of what to do. Who's grabbing the key to unlock the gate, and that type of thing.

**Interviewer**

Great. And then your huddles, does that take place before, like in the morning, or at the evening before the pool opens?

**Participant**

It takes place right at lunch time. Because we do the swim lessons and then morning fitness swim, and that all gets over at noon, or you know, right at 11:45 to noon, depending on the thing, and then they take place from 12:15 to 12:45. And then they have 15 minutes to, kind of, you know, refill their water bottle, go to the bathroom, put some more sun screen on, and then get out to their spot by 12:55 for opening at 1.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful. Ok. Lovely.

So are your — with your staff trainings, are they paid, and do they make a difference in attendance with them being paid?

**Participant**

Yes. They are paid. All of ours our paid, except for the video nights and the CPR/first aid recertification; that portion of it is not paid, because the whole day of boot camp is paid. So that's kind of how we work that out.

Then, the huddles are all paid as well. It's just kind of something that my boss has found she almost has to bribe the kids to come, that they get paid for six hours no matter even if we're there for six hours at boot camp. A lot of times we get done at 1 o'clock, but they still get paid for that extra hour. And then, if they can't make boot camp, then they don't get paid for that training, though. That six hours of training. So that's kind of another thing that makes it more, you know, that kids want to actually come to.

**Interviewer**

So if a person doesn't, isn't able to make it to that boot camp and have to make it up with you, they don't get paid for that time?

**Participant**

Nope. Nope. They don't.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Interesting.

**Participant**

Because it's one thing that we do is because I already, it's the same exact Saturday that it has been for 10-plus years, you know, that same Saturday. And then, I actually get all of my paperwork out to all former, like last year's employees that I want to hire back at like the first week in January, and that states it on there what day boot camp is going to be. So they know well in advance of when boot camp is going to be that they need to attend.

**Interviewer**

Good. Good. Good.

So, what other organizations are invited to participate in your in-services or your boot camp, in your huddles? Do you, you know, like EMS, are they invited to participate, the mayor, maybe the city attorney, who do you bring in on your in-services to make sure everything's covered?

**Participant**

We have done it, in the past we have done just the fire department because they would be the first one to respond, and then our fire department also has an ambulance and paramedics and they're closest to the pool because the hospital is clear on the other side of the pool with their ambulance. And, I would like get another — it's been quite a — It was before I came that they did the last one, quite a few years before that. So I definitely, that's one of my goals this year is to get them to come out one time, and just to see us in action, because a lot of times it's hard for I think, both us as guards and then as fire department people to understand what we do in water and what they do on land. So I think it would be definitely good to have a connection on levels that say you know, "This is how we need things to be running. This is what we're doing. What can we do better to help you guys once you guys get here, and you take over?" So that's something I would like to do at some point this summer.

Otherwise, I'm just looking at your list here, and my boss is always welcome to attend them. She has, you know, 30-plus years of knowledge in aquatics more than I do. So she's always welcome.

And then, I actually don't take care of the maintenance side and the chemical side of stuff. So we do, it's our recreation superintendent. He takes care of all of the maintenance and the chemicals and the pumps and that type of stuff. So he comes in at orientation night as well, and he just explains, you know, what to do if there's poop in the pool, you know, those types of protocols. He just kind of explains, you know, shocking the pool and very layman's terms, you know, kind of what to be looking for if, when to call them if it's cloudy, you know. So he just explains stuff, in not in-depth at all, but he goes over some of that stuff.

Trying to think. Otherwise, we bring in a couple, one of my managers, her mom actually, is a babysitter. She has an in-home daycare. So a couple times a summer we actually

bring in kids, and we actually backboard kids because they're a lot different than backboarding adults, and with like the strap placement and stuff. So we do that as well. I think that, as far as I can really think, that's about it for outside people.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Wonderful.

The backboarding kids, that's something new that, you know, I wouldn't have thought about. You're right. Backboarding a child is definitely going to be very different than an adult. And, that's how we learn, we learn on adults. Because obviously, we learn on everybody else that's in the class with us. So, interesting. I like that.

So what aquatic content do you implement during your staff training? You know you kind of hit on a few things. Do you have like a set list that you cover, or how do you know that you're covering all your bases?

**Participant**

Yep. So at boot camp, we have, I go through and make sure I have a checklist for every employee, that they have to have everything to get recertified, whether they need recertification or not, everybody, since we don't have an indoor pool, everybody needs skills refreshers on everything. So everybody has to have all of those skills done before we open as long as they attended boot camp. Otherwise, they don't get on a chair until all of those skills are checked off, or that type of thing.

And then throughout the summer, a lot of it is I have stuff that you know, I want to, I want everybody to go down to get the brick at least every other week at the bottom of the pool. I have — we try and do backboarding probably once a week, or if not, every other week, you know, and then otherwise it's a lot of stuff that is, we see throughout the day. So we go over whistle training, how to properly blow your whistle, if we notice that day that kids are just, it's not making sense, you know, a long whistle, versus a short whistle. And then, you know, if we have some complaints from parents about, "Oh, these kids, you know, slide rules, they're not, this guard let my kid go down, but not this one."

A lot of the stuff in the summer ones I would say probably about 75 percent of them are based upon what we think, or what is brought to our attention, and what we notice that need guards, that need paying attention to.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Participant**

But otherwise, you know, it is, I do have a thing that, you know, backboarding at least every employee needs to have backboarded, I think I have it scheduled like three times every single month, every person needs to backboard. So then it's up to the managers as

to what they want to work on for that day, but they have to look at the list of stuff that we do, like the backboarding list, and say, “Ok, and who’s working that day?” And they have to kind of, that’s their whole deal is. I tell them what I want them to work on, and they get to figure it out.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful.

So for that checklist at the beginning of the summer, did you just make up that checklist? How did you come up with that checklist?

**Participant**

I just went through, we do Red Cross for certifications, so I just went through the Red Cross, the recertification portion of it, which says all their skills that they need to be checked off on including entries and approaches, all of the saves, the different types of saves, all their water skills, their, you know, they all have to get the brick at the beginning, tread water, they all have to do the pre-course again, and then all of the videos. I only do, at the top of the checklist, I only do videos as, I do life guarding videos, because obviously, a person’s not going to just watch one life guarding video. If they’re coming, they’re going to come and watch all the videos. So then I have videos up there, and then I also have if it’s a written test, like the life guarding written test for the actual ones who need recertification, that checklist is up there. Then if they don’t actually need recertified, then I just like black out that little box so that we know they don’t need it.

**Interviewer**

Ok.

**Participant**

Then we also do that with, because we do water parks certification with all of our guards as well, because a couple of our slides, when we got — I think it has something to do with like our insurance — and also the city attorney. They highly recommend us to have water park certification. So we go through all of those videos and then the skills as well, so then that’s on the top of the list as well, but that doesn’t necessarily get covered at boot camp because we don’t have zero depth at the high school.

**Interviewer**

Oh, ok. Gotcha. Gotcha. And so and then when, throughout the summer it’s just the things that are brought to your attention. Do you sit down in a meeting with your managers, or how do you come up with that list?

**Participant**

Yep. Yep. When we sit down, a lot of times, we have time sheets. We’re kind of old fashioned, we have written time sheets, so and then, at the bottom of it, the manager at the end of the night will write down, “Worked on this today because — and then would

like, need attention at this tomorrow.” If there’s something pressing. Otherwise they’re good about, a lot of times, I like to have both, I only have two pool managers, so one opens and then stays until about 2:30 or 3 and the other one comes in for huddles, so right at like 12, and then stays till close. So that way they’re both there at huddles. They can run two different groups on the same thing. So then, they a lot of times talk it over with what huddle they’re wanting to run and that type of thing.

So I guess, and I meet with my managers once a week, at least, just in a formal setting, once a week. We usually, it’s usually after, it’s either early in the morning at like 7 o’clock for breakfast, or we go after swim lessons at like 8 o’clock at night. And then, but otherwise, I’m at the pool like every single day. I try to be there for, I would say, 90 percent of the huddles. I try to be there for. And, it’s easier for me, too, because I teach aquasize at 11 to noon, and then I’m still there at 12:15 and I like to be there especially right away at the opening, just in case if things happen. You know it always happens right away when we’re trying to open, and get in, you know, a couple hundred people through the door at a time.

**Interviewer**

Right. Right. Wonderful. Great.

What certifications do you require for your employees to have when they, you know, come join your team, and then do you require just the Red Cross or can they have others as well?

**Participant**

The only recertification they have to have in order to even be thought of as an employee would be your life guarding one. We do highly recommend having your WSI, but it’s not needed, to have your WSI. Then, my managers, I don’t require anything else, except for they do have to have their WSI to be a manager, and their life guarding. Then, otherwise, I am the only employee that has my life guarding instructor certification, and then I’m also in the fall, I’m also going to be getting my water safety instructor teaching certification. So I have to go to an academy at the Red Cross for that, to get that. So that way I can teach a WSI class, so that way, and that’s what we normally do. For our staff is, we teach a WSI class for participants that I want to see them as an instructor for me. I don’t open it up, we don’t open up any of our certification classes to the public. They’re all our internal staff only. And then, I pretty much handpick my instructors for who I think is going to be a good one, who has been a good aide in the past, that type of thing.

Otherwise, Red Cross is just more well-known around here. I haven’t had anybody come to me without a Red Cross certification yet. I do know a couple of years ago, we had one that was through the YMCA, I think it was. Star maybe? I don’t know necessarily the certification on it. The name of it. But, that was fine. We had her. It was just when she needed to get recertified, that we told her you either need to find a recertification class for your certification, otherwise you need to go through the entire Red Cross class again

because you can't, I can't obviously recertify a person in Red Cross that isn't Red Cross originally.

**Interviewer**

Right. Right. Ok. Wonderful.

So, do you, you say that you retrain for your recertifications, and do you hold that retraining process every year, or do you just kind of look at your employees to see who needs it, or can you go into a little bit of detail on that point?

**Participant**

Ya definitely. We do hold it every single year and then, basically, everybody in a sense I guess, would get recertified every single year. It's just not necessarily through Red Cross certification. Like you know, the physical recertification, because every single fall — or every single spring, everybody has to watch the life guarding videos again. Everybody has to watch the CPR and first aid videos again, whether you were just recertified last year, and then everybody has to do all of the boot camp skills as well. The only difference is if you actually need to get recertified this year, is that you have to take the written test, and you have to pass the final skills test, which, actually, everybody passes the final skills test. So it's the written test, that is the big thing. That is the only difference between guards who currently need, who currently have a certification that doesn't need recertified and ones who do need recertified this year, but otherwise everybody, I guess would get recertified, except for in the written test.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful.

So how do you evaluate that your employees are competent in the required skills? So you have that checklist at the beginning of the summer that you went through everything. How do you know throughout the summer that they stay competent? Or that they're competent at the beginning, you know?

**Participant**

Ya. I guess when I do my, when we do boot camp, it's me, and then we have another, she, another highly trained aquatics person but only just does a couple swim lessons for us. It's her and then my two pool managers and then I have two other lead guards, I guess you would call them that basically. If my pool managers are gone, they're going to be the managers. So then, there are six or seven of us there at boot camp, and I'm usually just walking around, and then they take a group of seven to 10 kids and they all, so then they focus on that group of kids for all of the skills, and I'm just usually walking around, making sure everybody's doing stuff right.

I guess it's just kind of, you know, what they feel is comfortable with. I am comfortable with all of their skills; so I feel like they know what they're looking for; they know what

to point out to all of the guards. If they need to change something up, if they're not doing something right, otherwise it just comes back to the Red Cross proficient, versus non-proficient. Can they do the skill? Can they not do the skill? That's kind of, I guess what it comes down to.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful.

I had a follow-up question and I completely lost it. Sorry.

**Participant**

If you think of it, let me know.

**Interviewer**

We'll come back to that, if I can think of it.

If your employees were to take the recertification test tomorrow, so you get them all together and they take it tomorrow, or at the very end of the season, do you feel that they would be ready for it?

**Participant**

Yes. I feel like, you know, the water skills may be a little bit of a challenge just because they haven't done — A lot of them don't guard at the YMCA, and I would say. I might have two that guard out of there out of my 50-some guards. So a lot of them, it's only in the summer. Which is why it's super important for me to get them in to watch the videos and do all of that, the water skills before we open the pool again. Because I know for a fact that they're going to be rusty on their skills, but I don't think that they would necessarily completely fail, but I think that there's definitely going to be, you know, "Remember, we have to do this. You know, remember with your front rescue you have to have straight arms." It's minor things like that, that they need to be reinforced in their head because they don't guard year-round. I think that's a big — I see that more often than not. That's a bigger thing that they struggle with is because they don't have practice with all year-round. It's only three months out of the year.

**Interviewer**

Yep. Great.

And I remembered the question. So, going back to checking to see if your guards are competent in the skills, if there was to be a guard that isn't competent, when you go through that boot camp, how do you make sure that they're on the same track, on that page? At the end of the boot camp everybody obviously goes home, and maybe Suzy or Billy isn't just quite up to par how do you get them onto par?

### **Participant**

So a couple things that we do is, we kind of have them just keep practicing their skills in the water. Then, we tried it last year how, you know, we did different stations, and they were timed, you know, you only had five minutes to do front rescues, five minutes — there was no practicing, there was nothing. It was all just testing out, because the guards wanted it to be quicker. So, we tried that, and we checked off people as they were proficient, and then the non-proficient ones, we would ask to stay after for just a little bit more practice. That didn't work out at all. So, we are going back to it this year how basically we are not going to be timing. They are only going to have five minutes to this, five minutes to do this, five minutes to do this, except for obviously the timed events that need to happen.

But I think it's a lot of just making sure, too that, we have to feel comfortable in talking to that employee. I know my managers, not necessarily are as comfortable talking to them as, saying, "Hey I'm not as comfortable with your skills." So that usually, they usually will tell me and then I'll be the one that relays it to them, and we have, we rent out the high school pool for our swim lessons, our spring swim lessons as well. And, a lot of times I'm thinking, too, with that, since our, we still have a week after, a couple weeks after boot camp, I think that would be a good time for them to get in the water again if they weren't as competent.

Otherwise basically, with it is, we have, our high school program is amazing with their Red Cross, it's, you know it's a semester-long course. So they, we actually get I would say probably 15 guards out of them a year, and they're the ones I am least worried about with their skills because they practice it five days a week, for how many weeks long? It's the ones that are in your weekend classes because there's so much information crammed your head, and you have very little time to practice. So I think it's just a bunch, it's a lot of just knowing just how to approach it with the employee, to not make them feel like they suck, 'cause they don't. It's just not necessarily up to our standards. And, that's what I always tell them, especially with the — so the life guarding pre-course session and then I also have a like a Rosedale Rapids pre-skills test that they have to take for me as well, which is swimming your 300-yards in under 10 minutes, and then also getting the brick at the bottom of the pool, which our pool is 13½ feet. Because I always tell them, I'm like, "I don't care if you can swim 8, 9, 10 feet. I care if you can swim 13½ feet down to the bottom."

A lot of times, it's just being at, you know, "You're doing good, but your skills, just, I'm not ready to put you on the chair." I think it's a lot of how you word it to the kids. "I'm not ready to put you on the chair yet, but practice, practice, practice, and we can definitely re-evaluate it later."

So, I guess, going back to your original question, sorry to ramble on there.



**Interviewer**

No. That's great. It's fine.

**Participant**

So I guess just how you would go about it is, we haven't ran into that problem yet. But, I would definitely not put them on the chair until I was ready. That's for sure.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful.

So you mentioned that they — So does your high school offer a semester-long course in life guarding?

**Participant**

Yes. It's really good. The teacher, well they do trimesters. So, it's just a one trimester thing. But the instructor, the teacher, he's great. He does it, basically if you don't pass it as a life guarding course you just get PE credit for it, so it's also a PE credit class that the kids can take it for and like if they come out of that class, they are very, very skilled lifeguards. I do not have to worry about. So that's nice.

**Interviewer**

That's a good program.

**Participant**

Yes. It is.

**Interviewer**

My final question to you is, what can the Red Cross, or any other certifying organization do to help you as a manager?

**Participant**

I guess a big thing is, and I understand that because obviously you're aware that all of the life guarding updates that happened. So I guess it's just that their timing of just rolling out stuff. It's hard because, you know, but then again, ya if you're an indoor facility, you can't roll it out at a good time. But it would also be nice, you know, the blended learning classes. I don't teach a lot of all these classes because I only do recertification programs, but if we would ever have an indoor pool, I would love to start teaching classes, so then it's also, I think, all their material just needs to come out at one time. You know, like the blended learning classes, you can't even start teaching the new material until sometime in April, but yet you have to start teaching the new material, if you are updated back in January. So I think that's hard, too.

Because now, also is, I am, you know, I'm in the process this year with the new update, is I am technically Red Cross site updating only half of my employees, the ones who

actually need recertified, but all of the other ones will have all of the updated material as well to keep everybody on the same page, with, you know, the extrication, and, the new rescues, and so I think that's just hard, you know. A lot of it is asking, you know, I don't know as why, I don't know. But I don't know necessarily what I'm trying to say here.

But it would be easier I guess if all the materials came out at the same time and if there were deadlines, because I do know that our YMCA — they're not the YMCA now they're The Rec now — but they're teaching the old material. And that's where I get the other half of my lifeguards. My new ones. So, then, you know, they're just learning that material, but then I'm telling them that their material wrong because I'm having all my kids do all the new ones, so that's hard for me especially to try and, cause then it's like “Ok, well I need you guys to come in and do some different videos, we need to go over different wording.” Because, you know, they hadn't learned “extrication” in the old material but now “extrication” is used in the new material. So it's all the different wording things, too. So that's a big thing that's kind of I'm learning is a struggle for me right now, is just trying to figure out a good balance of ok, when do I need to be doing this? Should we have, well, I can't teach any of the old material now. I can only teach the updated material. So I guess that's a big thing that they could help. I don't know, and maybe I don't know, but ya. I'm talking me, it's me as one person, and they have how many thousands of people that certify LGIs, that certify life guards. They're worried about, they're not worried about just one like me.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Ya. So when you said deadlines, do you mean deadlines for everybody to be on the new material?

**Participant**

Ya. Ya. Because right now you can still teach the old material until, I think it's like July 30th or 31st, or maybe it's June 30. But you can still teach it throughout the summer, so that's the hard part, is ya, some of my guards are literally getting recertified in two weeks, and they're going to be learning the old material, when the new material came out in January.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Participant**

Otherwise, and I know they're updating it, is their managers' workshop, I think that's what they call it, or they have a manager training on Red Cross for aquatics. I know they're updating it, which is good, because it needs to be updated. That wasn't a good one. I don't have my managers take that course. I don't know if I should, or not, but, I went through it once, and I was like, no, I'm not going to pay to have my life — to have my managers take this course.

Otherwise, I don't necessarily know anything else they can do to help us. I don't know.

**Interviewer**

That's fine. That's fine. Well you know, that's all the questions I had. Do you have anything else that you think would add to the content of this interview, anything just kind of out there?

**Participant**

Not that I can really think of I think I kind of covered quite a bit of it.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful, wonderful. Well again, thank you so much for taking the time.

(Tape ends)

Transcript of interview on March 15, 2017 between Primary Investigator and Participant from Pine Ridge College

**Interviewer**

Into the questions. So, again, thank you for taking the time to meet with me today, and we'll just start right off with, will you just tell me a little bit about your job, your background, and your job responsibilities and your background pertaining to your aquatics background?

**Participant**

Do you want to know like background as far as like degree and all that great stuff, or just in particular, Ok?

**Interviewer**

Ya

**Participant**

Ok. I am a 2004 graduate of Pine Ridge College. I graduated with a public relations degree, and played softball while I was here, was involved with a few different organizations as a student. Took an interest in planning and all of that sorts of stuff with my public relations degree. You know, I never thought I would be planning and running a pool or anything of that nature, but recreation and sport was always something that was of great interest to me.

After I graduated, I decided I would — about a year after I graduated with my undergrad I took some classes down at UNI and in the Health, Youth and Leisure Services field. And, at that time, Pine Ridge College was thinking about putting The W plan in place. Like, we needed bigger facilities for our athletic teams, you know, the community of Waverly was growing. There was a need for a wellness center. And, it came to, that the city could never get anything passed themselves, so it was a joint effort between the college and the community to build The W. So, you know, with that, you know in mind, a pool was something that the community felt really strongly about that they wanted to build. So I took and even greater interest in making sure that I had all of the, you know, life guarding, CPR, WSI certifications and all of that great stuff in hopes that, you know, I would get an opportunity to interview for the position. And, I did, and I've been here, for going on nine years now.

So, I basically, you know, have been here from the start in my position in the aquatics, you know, so I wrote all of the employment manuals for my employees, you know, the learn-to-swim program, certification courses, and all of that stuff. I was able to be a part of, so I mean I'm really fortunate that I was able to, you know, kind of come up and develop that within myself and really have been able to make it my own here the past nine years.

The program has really expanded. The W actually took over all of the recreation programming from the city. That was in part of the agreement. We would take on all of the swimming lessons. Those would be inside, you know. We've expanded to having our own swim club. Inside, it's very much a recreation program, it's not a competitive, of that nature. We run triathlon courses in the pool. We have our aqua classes, you know, several life guarding courses. Really, about anything that you can think of in the pool, we're doing it here. And, you know, it kind of runs through me.

**Interviewer**

Wow.

**Participant**

And my job has really evolved since I started, you know. I started and it was just solely aquatics. I only ever had to worry about the pool. Well, now, you know, with the way colleges and universities are running, it's like, you know, cutting things here and cutting things there. Well Pine Ridge College, you know, we didn't want to ever cut anything, it was just, "Hey some positions maybe people left, and we're not replacing. We're just going to add to your job."

So, I am actually the facilities director as well. So, not only do I coordinate the Natatorium, but I schedule our whole entire facility from our field house schedule, our center court — I don't plan the recreational programming, but I find spaces for them to hold their programming. Same with our group fitness classes, special events that we run here. We host a lot of proms, birthday parties — I mean we just had a couple groups in this week. It's spring break, so daycares wanted to bring their kids in, you know, for a couple hours to get them out of the daycare, to give them something to do.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Right.

**Participant**

And then I help a little bit with scheduling on the athletic side when high school events want to come here. I'll coordinate with either the coaches or the athletic directors, you know, dates and times that they could, you know, rent out our space to use for their competitions. So, over the course of the nine years, I mean, my position has definitely evolved and become — One of the race directors for our triathlon that we put on in May, and that's a huge event, obviously. It's year-long planning, you know, from, you know, marketing to coordination of volunteers and making sure, you know, we have all of our sanctioning stuff in and all of that. And then I am also, this past year, was put in charge of putting on our unified sports day through Special Olympics Iowa and working with our Student Athlete Advisory Committee. So, I feel like I have my hand in a lot of different things. And, aquatics has really become like almost a quarter of my job, you know. It used to be full time and time it's not so much any more, but, you know.

**Interviewer**

You've turned into a jack of all trades.

**Participant**

Jack of all trades, kind of. You know, there's only a few things that I would be like, "Hmmm. Yep, I'm not, I can't get that taken care of." You know, maybe for the day if I need to step in and do something, I can but, not long term, so ya.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful. Wonderful.

So, looking more specifically at your aquatics personnel, and the aquatics side of Pine Ridge College, can you explain your aquatics staff training? You know, how often you hold your training for your life guards, the attendance, and then we'll go into the content a little bit later.

**Participant**

Ok. You know, we're a unique situation that I employ both college students, and this is specifically the academic year I'm talking about, so September to May, college students and community, mainly high school employees, during September through May. Typically, how our calendar year goes is when Pine Ridge College — we don't start classes until September, but we'll have our all-staff trainings for a few different days. You know, I'll bring my new staff in on completely different times than my returning staff to, you know, go over, you know, changes, policies, procedures, you know, skill review, and work those groups separately. Just because the kids that have been here and worked for me, you know, I know their skills. You know, it's more of like a refresher, "Hey, welcome back to Pine Ridge College, you know, we're here for another year."

New employees, it's a more vigorous, you know, training to get them up to speed with our facility and how, you know, I want them to go about policies and procedures. So that's about, you know, the first week or two of May. I also, in the fall require each of my employees, regardless if they've been here forever, or if they're just new to the job, they have to participate in a skill review session. And, we do that in conjunction with our front desk. It's mainly to cover, like our emergency action plan, and how like the life guard staff works with the front desk staff, and that's usually a three-hour training where we review CPR, 'cause both staffs need to be CPR-trained, and then the life guarding to go through our rescues and our saves and backboarding and, you know, what role our front desk staff plays in an emergency situation. So, everyone on staff has to sign up for one of the days that we designated to do that in order to I guess get checked off to be able to, you know, to work in our facility. And then from there it goes to monthly training.

So we'll have an in-service every month. October, November, December, and then in January, we'll come back and we'll have a bigger, you know, in-service just with the Christmas break to, you know, kind of everybody's brains get them back on working in

the facility. And then we'll go January through May, and then, at the end of May, we will start training for our summer staff.

And my summer staff, I'm fortunate that the outdoor pool manager and I, we work closely together. This is our third year that we do a joint staff, so instead of, you know, me trying to hire, to cover for the indoor and him trying to cover for the outdoor, we just have one staff and they're trained at both facilities, and they get scheduled, you know, either indoors or outdoors. You know, some in one area more than the other. And then, we do again, you know, kind of like we do at the beginning of the academic year, a more extensive, you know, multiple sessions of orientation in-water stuff, classroom review, policies and procedures. The nice thing is a lot of the kids that work for me, high school-wise, that work at the outdoor pool, work for me during the academic year, so it's a lot of review for indoor training, and then more intense on the outdoor. So that works out nice that these kids aren't just life guarding June, July and August and then forgetting about, you know, all of their skills. They're constantly, you know, trained throughout the year. That way when it's back in the summer, it's like, ok, "You know, Pine Ridge College, we understand that, it's just remember all the, you know, points of the outdoor pool."

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Participant**

So that's been a positive, you know, for a staffing standpoint. And then, we have, you know, depending on the year, anywhere from three to six college kids that stay around to life guard. So ya.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful.

So you have a big orientation, you know, come September for new employees, and then kind of refresher for the returning employees and then monthly throughout the school year. And then you have a bigger one in January to get everybody back from the holidays, and then continue that monthly. And then in May, you do kind of a bigger one for the outdoor training as well and to bring in those summer hires?

**Participant**

Correct. And then in the summer, we meet more frequently as well. I failed to mention that. We'll go instead of monthly in-services, just 'cause these kids are working on, you know, a more regular basis. Typically my employees, they're working anywhere from four to eight hours a week. You know, some are less than that, depending, if they're involved in stuff or not. But in the summer, we're, you know, take out the beginning of the year orientations, you know, we're meeting anywhere from two to four times, you know, right away in May to kind of get everybody geared up for the summer, and then

we're meeting every two weeks, we have in-services. And we'll alternate between the outdoor pool and the indoor pool, with our training schedule.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful.

And then the, the lifeguards rotate, they're on a rotating schedule between the outdoor and the indoor pool throughout the entire summer?

**Participant**

Correct.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful. Great.

So with your staff trainings are these all paid staff trainings, both for the participants and for the managers?

**Participant**

Correct. We require, since we make our trainings mandatory, we do pay them. I mean, so, you know, we're spending a significant amount of money to train our employees, but we're also, you know, the biggest liability here at Pine Ridge College is the pool, I mean by far. I mean, you know, the pool is a huge liability, and there is a lot of risk involved, you know. We've just made that commitment that all of our trainings are going to be paid. Now, when they go to have to be recertified, you know, life guarding expires every two years. They need to get recerted; we do not pay for that training. You know, if you want to work here, you have to have a valid, you know CPR/life guarding, you need to pay for that. We do however offer it at a discounted rate. Like we don't make them pay, you know, say our life guarding review course costs \$95, they're paying \$35. So, we're at least just covering the cost of what, you know, the Red Cross is billing us for that piece of paper. But we do, you know, they cover that and then essentially, you know, I'm hiring either, you know, I'm conducting the class myself or one of my LGIs is getting paid to administer the review courses.

**Interviewer**

Right. Ok. Wonderful. Wonderful.

And how does, how does making, giving them a paid training or that reduced rate, how does that make a difference in attendance for your trainings?

**Participant**

You know, I don't know. We've never done it any other way.



**Interviewer**

Ok.

**Participant**

We've always paid our employees to attend staff training. You know, I can see if we weren't, they wouldn't show up, but then I'd also have — I mean I have, if you miss, you still have to make it up, you know, so typically, my, you know, students ask throughout the academic year — we meet on Thursday nights. Well, I have some kids that have conflicts. They have night class, you know, my high schoolers, "Hey, you know, I have a basketball game." You know, and if they miss I do require 'em to then make it up, and then they're still paid for their time. So, you know, I guess I could go to the, "You're not getting paid any more." But we've never gone down that road.

**Interviewer**

Right. Right. Ok

So when you hold your trainings, what other organizations are invited to participate, if any, such as, you know, EMS, city attorney, your bosses, so on and so forth?

**Participant**

Yep. We in the summer every year, we do a joint in-service with the ambulance at the outdoor pool. Indoors, we've typically, that they have been here, is usually every other. But every year the ambulance crew or the main head of the EMS department will be in contact, just to, you know, come to the facility, and, you know, just a reminder these are the things that we're, you know, going to do for you, you know, as far as, you know. We're never going to get in the water, you know. You need to get them out, and then we'll take it from there.

My boss, she frequently comes, you know, at the beginning of September, in January and then aside from that as needed. I mean, you know, there's some times she may pop in if it's like, you know, if we've had any situations, or, you know, different things that maybe she wants to talk about. But rarely I mean is she there all the time. She puts it on me that I'm doing what I need to do and this is my area of expertise so she kind of lets me go with that.

And then we do, we had this in the fall, a joint with all of our staff members. We met upstairs in our classroom and then reviewed, you know, policies, procedures, bloodborne pathogens, all of that, with, you know, group fitness, personal training, climbing wall, fitness area staff, life guards, welcome desk. We'll typically do that training about once a year, that all of the professional-staff members are a part of.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful.

So what aquatic content do you implement during your staff training? You kind of touched on it a little bit there, but when you are doing those, you know, monthly in-services, what do you implement during those?

**Participant**

You know, in the fall, September, those are the lengthy ones, so we'll review backboarding and the saves and escapes, and CPR, we'll hit everything. And then monthly, it's just, we'll pick a few topics, you know, to talk about each time. I always like to get them in the water and do some sort of backboarding each time. Just, you know, because it's like anything, if you don't practice, you know. We're not backboarding on a regular basis. Which is a good, you know, a good thing, then we're doing our job, and we're making sure our patrons are safe. We'll, every in-service we'll get in and we'll do some type of swimming and then, backboarding.

Now that the Red Cross has changed life guarding, that came out, you know, in January of this year, we've really been working through all of the changes. So each month, you know, in January we really reviewed, Ok, the new backboarding technique. February we did backboarding and escapes, actually we that sorry, that was in February. We did all of that stuff. The new backboarding, escapes. March, here last week we went over, you know, the new unconscious choking and just kind of the changes that the Red Cross has implemented. And just by the end of the May, we're going through the checklist of, you know, 11 changes, we'll have all of those covered within the semester.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful.

And so, go ahead—

**Participant**

And then — we'll review, you know, one month it's like some people forget how to test. You know, how do you not know how to read a test kit? But, you know, some people they forget, or they don't like to test. So we make everybody go through that. Or cleaning, I mean. Kind of some other auxiliary type stuff, I guess. And then once in a while I'll, we'll put like a little game together just so it's not like, "Oh god, I gotta got to in-service training again and be bored to death." You know they understand it, but it's also like, "Oh my god, like this is the fourth year I've gone through this." You get some of that. And I get it, you know, it's like I'm a broken record sometimes. You know, but —

**Interviewer**

You gotta do what you gotta do.

**Participant**

Exactly. Exactly.

**Interviewer**

So, when you come up with your, the things that you're going to work on month to month, is that just something that you come up with as the manager, or do you kind of bring in your team of head guards to talk about this stuff, or how does that come about?

**Participant**

Well, my managers, we meet bi-weekly, so twice a month we're meeting outside of our manager meeting just to discuss, you know, any issues with some guards or, you know, situations that have come up. I've actually had some life guards email me and be like, "Hey, you know, can we practice if something happens by the hot tub, what do we do, you know like, I don't remember." Or, you know, so then like we'll cover topics sometimes the managers are like, "We really need to cover this. Like this has been an issue." You know, and we'll kind of like come up with ideas together, or if they don't really have ideas, I think of, "Hey, what can we do?"

**Interviewer**

Ok. So what certifications do you require for an employee to work at your facility? And do you require a specific certifying organization?

**Participant**

Everybody has to be lifeguard, first aid and CPR certified. I mean, if you don't have that and you apply for a job, I'm not hiring you. I'm not going to pay people to get certified to work for me because we have an abundance of people that are already certified that want to work. Typically, I just hire Red Cross certified, because that's, you know, what the majority of people have, have had. I've had a couple Boy Scout certifications over the years, and I've had a couple Ellis & Associates, and I've let them work for me. I just make sure that they know specifically how, you know, how we're going to backboard at this facility, and aside from that most of the stuff is relatively the same.

**Interviewer**

And to make sure that they're, they work fluidly with the guards who are Red Cross certified, do you hold a special training or do you just emphasize during your training what's different or how does that work to make sure that they're all on the same page?

**Participant**

That'll be mainly if somebody at the beginning of the year is coming in with a different certification, through those skill-review sessions, we go through. Honestly, it's been probably six years since I've had someone with a different, other organization, and it was a Boy Scout. And there were just a couple, of you know, the holds, that they did different, was like the backboarding. But, I mean the differences, you know, they're not that major.

**Interviewer**

And then, you know, you kind of talked a little bit about retraining for certifications, how, when they need to get recertified every two years, they can go and do that. Is there anything that you do at your facility to help retrain the students? You mentioned in May, you kind of run through everything, do you pull out the life guarding book and just do all of it or how does that work?

**Participant**

You know, in the fall, those employees that are coming to me that are new, mainly the college students that are coming from different facilities there have been times that we've, you know. They go through, I guess you could call it an interview process, to see if we want to hire them. Like we make them go through a pre-employment checklist, you know, their backboarding skill, it's kind of, you know, kind of a test. Like I make them take the life guarding test. I make them take the, you know, just go through, "Hey show me how you would backboard." And we don't really help them at all at that point in time. We want to see what they know. From that, there's been a couple people that were like — errrr — their skills aren't that great, but we think they could get it with some additional training. If that's the case, then we'll say, "Hey, you need to come in again and review you know, this." If we feel like one, you know, we need extra staff, or two, you know, maybe they didn't lifeguard that summer, or they've come from facilities and they're like, "We never review any of this." And that's scary. I'm like, "How do you work all summer and never have an in-service?" But Ok. But, I mean, I've heard it all. So, like Ok. Great. You know, so then I will be like, "You're not working until we feel, my managers and I feel like you, you know, are up to speed and to the competency of the rest of our staff."

**Interviewer**

Gotcha. And then you said you do a pre-employment checklist. Where does that checklist come from? Did you just make it up? How did you get that checklist?

**Participant**

It was one that I borrowed from another aquatics friend. It was somebody down at UNI, to be honest, nine years ago, and from there, you know, just kind of have tweaked. The Red Cross, you know, on Instructor's Corner, I don't know, if you are— Are you Red Cross certified?

**Interviewer**

Yes. Yes.

**Participant**

I mean, they have some ideas on there. I'll go on there every once in a while if it's like, "Hey, what can we do?" You know, with workshops, you know that the Iowa Park and Rec Association puts on, typically in May that they run different aquatic seminars. I haven't specifically been able to go, but our outdoor pool manager, he's sent his

managers, you know, and they'll come back with ideas like, "Oh we did this, or another facility does this." So it's kind of like, the borrow, you know, get ideas from other facilities. And I'll even ask my managers, "Hey what do you do at an in-service to practice this?" Or, you know. I feel like throughout a year, I kind of have a set schedule as far as this is when we're going to meet and kind of the things we need to cover, but it's really not the same year-to-year because it just really depends on the content, you know, the bones, is the same, but sometimes we're adding in based on, you know, where my staff is at, ya. If that makes sense.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Totally.

So how do you evaluate that your employees are competent in the required skills?

**Participant**

And that's where that pre-employment test right away when they start their freshman year or whenever they start as a high schooler, we go through that. We're very fortunate at Pine Ridge College, that any new high school student that we hire, they've been certified for us. So that's a huge comfort, because one, I'm hiring the LGIs to teach the life guarding classes, so I know like, yep, you've been certified, you know, I know that they're not just going to pass you to pass you. Where there's some maybe first year Pine Ridge College students that come in and I'm like, you know, looking at some of their skills like, "How did you get certified? Like, who certified you?" You know. And, then, that's where we need to spend a little bit more time. But I always feel confident if I'm hiring, you know, high schoolers, we're hiring high schoolers at the outdoor pool that they've been, 90 percent of them have been have been certified by Pine Ridge College, that they know their stuff. And that my LGIs went through a thorough job, you know, in complying to the Red Cross standard.

**Interviewer**

Lovely.

So, if your employees were to take the recertification test tomorrow, do you feel that they would be able to pass it?

**Participant**

I feel that they do. You know and once in a while I honestly will throw in there, "Hey we're going to take the life guard test tonight." And they're always like, "Oh. Great." You know, that test.

But that's where, you know, really looking through the recertification, you know, this is what you cover in that 13-hour recert, we really try to work off that throughout the whole year. So each in-service, you know, we're not always covering every thing, but bits and pieces from all of it. You know we've had some special cases here. Like we have a girl

that's in our swim club that is, she's epileptic. So we know, like, "Hey, we could have a seizure." And she actually did, like a month ago, in the pool, during swimming lessons, like. But it was one of those, you know, like, you can talk about all of this stuff, but then until you have to do it, it's like, "Oh my god. This is how it goes."

You know, so we do have, you know, we have a very elderly population that uses the facility, not only, you know, the track, but there's a fair amount that come in and, you know, swim and walk in our vortex, you know. So we talk about, you know, the aging population, you know, as well. If we do have special circumstances like, you know, the gal that's prone to seizures, you know, we do talk about that like this could happen very easily, you know, and the one day it did. And so, you know, we just kind of dealt with it, did what we needed to do and Ok, you know.

**Interviewer**

Right. Right. Wonderful.

So, my final question for you, and then anything you might want to add to the interview is, what can the Red Cross, or any other certifying organization do to help you as a manager?

**Participant**

What could the Red Cross do to help me?

**Interviewer**

Um-hmm.

**Participant**

Well, they could make it not impossible to get WSIT certified. Do you have your WSIT?

**Interviewer**

No. We are in the same boat there.

**Participant**

Oh my god. That's been one of the frustrating — I mean the gal at the Red Cross probably hates anytime that she has to talk to me. But they've made it about impossible. But I'm like, "You want people to teach Red Cross swimming lessons, like let's not make it impossible to get someone certified to do this."

But, I don't know. I feel for the most part, if I need the aquatics, Cindy, to do anything for me, she's good about, you know, doing what she needs to do. And I feel I have a good relationship with Jim Hall down at UNI. He helps me out when I need LGIs certified. So, you know, it's just like with any job, it's just kind of get to know people that can help, you know, help you when you need help. It's saved me from having to go get WSIT certified, LGIT certified, just with the way my job's structured now. It's about impossible

to be able to be away, you know, to be away to take care of that, you know. Because I'm also CPO certified, you know. I'm one of the four CPOs here. And I like to have my lifeguards, if they are WSI certified, you know, I like them to be WSI-certified, and for the most part, everyone that teaches my swimming lessons, they are. But I have a couple that are not. They've just, you know, they have a good swimming background, they've swam all throughout. You know, we've just kind of run them just like mini-WSI session with them, with, "Hey, these are the levels you're going to teach." You know. "Ok, you're good to go."

And, fortunately every year, I have kids that want to get LGI certified 'cause I spin it, "Hey, you go home in the summer you can make extra money and certify your staff." And a lot of my teachers will do, teacher-employees, you know, once they graduate and they're going to teach, "What are you going to do during the summer? Ya, maybe you don't want to be a lifeguard all your summers, but why don't you be the person that certifies whatever community you're in?" "Oh, Ok."

So, that's been nice. My biggest hurdle has just been the whole WSI piece. Like I have people that want to get WSI certified, but, you know, I need someone that can teach the course. I'm not that person. You know the WSITs that I've been able to find, their availability is SO slim, and, you know, the number of hours that it takes to instruct a WSI course, you know, just like the life guarding, takes time. You know, the life guard recert 13 hours. Oh boy. You know, it's just like — Let's not make it impossible. I get it, too. There's obviously a reason it's changed to what it is. And there's people out there that don't, LGIs that don't instruct how they should either, so. That's scary as well, so.

**Interviewer**

Definitely.

Well. Those are all the questions that I had for you. Do you have anything else that you might want to add to the content of this interview?

**Participant**

I don't think so. 'Cause basically what you're writing about training and development.

**Interviewer**

Aquatic managers' perception on staff training and development. So we're just looking, I'm looking at the content and, you know, basically, what's going on out there in northeast Iowa so

**Participant**

My take is, some are better than others, like with anything. And I think it gets hard, too with some of these smaller communities, like Tyler, for example, Smith, who runs the outdoor pool, he's not even a lifeguard anymore. He's not an LGI. Like, he's just the rec person running the pool. And I feel a lot of communities are that way.

We get area pools like Greene and Allison and Applington-Parkersburg. We get Sumner. There's kids coming here all the time to get recertified because they don't have, you know, the people that are running their pools, are not certified to do it.

**Interviewer**

Yep. Yep.

**Participant**

I mean, I think, you know, in our situation, we've created a great hub to be able to help these area communities and obviously it benefits our facility, you know. But I can see — and it's hard too, when you're only open for three months out of the year.

**Interviewer**

Right. Yes.

**Participant**

Pools are expensive.

**Interviewer**

Yes. They are.

**Participant**

Your certifications are expensive to keep. We're reviewing it all the time. I mean, and I always tell my kids, you guys are fortunate you're working throughout the whole year. You're going to go back home, and you're going to work for your pools and you're going to work with, you know three-fourths of a staff that haven't done anything since last summer. You know, and but I know don't know how you get around that. It kind of is what it is.

**Interviewer**

We just gotta do what we can.

(Tape ends)



Transcript of interview on March 24, 2017 between Primary Investigator and Participant from North Bay Shore Aquatic Center

**Interviewer**

Alright, wonderful. So we'll just dive right in to the first question. Will you tell me a little bit about your job, your background and your job responsibilities?

**Participant**

Sure. So I graduated from the University of Iowa, and majored in psychology and sociology. I worked at the Iowa City pools through college and a little bit after college, and I had lifeguarded at high school in Illinois before I came to college. And then I left Iowa, and went down to Kansas City, where I started as an aquatics assistant manager for Lifetime Fitness, and my manager left, and so I was promoted the aquatics manager for the club down there.

Basically, I mean, my responsibility is similar to, I mean, sorry similar to how they have it, you know, I'm responsible for training, hiring, the lifeguards, and swim instructors staff, pool managers staff, keeping the pools balanced, making sure that everything is in line, ordering for all of our supplies, chemicals, staff safety, supplies, all of that stuff, and then I create and train everybody as well for their position here. Normally people are usually lifeguard certified when they start, but we do, we do offer lifeguarding classes through our Rec center, and myself and I have lifeguard instructors who are pool managers teach those courses.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful.

So you've kind of been in the world of aquatics, you know, since high school?

**Participant**

Ya, for a long time.

**Interviewer**

That's great.

**Participant**

Definitely. I'm very passionate about swimming lessons. I absolutely love children and love teaching them a skill that — I've swam since I was very little. I swam competitively since I was in like second grade, and so that's definitely something that I really enjoy, and enjoy teaching my instructors in how to make their classes better. And so I never thought that this would be my career forever, but something that I love, mixed with having it as my everyday job is pretty fun.

**Interviewer**

Right. Wonderful. That's great.

Ok. So looking at your aquatics staff, so your lifeguards and your training, can you explain your staff training a little bit? How often, kind of the attendance, and then we'll go into the content just a little bit, later.

**Participant**

Ya. So we require lifeguards to attend a two-hour in-service from the month of August through April. Typically they have, during the school year, or school year, so like from September through April, they have two choices: usually a Sunday evening and a Monday evening in different weeks. In August, we keep kind of what our summer schedule is, we offer in-service every single Sunday for an hour and then two Fridays of the month we offer a two-hour in-service. So for June and July, we require four hours worth of in-services. They can choose if they want to do two two-hours, or, you know, four one-hours, or however they want to do it. I do not care, I just, at the end of the month make sure that they attend four hours.

And then in May, we have a pretty intensive summer training where we have two weeks: so a total of eight days. And, we offer a rules and policies night, one week on one day, and the next week on a different day. We offer CPR skills training one week and then the next week on a different day, lifeguard skills, and then we do a night that's solely dedicated to practicing our emergency action plan over and over and over again, for different scenarios.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Wonderful.

And for your aquatics facility, I'm assuming you have an indoor and an outdoor facility? What are your facilities like?

**Participant**

We do. We have an indoor pool that's open all-year-round, that's six lap lanes, has a diving board, a basketball hoop, and a zero-depth entry. And then outdoors, which you literally walk across the pool deck, out the double doors and then there's the outdoor pool, zero-depth entry, play structure, floatables, two water slides, a high dive, and a low dive, and a ropes course.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Wonderful. Wonderful.

So, with your staff trainings, are they paid? And so on both sides, for those going through the training and those facilitating it? And how does that make a difference in attendance?

**Participant**

They are. They're paid. I tell my staff to treat it like a scheduled shift, even though I don't schedule people for which in-service because I want to leave it open to what's available for their schedule that month. But I do tell them to treat it like a scheduled shift. And yes, they get paid for it.

My pool managers run it. I have one LGI at each one, and then usually one or two other pool managers to assist them, you know, make sure that everything's going well. For them, I do assign, like who runs the in-services to make sure I have an LGI at each one, and then to make sure they have assistance, to help and stuff. And they're paid as well. In fact, LGIs they get, they make a little bit more than when they just pool manage, so that's an incentive for them. You know, they want to become LGIs, they want that extra training to also, to make sure that everybody's doing it correctly, and they know like, for a fact that they are 'cause they're trained to that specialty.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Wonderful. And then what other organizations are invited to participate, if any, such as EMS, city attorney, your boss, you know, so on, so forth?

**Participant**

So I started last March, and I had gotten an email that in the past they invited like the fire department to come and like help run a scenario and stuff, and have them show up, you know, as EMS, you know, and take over. Last year, I did not get back to them in time because I wasn't sure when we were having our training or how that was going to look. So this year I'll get back to them and ask them if they'll come like they have in the past years to do something like that.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful. Good.

So, going back to, you know, the content that you implement, during your trainings, so you do them monthly, what kind of content do you go over when you are actually focusing on aquatic content?

**Participant**

Ya, so for skills, I mean at the beginning, we always just review things that are not, that have been issues, whether that's subbing or you know— Or you know, whatever it is. And then, we'll go into an out-of-water section, so CPR, whether that's CPR for adults, two-person, one-person, choking, infant, you know, just one of those skills. And then we'll also, typically, unless we are doing like adult-child-and-infant CPR, or you know, something, you know, more one, usually we'll do some first aid, too. Or just kind of review sudden illnesses, or heart attacks, I've also of done things like that out of the water. And then we'll get in the water and practice one or two skills, depending on the

month, splitting up anything, you know, spinals, deep water, actives. And we'll usually do a fitness activity as well for some of that in-water portion.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful. So you do out-of-water, in-water, and then fitness at all of your trainings.

**Participant**

Yes.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Cool. Cool. Great.

So, what certifications do you require for your employees to work at your facility? And, do you require a specific certifying organization?

**Participant**

So, we use the American Red Cross

**Interviewer**

Ok.

**Participant**

And that's what I tell people when they're applying for the job. Since that's the class we offer. We do a special, where if they work from Memorial Day through Labor Day they get reimbursed for the class. So, the majority of people will do that, unless they are college students, and they need to leave early.

**Interviewer**

So if they work the whole summer for you then, you'll pay for their certifications?

**Participant**

Ya. As long as they take it through us, through our program.

**Interviewer**

Ok. Great. And so they just have to have their standard lifeguarding. Do, you do swim lessons as well. Do they have WSI as well?

**Participant**

We don't use the Red Cross program, no.

**Interviewer**

Oh. Ok. Ok.

Do you retrain for required certifications and can you tell me a little bit about how, what the retraining process for those certifications are? Besides the standard class when somebody needs to get that recert card.

**Participant**

Ya. So, I mean, eventually our summer training is a re— I mean, isn't necessarily like a, like if a lifeguard isn't expiring they don't need to be recertified, but every year, I mean, they go through, it's what — so it's about 14 hours or so, it's between 10 and 14 hours worth of training every year to work here, whether you're working here all year round or not. And so, just covering everything during that time really resets everyone for, you know, an entire year. Now, kind of as we're getting close to that time, I notice things that are happening, you know, just uniform things that aren't necessarily related to skills or anything that are starting to get a little lax on that. It's good that May is almost here and we're going to retrain on that and retrain on everything.

**Interviewer**

Right, ok. And then how, so you have like that list. How do you come up with that list of things? Is it just between you and your managers, like how does that — how do you come up with that content list that you go through all of your trainings?

**Participant**

So the in-services, I've designed. I've actually, so there's for every single month, I worked on last year when I started in-services for every month and they cover different things, I mean, a lot of it's the same thing, you know, skill-wise, just practicing it each month, or alternating between months. And they'll just use the same guide then for, you know, a little while to come, for the next couple years. I might change games, or the water fitness activity or, you know, things like that. But in regards to like skills and things, you know, those, that's what they'll practice that month, every January and stuff like that.

In regards to the content for this May training, I try and take in just feedback from my pool managers on things, I mean. We basically just follow the outline of the American Red Cross for like CPR and lifeguard skills. I mean, we just go through, we watch the videos that are there and then practice the skills and pretty much follow just the lifeguard instructor manual for those two nights. Because it's already essentially made for us, and we'll just use it and retrain everyone. But the other stuff, like rules and policies, I'll go through like the city manual too, and it's been, a lot of that stuff, has been pulled to review and stuff with staff so they make sure there's no questions going forward into the summer.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Right. Great.

So how do you evaluate that your employees are competent in their required skills? So they have to be certified, and they're sitting, you know, they're ready to go for the summer. How do you know that they're up to par, and that they're ready to go, and that they're competent?

**Participant**

I really use the assistance of all of the managers, especially the lifeguard instructor managers to watch them, you know, during the CPR night and during the lifeguard skills night, and then even during the EAP night when they're practicing their skills, you know, each time that someone makes a rescue, to make sure that everyone is competent. Luckily, I am lucky that there is enough staff who are certified in that that between all of us we can watch, at — you know, similar to a lifeguard class, everyone's practicing their skills, and we're watching for anybody's who's weak or not weak. Or, I shouldn't say not weak, anybody who needs a little more practice, with their skills.

But, evaluation-wise, I mean, that's how we do it, to watch, I mean, it's very similar to a lifeguard class. We have the skills checklist, and stuff that they have in there and we just, you know, go through make sure we know what's on it and make sure that everybody marks off as competent for those skills.

Same thing even during the in-services. Obviously, it's not as intensive. It's there to practice, but if there's anyone that any of the pool managers feels maybe needs a little more practice, I mean, we've done it before where we've scheduled, you know, a time for a couple of those people. Like, I've tried to get a time that works for everyone, and they came in, you know, that group practiced their skills with an LGI, and just made themselves a little more confident.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Wonderful. And the skills checklist you get out of the lifeguard manual, you said?

**Participant**

Ya. There is, ya the skills checklist, that is in there.

**Interviewer**

Good. Great.

And then, for your employees at the end of the season, if they were to retake the certification test, you know, that last day do you feel that they would be ready for it and be able to pass it?

**Participant**

Yes. I do.

This training here, just the in-services, the amount of hours, and a lot of it has been set before I started, and I feel very strongly about it, and I have kept things in place in the sense of hours-wise and how much in-service they need to do each month. It's definitely, in my opinion, it's like a very strong system in making sure that everybody, you know. There's no one in the stand that you're like, worried about. Like everybody up there knows what they're doing because they've been trained and practiced and practiced and practiced.

**Interviewer**

Wonderful. Good.

Alright. And then my final question for you is what can the Red Cross, or any other certifying organization do to help you as a manager?

**Participant**

I saw that, and I really, I can't think of anything, to be honest. I mean, the biggest thing is just having the resources, you know, available for me or any LGIs at anytime just to access, which, I mean, the Red Cross it is, you know, for the most part, so. That would be the only thing. If that wasn't there, then I feel like it would be challenging.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Definitely.

Alright. Great. And then do you feel, is there anything that you feel that could add to the content of this interview?

**Participant**

No, just, I mean, in regards to staff training, this facility and this pool what was implemented before I started is just very strong and a lot of the training that as a manager and in charge of everyone it makes me sleep well at night knowing that everyone has practiced and practiced and that they know what they're doing. And well that's a great thing when you're in my shoes.

**Interviewer**

Ya. Ya. Wonderful.

Alright. Great.

Well, thank you very much for taking the time to meet with me today. I really appreciate it.

Tape ends.