AN INTRINSIC CASE STUDY EXAMINING ADAPTIVE RECREATION INSTRUCTORS
WHO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF ATHLETES WITH DISABILITIES
IN NORTHWESTERN COLORADO

by

Jenna L. Jordan

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to understand the experience and pathway to becoming an adaptive recreation instructor at Oscar’s School Center for Adaptive Recreation (pseudonym). Knowledge is often missing in the preparation and training of instructors via non-traditional certification programs, on-the-job training, and background education and experience of persons working in adaptive recreation, adaptive physical education, and adaptive health education. I used an intrinsic case study to examine the perspectives of 17 participants including the executive director, program director, marketing director, and adaptive recreation instructors at Oscar’s School Center for Adaptive Recreation in Colorado, to obtain the missing knowledge. The theoretical framework for this study included Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory and Knowles’ (1980) adult learning theory and was used to understand the experience and role of adaptive recreation instructors. Data collection included interviews, observations, reflective journals, and document reviews. I conducted data analysis guided by Yin (2014) and themes identified through open coding, to create a detailed understanding of the adaptive recreation instructor within the realm of an adaptive recreation program.

Keywords: adaptive recreation, adaptive recreation instructor preparation
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family. I would not have made it to this point without their unconditional love and support. To my husband David, your patience, listening ear, and words of support were instrumental in my ability to forge the path and complete this work of art. To our beloved Oscar, it is through our care and time with you that I learned the importance of animal-assisted sport and activity. Adopting a senior Irish Setter has taught me patience, acceptance, and love from a deeper place than I ever thought possible, the heart of a dog. Jesus placed you and each of my family members in my life for His purpose and for that, I am truly thankful. Through faith, we have all reached this milestone together!
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Being led by such an amazing team of Godly women was an honor. I am humbled by these remarkable ladies and believe that God placed them on my committee for specific reasons. I will continue to reflect on the challenges and bumps in the road that were overcome throughout my doctoral journey. It is by His grace and spirit in each of my committee members that we reached the end of this road! I am indebted to you all.
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List of Abbreviations

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
Adaptive Recreation (AR)
Adaptive Recreation Instructor (ARI)
Adaptive Recreation Instruction (ARIN)
Adaptive Recreation Programs (ARP)
Adaptive Physical Education (APE)
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP)
Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS)
Discrete Trial Teaching (DTT)
National Council on Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC)
National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA)
Oscar’s School Center for Adaptive Recreation (OSCAR)
Professional Association of Ski Instructors (PSIA)
Recreation Therapy (RT)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

As with all education methods, tools, and practices, the realm of recreation has evolved in recent years to meet the needs of wide range inclusion (Lundberg, Taniguchi, McCormick, & Tibbs, 2011). For instructors to be able to properly perform and provide services in the various methodologies, there is a need for specified training and skills (Marchand, Russell, & Cross, 2009). Preparation programs for instructors in adaptive recreation (AR) are minimal at best (Mullins, 2015; Schleien, Miller, Walton, & Pruett, 2014). With the lack of knowledge or program standards for instructors in this field, there was a need for discovery of the skills, tactics, and knowledge necessary to properly provide adaptive recreation (AR) programs, services, and experiences for populations with disabilities (Marchand et al., 2009). This qualitative intrinsic case study granted insight into the detailed nature of the AR instructor (ARI), their background, experience, and beliefs on what is necessary for successful adaptive recreation instruction (ARIN). Chapter One includes the background of AR and my approach to this study, as well as the problem and purpose statements, the significance of the study’s findings, the research questions, and definitions related to AR and the role of the adaptive recreation instructor. In summary, this chapter provides a foundation of information on AR, key aspects of AR, and the purpose of this research study.

Background

Founded in 1983, the United States Adaptive Recreation Center (USARC) began with the original purpose of granting access to sports, such as skiing and cycling, to those individuals with a physical or cognitive disability (USARC, 2007). The history of AR, recreation therapy (RT), and special education in recreation are all pertinent to understanding the background of
adaptive recreation programs (ARP). There are private organizations around the country that provide AR services to those seeking adventure through the safe supervision of persons working as ARIs (Hans, 2000; Lundberg et al., 2011; Marchand et al., 2009; USARC, 2007). In some cases, AR has been deemed outdoor behavioral healthcare (Hopkins, 2014; Marchand et al., 2009). This label carries with it a sense of high standards, similar to healthcare standards. As of yet, however, such standards have only been mentioned in passing in legislation related to AR, but not necessarily outlined by program training or certification (National Recreation and Park Association [NRPA], 1999; Marchand et al., 2009; Mullins, 2015). As with most specialty services, there should be a process by which the pathway to working as an ARI follows (Zimmerman, Dupree, & Hodges, 2014). This route, provided the newness of the field, has yet to be defined (Maumbe, 2014; Stevens & Wellman, 2007).

Over the last few years, researchers have lightly studied adaptive recreation (Hans, 2000). There have been developments in participant outcomes, perceived barriers and stigmas, and job-related stress and retention (Bowen & Neill, 2013; Lundberg et al., 2011; Marchand et al., 2009; Shields & Synnot, 2014). However, researchers have yet to identify the standardization of how ARIs come to work in the industry and what requirements they face (Hans, 2000; Marchand et al., 2009). The lack of standardization leaves individual program directors with the task of determining what to include in the job description, what credentials and experience should be required, and how to go about training incoming employees (Jull & Mirenda, 2016). Current program directors and those looking to create an ARP will benefit from a level of understanding of the role requirements for an ARI (Marchand et al., 2009). If instructors lack proper preparedness for job duties, the participants are the ones impacted, possibly gravely. There is a need for instructor certification mandates so that ARPs can provide their services to the best of
their ability. This research study advances the current knowledge of participant outcomes, perceived barriers, and job-related stress for ARIs (Shields & Synnot, 2014, 2016). By obtaining a rich description of the role and experience of ARIs, training programs and preparation pathways can be developed to focus on the needs of instructors and allow them the opportunity to be equipped with a broad range of skills and knowledge (Sheehan, 2015).

Oscar’s School Center for Adaptive Recreation (OSCAR; a pseudonym) is a program located in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. All information regarding the study site came from their website, but this site is not identified to protect its confidentiality. Founded in 2006, the program is rooted in parent, ski instructor, and management team member concerns for providing access to and services for persons with disabilities visiting the ski mountain in northwestern Colorado. Clients of OSCAR are individuals of any age with a physical, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral disability and are not limited to any specific organization, program, or institution. Partnering with the OSCAR Ski and Resort Corporation, scholarships for community members are provided to allow students to participate in programs like Winter Sports Club, Summer Camp Trailblazers, Adventure Camp, and Watersport Racing. In 2008, the program expanded to provide long-term summer season programs, military and veteran support programs, and vacationer services to allow clients with disabilities to experience the same positive experiences as family and friends when staying and living within the town of Griffin.

The mission of OSCAR is to “help teach self-confidence, social skills, and independence.” They do so through the lived and shared experiences of participating in sport and recreation. The need for specific equipment, physical assistance, and other barriers are limitations that instructors of OSCAR can alleviate through service provisions. Due to the success and time of operation, examination of this organization provided valuable lessons
learned in the realm of how, what, and when instructor training and preparation occurs. It also granted insight on what does not work or should be further investigated to improve. The attraction of patrons from around the world to work with OSCAR and take advantage of its services was also a reason to focus on this program and allow existing programs and future programs a chance to benefit from the experience in ARI training, knowledge of ARP operation, and history of OSCAR.

**Situation to Self**

As the researcher, I approached this study from the point of view of a health educator, in the private sector. Education and training have been a large part of my life, as I have worked in the health and fitness industry since 2002. Working in public and private healthcare arenas, awareness of inclusive services and the need to hold workers to a standard has become evident. The standard requires professionals in special education and healthcare to have training and certification in inclusive methodology and adaptive techniques, so they can interact with and provide instruction or services to persons with a disability. This awareness led to my discovery of recreation therapy (RT) and AR, outside the traditional health and medical settings. My involvement in health and fitness instruction and health education also impacted my desire to understand better how ARIs come to work at a non-profit organization that services persons with disabilities. When health educators and instructors embark upon a career, they must be prepared and knowledgeable in multiple philosophies and techniques to serve the motley mix of populations they encounter. The arena of special education, specifically for health and physical education, is one that serves individuals with more than cognitive disabilities. Instructors and educators need to be equipped with the skills to work with individuals that have behavioral and physical disabilities as well. Many times, patrons at an AR facility have more than a single type
of disability and professionals in the field need to be fully prepared to adapt to each individual circumstance. Health, recreation, and physical education professionals that work with special populations have unique characteristics and should be provided a work environment that fully supports their job needs. Programs like OSCAR exist because of passion, investment, and caring.

The intrinsic case study approach is aligned with my paradigm of pragmatism and allowed research to support current and future programs to improve recreation experiences for persons with a disability successfully. My axiological assumption was that the discovery of the role and experience of ARIs adds value to program development and instructor training. I believe that an understanding of the ontological perspective of themes and identities from ARI’s individual experiences assist in the creation of implementation plans and strategies to create successful programs. It also provides knowledge of those methodologies, trainings, or approaches that are positive or negative. I believe the study sheds light on all sides of ARPs and grants a true understanding of the multifaceted nature of an ARI.

**Problem Statement**

With an increased effort to achieve fully inclusive environments in society over the last four decades, a need for ARIN and ARP has grown (Kerr, Dattilo, & O’Sullivan, 2012). Persons who desire to become involved in these organizations come from a diverse background of education, experience, and viewpoint. The role of the instructor on student success and achievement is an integral one. Current research identified the absence of a full understanding of the role of the ARI, the needs of ARIs, and their experience working with individuals with disabilities (Lundberg et al., 2011; Marchand et al., 2009). This gap in the literature called for the discovery of a rich comprehension of the training and preparation that occurs when a person
becomes an ARI, the influence of their background and experience, and the process of training they are provided while on the job (Marchand et al., 2009; Munirova, Raynis, & Gvozdeva, 2013; Shields & Synnot, 2014, 2016). The outcomes of this intrinsic case study produced a contextual description of ARIs that fills the current gap, identified by Lundberg et al. (2011) and allows for improvement in ARIN and development of better preparation programs for ARIs.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to discover the experience and pathway that a person follows to become an adaptive recreation instructor (ARI) for OSCAR, in northwestern Colorado. ARIs are defined as individuals working as program instructors in an organization that provides inclusive recreation activities for individuals with physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral disabilities. Inclusive recreation activities are generally defined as enabling persons with disabilities to participate in recreational sport or activity by redefining their capabilities through the implementation and use of instructor supervision and support, and adaptive devices and equipment (Lundberg et al., 2011). The theories that guided this study were Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory and Knowles’ (1980) adult learning theory, as they relate to the background experience, education, and skill set of each ARP instructor. By examining the instructors, the executive director, program director, and marketing director at OSCAR, this study provided perspectives of ARIs at the study site. The perspectives create a rich, thick description of the ARI role, how individuals become ARIs, and what current instructors believe is necessary to perform the duties of the job. These findings provided lessons learned, for the benefit of future training and program creation.
Significance of the Study

The empirical significance of this study is the opportunity to advance the arena of ARI preparation programming, ARP implementation, and ARIN service planning. Findings from this study advanced the conclusions of Lundberg et al. (2011), Marchand et al. (2009), Shields and Synnot (2016), and Sheehan (2015) who asserted that adaptive recreation is necessary for society’s movement towards total inclusion. Further, it necessitates a thorough understanding of the skills necessary to provide adaptive recreation instructor training and program development (Lundberg et al., 2011; Marchand et al., 2009; Shields & Synnot, 2016; Sheehan, 2015).

Lundberg et al. identified the positive impact that ARIN had on individuals with disabilities, in the realm of building social networks, experiencing freedom, improving self-identity, and feelings of normalcy. Marchand et al. presented the first empirical evidence for the difficulties, stressors, and demographics of ARIs. Shields and Synnot (2016) showed the barriers, difficulties, and influences on those looking to participate in AR as clients seeking assistance through an ARIN service. Sheehan investigated participant and instructor interaction and duration of interaction through observation, to provide information and lessons learned to assist managers and supervisors in improving the overall experience and outcomes of both instructors and participants in recreation programs. The current study advanced the findings of Sheehan through defining what reinforcements positive feedback, and continuing education or training best benefits the instructors to improve and expand their on-the-job performance and experience.

Data collection and analysis targeted ideas and perspectives omitted in previous studies, by utilizing various aspects of these studies as guidance. For example, Shields and Synnot (2016) focused on views of participants on instructor performance and needs, leaving out the instructor perspective and allowing for a gap in the ability to transform ARI preparation programming.
This study adds to the literature from a theoretical standpoint by way of advancing Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory and Knowles’ (1980) adult learning theory into the arena of AR and ARIs’ perception of their role as an adult learner, acquiring knowledge through social interaction with other instructors experiencing the same situations and environments (Fetherston & Sturmey, 2014; Halpern & Tucker, 2015). From the lens of social cognitive theory, this study further applied the thought that “the environment thus becomes an autonomous force that automatically shapes, orchestrates, and controls behavior” (Bandura, 1978, p. 344).

Obtaining the opinion and perception of the preparation and training received by OSCAR instructors allowed a true understanding of the benefits and ramifications of the learning environment provided by the program (Jull & Mirenda, 2016). There is also the aspect of the conversation, relationship, and influence of other instructors participating in the same training, practice, and program development, as instructors working at OSCAR go through these preparations together (Knowles, 1980). Due to the age requirement of instructors, they were all considered to be within the bracket of adulthood. Knowles’ (1980) premise that adults need to “know why they are learning new knowledge” and have “a readiness to learn” (McGrath, 2009, pp. 99-100) was certainly applicable to the overall purpose of this study. The various backgrounds encompassed by instructor pools require the use of the adult learning theory, as preparation curriculum must be able to address all levels of learner, knowledge base, and learning style (Knowles, 1980; McGrath, 2009; Sheehan, 2015).

This study revealed aspects of the ARI role to the current program developer, marketing director, and executive director at OSCAR related to what ARIs need from their on-the-job training. It also provided insight into future instructor preparation programming, modules, and professional development within an ARP, such as on-the-job training. The opportunity for
growth, expansion, and program improvement was also present, through the lessons learned from data synthesis and conclusions of this study (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). On a wider scale, education and certification programs around the country might benefit from the discovery of themes and needs of ARIs that allow for instructor preparation program creation, curriculum, and training development (Lundberg et al., 2011; Marchand et al., 2009).

**Research Questions**

The research questions were designed to address the gap in the literature in relation to ARI preparation, background experience, and needs for successfully providing AR services to populations with disabilities. These questions took Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory and Knowles’ (1980) adult learning theory and applied them, as a lens, to the ARI experience and role within an ARP. The adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980) enlightened the research of how ARI’s obtain the knowledge and skills required to perform their job successfully. The social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) granted insight into how on the job training, working with the organization’s employees, and experience working as an ARI impact an ARI’s ability to provide AR services to clients and be a part of an ARP team structure.

1. How does an individual’s background and education influence an adaptive recreation instructor’s ability to provide adaptive recreation services to clients?

Discovery of each individual’s background and education identified the differences in each ARI’s pathway to becoming involved in adaptive recreation. I analyzed each pathway to determine how an ARI obtains the knowledge, skills, and readiness to perform the duties of their job (Knowles, 1980). It also shed light on how much training OSCAR, or any ARP, needs to be prepared to give to their incoming instructors. Maumbe (2014) proposed that there should be three separate methods by which individuals can learn recreation instruction. First, instruction
should be teaching centered via the lecture approach. The second was learner-centered instruction via the team-based learning approach. Lastly, Maumbe suggested a second type of learner-centered instruction via the service-learning approach. These instruction approaches, according to Maumbe, largely impact a person’s educational experiences, which in turn influence how they perform instruction, as a job duty. ARIs’ knowledge and skill sets are also crucial to how they provide services to the varied populations seeking assistance from an ARP (Ryan, Katsiyannis, Cadorette, Hodge, & Markham, 2014). A thorough understanding of what allows an ARI to feel prepared and ready for their job was key in obtaining the thick description sought by this study.

2. What instructor preparation training takes place at OSCAR?

Data from this question provided insight into the amount of training, type of training, and need for revision in training. Based on the suggestions for future research by Lundberg et al. (2011), this question expanded the theoretical models identified, as well as outlined beneficial characteristics of a person who self-identifies as an ARI. ARIs feel drawn toward their career path based on an educational or learning experience. Identifying the preparation training at OSCAR was a key component to expanding Knowles (1980), by way of understanding how adults perceive their on-the-job training and how they understand the need for it. Marchand et al. (2009) identified job-related stressors for those working in outdoor behavioral healthcare. Given the similarities between those professionals and ARIs, the knowledge gained from this question allows persons to prepare themselves in a way that alleviates one or more of these stressors. The description of instructor preparation training at OSCAR laid a framework of OSCAR’s approach to instructor training and grants other recreation programs the ability to better prepare their instructors for job responsibilities.
3. What do the adaptive recreation instructors at OSCAR gain from observing each other, the executive director, program director, marketing director, and participant interactions?

Utilizing the adult learning theory of Bandura (1986) and the findings of Zimmerman et al. (2014), comprehension of what ARIs gain from observing each other, the executive director, program director, marketing director, and participants allowed for true comprehension of how ARIs learn, adapt, and evolve while working in the program at OSCAR. Supervisors, including the executive director, program director, and marketing director, have interactions with ARIs throughout the day and these were instances where ARIs learned and evolved in their professional development. Zimmerman et al. (2014) suggested service learning as a means to self-discovery. From this idea, the answers to this question provided knowledge on just how influential an ARI’s environment was on their job performance and advancement in skill development. Looking through the lens of the adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980), discovering what ARIs gain from observations of coworkers on the job highlighted ways that supervisors encourage ARIs “by emphasizing the benefits of acquiring a qualification or learning new skills” (McGrath, 2009, p. 99).

4. How do daily interactions with other ARIs, the program director, the executive director, and the marketing director influence an ARI’s ability to perform job duties successfully at OSCAR?

Answers gave evidence of social learning as adults, through work environment, socialization with coworkers, and interactions/guidance from supervisors (Bandura, 1986). In addition to the data collected from question three, this question provided knowledge of specific instances where an interaction with or around another ARI or supervisor impacted an ARI’s
ability to remain confident, calm, and purposeful in their daily job duties and tasks. Knowles (1980) raised the notion that an environment, including the individuals in it, may affect the learning ability or performance ability of a person. This question allowed for an understanding of how human interaction prohibits or facilitates successful provision of adaptive recreation services. Marchand et al. (2009) discovered job-related stress and its impact on the retention of professionals working in outdoor behavioral health. Question four answered the suggestion of Marchand et al. (2009) to obtain a better understanding of the experiences of ARIs through their eyes and that of their supervisors. It also strengthened the argument of Ryan et al. (2014), that adaptive sports program success is heavily dependent on the quality of its coaches, volunteers, and organizers.

**Definitions**

1. *Adaptive Recreation (AR)* – enabling persons with disabilities to participate in any given recreational sport or activity, redefining their capabilities through instructor supervision and adaptive devices (Lundberg et al., 2011).

2. *Adaptive Recreation Instructor (ARI)* – persons providing adaptive recreation services, activities, and situations to persons with physical, emotional, behavioral, and/or cognitive disabilities (Hans, 2000; Lundberg et al., 2011).

3. *Adaptive Recreation Instruction (ARIN)* – the act of employing problem solving, creative methodology, and manipulation techniques to provide recreation services and activities to persons with physical, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive disabilities (Hans, 2000).
4. **Adaptive Recreation Program (ARP)** – recreation programs seeking to improve flexibility, morale, and adaptability for persons with physical, emotional, behavioral, and/or cognitive disabilities (Hans, 2000).

5. **Curriculum Development** – the process of creating learning experiences, objectives, materials, standards, and assessments for any given content area (Soto, 2015).

6. **Clients** – persons taking part in adaptive recreation activities in the town of Griffin and/or with the OSCAR program, also called clients of the OSCAR organization.

7. **Preparation Programs** – standardized paths of study to obtain knowledge and skills required for a given career field (Marchand et al., 2009).

8. **Recreation Therapy** – the provision of recreation services to individuals with an illness or disabling condition, to treat a condition and restore, improve, or rehabilitate function and/or eliminate the effects of the illness or disabling condition (Barney, 2013; Garcia-Villamisar, Dattilo, & Muela, 2017)

9. **Self-efficacy** – a person’s perceived performance capability for a given activity or skill (Bandura, 1997).

10. **Successfully** – self-reliance and confidence in ability to provide AR services to varying challenges presented by participant disability and uncovering strengths within them (Bobilya, Kalisch, & Daniel, 2014).

11. **Training** – in-service learning modules where knowledge is practically applied to scenarios, mock situations, and actual activity settings under the guidance and supervision of a senior instructor or teacher (Munirova, Raynis, & Gvozdeva, 2013; Roper & Santiago, 2014)
Summary

To establish an effective ARP, a true understanding of the needs of the organizational structure, including instructor preparation and recruitment was necessary (Ryan et al., 2014). AR is a newer field, with areas ready for discovery (Lundberg et al., 2011; Marchand et al., 2009, Stevens & Wellman, 2007). A standard of practice should be set for the ARI position, to assist future program developers, current directors, and potential ARIs (Marchand et al., 2009; Maumbe, 2014; Zimmerman et al., 2014). The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to create a rich, detailed context of the pathway and experience of an individual to become an ARI to gain knowledge of the needs of ARIs and how to best prepare them for their job duties and experiences. Using the intrinsic case study design, (Yin, 2014) I collected data from interviews, observations, documents, and journal reflections. The data collection and analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of the duties, knowledge, background, and training necessary for successfully providing ARP services, and covered the grey areas outlined by Lundberg et al. (2011), Marchand et al. (2009), Mullins (2015), Sheehan (2015), and Shields and Synnot (2014, 2016). This information allows for curriculum and training development that will create a standard in the arena of AR. It is a step towards awareness for these programs and cognizance of the role of ARIs, advancing Bandura’s (1986) and Knowles (1980) theories on learning in the field of AR.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Given the rise in awareness of inclusion practices for persons with disabilities over the last several decades, opportunities for adaptive recreation instruction and programming has grown (Kerr et al., 2012). Persons looking to become involved in these organizations come from diverse backgrounds in education, experience, and viewpoint. A better understanding of the needs of ARI’s and their experiences working with individuals with disabilities was needed (Marchand, 2008; Marchand et al., 2009). A qualitative approach, informed by the adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980) principles and Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory was used to understand adaptive recreation instructors’ experiences in the working environment of OSCAR in northwestern Colorado. Through a review of the literature, the experience, background, and needs of ARIs came to the surface as no real comprehension of this role in instruction had been attained (Lundberg et al., 2011).

Explanation of the theoretical framework for this study is necessary, as it uses two separate theories, Knowles’ (1980) adult learning theory and Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory. AR outside the traditional learning environment must be included in this explanation, as there are key differences in inclusion practices inside and outside a classroom. Recreation Therapy (RT) is a sister to AR, as they serve similar population groups. The history of ARIN is also important, because of the newness of this arena in recreation instruction.

The need existed to identify the preparation programs, and education pathways are used to reach a position as an ARI. Comprehension of the impact that self-efficacy has on an individual in this profession relates to the possible job-related stressors and grants an opportunity to better understand what the support system needs are for ARIs. As with any organizational
structure, the administration and leadership of adaptive recreation programs (ARPs) are crucial components in the effort to obtain a full contextual description of the role of an ARI in an ARP. Research relevant to organizational communication and structure from the standpoint of leadership allows the picture to come full circle and a true sense of the gap in the literature to be attained. First, I must explain the theories guiding the current study and illuminate their application.

**Theoretical Framework**

Adaptive recreation instruction calls for a unique personality and skill type (Lundberg et al., 2011; Ryan et al., 2014). The nature of working with persons with disabilities may be both a challenge and a joy (Zimmerman et al., 2014). The process of identifying and providing adaptations to meet the various needs of persons seeking inclusive recreation takes time, patience, and consideration, but witnessing them experience activities they never thought possible is the reward (USARC, 2007). With the detailed devices and specific learning needs added to that, instructors must house within themselves a broad range of methodologies, perspectives, and approaches for assisting a person in successfully learning how to perform a given activity (Jull & Mirenda, 2016). To better understand the intricacies of these categories of skills and knowledge, one must undertake an application of the adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980) and the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). As these theories have long since been used to explain self-efficacy, it begs the question of whether anyone has placed adaptive recreation instructors under a theoretical microscope through qualitative inquiry (Bandura, 1986). Theory allows for qualitative research to be founded upon a framework using the lens of social justice or social science (Creswell, 2013). It also allows the study to begin with an analytic generalization. From this, the findings may then corroborate, modify, reject, or advance
a theory while allowing new concepts to be born (Yin, 2014). Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory and Knowles’ (1980) adult learning theory were used from the social science standpoint, through a social constructivism lens and resulted in a maximum variation view of ARI experience, purpose, and practice.

**Learning as an Adult**

According to Knowles (1980), the adult learning theory places an importance on the adult’s need to know why they are learning, their self-concept as an independent learner, their learning experience, their readiness to learn, their orientation to learning, and their motivation to learn. Unlike the old philosophy that students only need to understand they need to learn what the teacher teaches, Knowles (1984) identified the need for adult learners to utilize self-direction in their pursuit of knowledge. Self-direction comes with maturity and should be fostered in adult learners, otherwise sensation of resistance, tension, and resentment occur (Knowles, 1984). A key component in the adult learning theory is the use of andragogy that Knowles (1980) emphasized as “a model of assumptions, which includes pedagogical assumptions” (p. 62). This information means that adult learning theory is not a counter to pedagogy, rather it is a foundation for how adults learn and how educators should seek to meet their needs (Halpern & Tucker, 2015).

Lundberg et al. (2011) delved into the meaning of and outcomes from ARP but has yet to look at the other side of the table and focus on the individuals providing these services. Instructors are generally above the age of 18 and have had some post-secondary instruction on recreation instruction (Hans, 2000). The need to discover what training, education, and experience these instructors have was the very essence of this study. Due to the age of the instructors and the fact that they are employed while learning on the job, Knowles’ (1980) adult
learning theory applies to the discovery process of capturing the essence of the instructor experience at OSCAR. Knowles’ (1980) adult learning theory as an established framework for understanding learning trends and behaviors in adults or non-traditional learners is pertinent to the participant population as these individuals are in the age range of adulthood. Halpern and Tucker (2015) applied this theory in the scenario of online tutorials, specifically those used to educate adults on the systems within higher education libraries. This situation is vastly different from that of OSCAR, as the approach to in-classroom instruction varies from outdoor physical activity instruction (Halpern & Tucker, 2015; Stevens & Wellman, 2007). The premise of creating instructional curriculums for varied age, skill, and learner types is correlational to the learning process for persons looking to enter the field of ARIN.

McGrath (2009) pointed the theory towards the importance of adults understanding why they need to learn concepts, specifically, how to apply those concepts to their current lifestyle. McGrath also elicited the notion that some adult learners enter programs or courses without any previous background knowledge on the subject. Because of this, a program must account for the varying degrees, or lack of, previous experience and education related to a content area. Without knowledge of this foundation, ARP instructor training may not be as effective as the curriculum creator thinks it is. Grasping an understanding of the backgrounds of ARP instructors provides insight into what or what not to include in preparation-training programs. It also allows for improvement, from a management standpoint, in the human resource and industrial organization of an ARP (Locke, 1987).

Knowles (1980) identified an adult learner’s need to understand the reason they needed to learn a specific concept or skill. In the current study, I sought to take this a step further to identify the reward and punishment, motivation, and stressors that may influence an instructor to
want to learn about and consequently enter the professional field of AR. The adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980) highlighted the effects of a person’s perception of the outcomes related to obtaining knowledge or skills. Apprehension of how an ARI learns from their supervisors modeling behaviors, skills, or instruction methods, provides ARP management knowledge of how to best lead their teams of ARIs. Understanding how ARIs learn from supervisors may also identify the extent to which an ARI, as an adult learner, self-regulates their performance related to specific job duties and circumstances presented by a client and the nature of his or her disability (Locke, 1987). Self-regulation may have a larger impact on ARI performance than has been identified in the literature. The act of recognizing one’s ability or inability to perform a skill or service is a crucial component of successful AR service programming and provision (Marchand et al. 2009). Knowles’ (1980) concept of the adult learner as an independent learner is the lens that highlights this aspect of the ARI directly.

Learning through Social Cognition

In conjunction with the adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980), Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory served as a helpful theory for investigating the overall development and apprehension of the skills and knowledge necessary to fulfill the duties of an ARI. Anticipation of reinforcement and anticipation of causal relationship are two concepts driving Bandura (1986). Bandura (1986) stated that a person learns because of his or her anticipation of a benefit or reinforcement because of their behavior. He identified these motivations as response-outcomes expectations (Bandura, 1986). The environment in which a person is learning, classroom or professional, may become an autonomous force in a learner’s choice to absorb information and behave in a certain way because of that person’s action-outcome based expectancy (Bandura, 1986). Furthermore, social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) relied on the
notion that a person’s desire and ability to learn is grounded in his or her engagement in thought, to create, and use foresight to follow a course of action. This notion alleviates the likelihood that there are negative consequences or responses to their actions because they are no longer thoughtless (Bandura, 1986). In essence, the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) lens is used to understand better whether a person seeking a profession will do so in a manner that correlates to a strategy they have seen others use. It also helps to identify if they will choose an avenue directly related to their own assumptions about what it takes to reach that goal.

To better understand the idea of a person’s assumptions on what pathway is required to reach an end goal of being prepared for a particular job, one must look at that person’s initial versus the reciprocal concept of such a learning pathway (Lerner, 1990). Personal-contextual change, as identified by Bandura (1986), impacts a learner’s motivation to continue to absorb, comprehend, and apply knowledge gained through instruction. This motivation may evolve and change as they progress through a given learning experience, creating a difference in initial effects of learning and reciprocal ones (Lerner, 1990). Application of Knowles’ (1980) concept of understanding the reciprocal impact, or the reason behind learning a skill, provides a better, more intimate comprehension of an ARI’s learning experience and likelihood to improve their knowledge and skills based on them, as an adult learner.

**Social Cognition as an Adult**

There is not a solid understanding of the interconnected nature of the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) and the adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980) as they relate to adaptive recreation. “A need exists to study additional programs and different program models to better understand the lived experience of field instructors in and out of the field” (Marchand et al., 2009, p. 72). To address this need, researchers must apply learning theories to obtain a true
understanding of how ARIs come into their profession and what learning experiences provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to perform their job duties. More goes into preparation programs than merely reading and testing on curriculum content. Instructors, like teachers in schools, learn from each other, their students, and the environment in which they work (Bandura, 1978). Because of this, using the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) lens was imperative to truly capturing the detailed experience of instructors at OSCAR. As the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) bases its foundation on the notion that environmental determinism influences behavior and situational influences, an ARP’s approach to training and job readiness for its ARIs may have a significant impact on ARIN implementation and service provision.

An ARP’s perspective on the pathway to ensure ARI preparation for job function is directly related to how these adults obtain knowledge and skills to perform specific duties. Bandura (1986) touched on the notion “human functioning is explained in terms of a model of triadic reciprocity in which behavior, cognitive and other personal factors, and environmental event all operate as interacting determinants of each other” (p. 18). This notion coincides with Knowles’ (1980) construct that the adult learns from perceived causal relationships. The environment in which a person is learning provides sensations and feelings that will either positively or negatively impact their acquisition of knowledge. Bandura (1986) took this idea a step further by stating “whether social behavior is invariant or changes over time depends, partly, on the degree of continuity of social conditions over the time span” (p. 12). As adults evolve in a given working scenario, their perception, and openness to learning new things will ebb and flow with the experiences they encounter. This ebb and flow presents the need to use both theories, as they can explain the missing pieces of each other.
Lerner (1990) introduced the idea of “layered theory” (p. 93) in his review of Bandura (1986), suggesting change and context as primary aspects of studying a process, such as learning through experience. Knowles (1980) emphasized that adults could see other adults learning and acquiring skills in an environment that may increase the observer’s likelihood to desire to learn the same skills. The observation of someone else gaining a skill is the causal relationship desired by adult learners, according to Knowles (1980). Bandura’s (1986) social learning theory can possibly further explain that same individual’s increase or decrease in desire to learn. This learning comes from their relationship with the learning environment, circumstances guiding the teaching of a skill, and that individual’s observation of a fellow worker increasing their ability level in a specific job. Lerner referred to this as interactive conceptions of learning. The two learning theories create a double-sided lens, increasing the application of each on a given learning situation.

Lundberg et al. (2011) utilized classical grounded theory but left out crucial components of identifying relationships, themes, or identities with regards to instructors in ARPs. Their study brought forth the need for further research on these types of programs, as “there has generally been a lack of information regarding the meanings and outcomes associated with community-based adaptive sports and recreation participation” (Lundberg et al., 2011, p. 222). Expanding this idea to the realm of individuals doing the instruction and carrying out the provision of services, research is necessary via the learning theories of Knowles (1980) and Bandura (1986). Adding this perspective to the existing framework created by the study of Lundberg et al. (2011) will provide a more rounded understanding of adaptive recreation as a means to health and fitness education participation (Marchand et al., 2009).
Related Literature

Within the field of health education, there are several branches that individuals can choose to pursue a career. Recreation outside the traditional setting has evolved to both therapy recreation and adaptive recreation (Kerr et al., 2012). These are specific programs geared towards goals related to the individual clients taking part in activities provided under the supervision of instructors (Hans, 2000). Health and physical education within the traditional classroom require a specific degree type along with certification at the state level (Roper & Santiago, 2014). Each of these varying types entails proper program leadership and administration to provide services and support to students, clients, and instructors (Ryan et al., 2014; Shields & Synnot, 2014). Areas of recreation instruction and preparation relevant to review are adaptive recreation both inside and outside of the traditional learning setting, recreation therapy, the history of adaptive recreation instruction, certification options and how they relate to self-efficacy, and the role of an ARP’s leadership and administration staff.

Adaptive Recreation Outside Traditional Education

A review of the literature revealed the need for more information on ARPs, specifically ARP instructor experience (Lundberg et al., 2011; Marchand et al., 2009). Fetherston and Sturmey (2014) asserted that instructors “must acquire skill sets, or a group of teaching responses that share a single task analysis” (p. 541). They directed their research towards specific skills training for instructors working with individuals who had varying categories of behavioral needs (Fetherston & Sturmey, 2014). Using specific skills training for instructors opens the door to implications in the AR arena. Their findings begged the question of ARP instructors’ background in education, specifically special education, to carry out their job duties working with persons with a disability. Behavior training, as it relates to instruction for students
with emotional, physical, cognitive, or behavioral disabilities, may or may not play a role in ARP instructors’ working relationship, experience, and self-efficacy at an organization like OSCAR (Fetherston & Sturmey, 2014).

Sheehan (2015) followed the same storyline as Fetherston and Sturmey (2014), moving from the training of instructors to the requirement for those administrating an ARP needing to hire instructors fully capable of the job demands of working with people with disabilities. Looking closer at the pathway that leads to a person becoming an ARP instructor allowed for a better understanding of the skill set necessary to provide services to those looking to experience adventure through adaptive recreation activities. Marchand et al. (2009) provided a brief description of the difficulties related to this position. This description included aspects of instructor lives that influenced turnover rate, sustaining romantic relationships outside of work, emotional anxiety and job-related stress issues, and physical and mental challenges (Marchand et al., 2009). Combining this description with that of Fetherston and Sturmey, built a bridge between what is needed and what is perceived to be complications of the ARP instructor.

Self-efficacy, as it relates to Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory, plays a pivotal part in the relationship of the instructor, cohorts, supervisors, and students they work with (Bowen & Neill, 2013; Saville et al., 2014; Sheehan, 2015; Shields & Synnot, 2014). Ryan et al. (2014) outlined the process of creating an ARP, emphasizing the assorted roles involved from organizers to coaches and parent volunteers, stating that these different functions should all work together to form an organizational team approach to providing AR services. Discovering the details of instructor attitudes towards their own skill set and what the job requires could allow for course work or certification curriculum creation in the future. It might also grant future
instructors knowledge and dexterity in the line of work that their predecessors were unable to acquire (Mullick, 2013; Mullins, 2015; NRPA, 1999; Shields, Synnot, & Barr, 2012).

Training programs exist for traditional recreation roles in relation to specific sport coaching, rehabilitation for physical injury, and fitness program instruction, but none are directly related to ARIN (National Academy of Sports Medicine, 2017). Whether they are continuing education modules or staff training programs, the need to fully comprehend the day-to-day tasks was prevalent for those working in the field of special needs (Jull & Mirenda, 2016). Utilizing online education has become a commonality amongst continuing education training (Halpern & Tucker, 2015). When program or course creators look to improve, or advance a given curriculum, having insight from individuals who are performing the duties of the field positions may be advantageous. Saville et al. (2014) investigated the self-efficacy of instructor behaviors with the intention of discovering themes and attitudes from the viewpoint of the students. Saville et al. was a great model for the need to ascertain themes and attitudes from the other side of the equation, the instructors. By ARP directors and supervisors not knowing what instructors believe to be a challenge, need, or confidence for them is a disservice to those striving to become a part of an ARP and those the program is serving. Clients need ARIs fully equipped to service any special need presented. To discover what elements of training-preparation programs are required to successfully implement and service special needs recreation activities, certain questions need answers. For instance, what training makes instructors ready to perform their job duties? Alternatively, what preparation can create self-efficacy in the position of an ARP instructor?

In a qualitative study, Shields and Synnot (2014) researched what was needed to make instructors feel prepared for their job duties by examining perceived barriers and facilitators
when providing physical activities to children with disabilities. Findings included environmental, transportation and accessibility barriers to children seeking services from recreation and sports industry organizations (Shields & Synnot, 2014). They also identified instructor lack of confidence, skills, and training as impactful on the experiences of clients at AR community programs (Shields & Synnot, 2014). The limitations presented by these authors were that this was merely a proposal for future study, as the sample group was both small and presented bias (Shields & Synnot, 2014). This bias was present due to the nature of the convenience sample selected; all were attendants of a symposium for the sport and recreation industry (Shields & Synnot, 2014). As such, these participants were not able to be determined as an adequate representation of instructors in the field (Shields & Synnot, 2014).

Shields and Synnot (2016) conducted a second, smaller descriptive study ($N = 63$); however, it focused on the experiences of the children and not the instructors. The interesting portion of this study was that it presented ideas and themes from only a single side of the program, bringing to light the need for children’s opportunities to participate in physical recreational activities, but not necessarily discovering information on the instructor’s part in the experience. Again, it leads research towards the general direction of adaptive recreation needs, without informing on what it takes to create these opportunities, who creates them, and how a team of instructors becomes successful at implementing adaptive recreation activities (Shields & Synnot, 2016).

Researchers identified the need for instructors related specifically to working with children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) through exploratory study, highlighting the need for “extensive background working with individuals with ASD” (Jull & Mirenda, 2016, p. 29). Their study was based on instructors teaching swimming skills to students with ASD and the use
of discrete trial teaching (DTT; Jull & Mirenda, 2016). The findings gave evidence of the need for specific training, background knowledge, and emotional support for instructors working with this population, begging the question of whether ARP instructors receive or have these qualities and resources available to them. Lundberg et al. (2011) briefly touched on the subject but did not fully delve into the experience and educational background from which persons come to be ARP instructors.

Research exists on the public perception of ARPs and those involved in them. Lundberg et al. (2011) and Hans (2000) presented information on the stigma, negative or positive, associated with participation in and with ARPs. This stigma could play a part in a person choosing to work as an ARP instructor, as it may impact the social perception of their choice in career or their own perception of working with persons with disabilities. As Hans pointed out, these programs serve as therapy, and a means for “safe risk-taking behavior” (p. 35). Depending on the lens a person chooses, ARPs viewed as therapeutic or inclusive risk-taking, may result in a positive or negative viewpoint. The view of ARPs as therapeutic or inclusive risk-taking can be both a positive thing, allowing those with a disability to seek adventure, and a negative depending what lens a person chooses to look through. Hans conducted an in-depth meta-analysis of adventure programming by synthesizing 24 primary studies with a total of 30 effect sizes, resulting in the need for further study of the outcomes from ARPs. Even with its dated time of publication, there has yet to be other inquiries to produce these answers (Hans, 2000). A qualitative discovery of OSCAR sought to do just that, answer the how, why, who, when, and where of an ARP.

The closest study to address the how, why, who, when, and where of an ARP would be from a dissertation standpoint. Laferrier (2012) used a questionnaire analysis of a convenience
sample \((N = 220)\) to discover the outcomes presented by participation in sport, exercise, and recreation (SER) on the psychosocial aspects of the lives of individuals with disabilities. In that study, the researcher highlighted the participants and achieved a better understanding of the impact of SER on individuals’ mental perceptions and social environment (Laferrier, 2012). Little information existed on the experience, impact, and psychosocial influence of the instructors and activity leaders (Laferrier, 2012). Leaving a hole, yet again, for further research of who is performing the instruction and creating the opportunities for these students to take part in SER. Mullins (2015) took a phenomenological approach to understand better the influence of participating in “specialized and inclusive recreation programs” (p. 1). Although Mullins focused on capturing the essence of an experience, it was placed on those participating and not those instructing. The themes and implications of Mullins are like those found in a case study on OSCAR, but they are slightly different regarding impact and influence. The experience of an instructor varies from that of a participant, due to the foundational concept of teacher versus learner. Future research into the ARI experience may expand the knowledge base of training, support, and leadership needed to be a successful instructor in an ARP (Anderson & Heyne, 2011; Mullins, 2015; Schleien et al., 2014; Shields et al., 2012).

Bobilya et al. (2014) sought to obtain the perception of outcomes for participants, basing their research questions on the perceptions of the instructor’s role in their experience as an Outward Bound patron. A modified grounded theory was utilized to identify themes of the participants’ perception of their instructor and the impact that the instructor had on their sense of autonomy, feelings of community, teamwork, and sense of accomplishment (Bobilya et al., 2014). These themes, again, may parallel or mirror those of instructors, but there has not been research in this specific area to make the correlation.
In a different meta-analysis, Bowen, and Neill (2013) reviewed 197 studies directly related to adventure therapy outcomes. Bowen and Neill further confirmed the depth of which outcomes, barriers, and moderators have been studied. The evidence presented falls in line with that found by Bobliya et al. (2014). The added component was looking at the pre, during, and post time frames of outcomes and perceptions from participants. The researchers made comparisons between each grouping of students with conclusions leading towards the need for a better understanding of how results were influenced, from a qualitative approach (Bowen & Neill, 2013). Prior meta-analyses confirmed both short-term and long-term benefits when compared to those of alternative or no treatment groups (Bowen & Neill, 2013). Bowen and Neill’s findings presented the question of how much of an impact an instructor could have on the outcomes. That answer could lead to an even deeper question of how the instructor plays a role in these outcomes and what about them, their knowledge, methodology, self-efficacy, and experiences influence the experiences of the participants with whom they work.

**Adaptive Recreation Inside the Classroom**

It would not do justice to the subject matter and research to ignore the perspectives and literature from the standpoint of health and physical educators within the traditional learning environment. Looking at teacher preparation programs, service learning and hands-on experience integrated into the curriculum has proven to be both beneficial and perspective-altering (Roper & Santiago, 2014). Through a grounded theory approach, service learning was found to influence awareness and preconceived ideas of what it was like to work with persons with disabilities (Roper & Santiago, 2014). Service learning presented itself as an aspect of background education or preparation programming that influences ARP instructors. From Roper and Santiago’s (2014) study design and conclusions, the current case study provided insight into
how practical experience, internship contact hours, or interaction with students with disabilities before embarking on a career with an ARP can influence an instructor’s performance in the field. As stated in the conclusion of the article, an interview discussion incorporating “former undergraduate students who have taken the course to share their experiences and lessons learned” could allow an improved “understanding and acceptance of students with disabilities” (Roper & Santiago, 2014, p. 177). The interview discussions with OSCAR instructors provided knowledge of how service learning integration may be helpful to persons considering becoming ARP instructors or teachers.

Umhoefer, Vargas, and Beyer (2015) presented the idea of service learning and obtaining experience with populations with a disability in a way that parallels the ideas and conclusions from Roper and Santiago (2014). Utilizing Bandura’s (1977) theory of social persuasion, Umhoefer et al. applied the idea that social encouragement and support may grant adaptive physical education (APE) teachers or instructors confidence and persistence in their efforts with students with disabilities in the APE classroom. This idea is a continuation, or similar idea pattern, with what Roper and Santiago concluded, that experience and interaction with special populations can reorder preconceived ideas in a manner that grants self-assurance in APE teachers and instructors. To expand on this logic, discovering the preparation process that leads individuals to become ARP or APE instructors may provide insight and comprehension of how one can persevere in the scenarios and situations of ARP or APE implementation (Umhoefer et al., 2015). Questions of how perceptions of performance accomplishments may or may not enhance instructor experience and ability to be effective in their instruction methods within an ARP have been left unanswered by current literature. As such, the proposed research is needed
to fully comprehend the knowledge and skills necessary for individuals to be successful as an ARI within an ARP.

Teacher self-efficacy achieved through various methods of learning provided evidence that each method of learning produces a different level of self-efficacy (Umhoefer et al., 2015). A clearer definition of preparation programs and training is needed to pinpoint levels of efficacy when working with students or persons with disabilities (Umhoefer et al., 2015). Tying this to the conclusions of Roper and Santiago (2014), Munirova, Raynis, and Gvozdeva (2013), and Klein and Hollingshead (2015), the need for interaction with persons with disabilities, collaboration amongst fellow ARP or APE educators and instructors, and solid background knowledge in methodologies for instruction may all be necessary elements of the pathway to successful ARP and APE institutions. There is a blatant need to understand better how instructors come to work in these specified programs and how they continue to invest in the individuals seeking participation in ARP or APE (Klein & Hollingshead, 2015).

Research revealed that there is a good deal of collaboration between regular physical education teachers and special education teachers in the realm of health and physical education (Klein & Hollingshead, 2015). It has not yet identified if there is collaboration between regular recreation instructors and ARP instructors. To date, Lundberg et al. (2011) grazed the surface of this idea when studying participants’ outcomes and sense of meaning within an ARP in Crested Butte, Colorado. They have not, however, provided knowledge of the partnerships or associations between ARP instructors and regular sports instructors (Lundberg et al., 2011; Shields & Synnot, 2014; Umhoefer et al., 2015). To provide “an opportunity to lead a meaningful life to the greatest extent of their physical abilities,” (Klein & Hollingshead, 2015, p. 169) ARP and APE teachers and instructors must be properly prepared. For this preparation and
training to occur, leaders must obtain knowledge and awareness of how current instructors feel about their experience, background, and skill set, as they relate to successful performance achievement and proper program implementation (Marchand et al., 2009).

Munirova et al. (2013) elaborated on this need for training and education, calling instructors and teachers “polyfunctional” (p. 493). The vast variety of situations, disability profiles, and challenges presented to ARP and APE instructors requires an equally diverse skill set and ability base (Munirova et al., 2013). Questions of personal competence, comparative education, and professional teacher development were examined and found that the polyfunctional teacher requires characteristics of “multifunctionality, modularity, variability, flexibility in the dialogue of culture and sport” within the realm of sports instruction (Munirova et al., 2013, p. 498). These same attributes may, in fact, be needed to be an efficacious instructor in ARP or APE. No real evidence exists, or study conducted to identify the skills, knowledge, and experience needed to succeed as an ARI. There are ways to correlate or assume the similarities between sports education and ARP, but a true understanding of the daily tasks accomplished, and prerequisites needed have yet to be determined.

Recreation Therapy

Often, AR and RT are confused or thrown into the same category. Recreation therapy differs in the objective of the service (Barney, 2013). From the standpoint of a person seeking a service, individuals would look to RT as means to possibly improve cognitive, social, or motor functions, as an intervention (Borgi et al., 2016). The fundamental mission of recreational therapy is to remedy or improve an issue in the person receiving the service (Barney, 2013). AR, on the other hand, seeks to provide a service that allows individuals to participate in activities that they otherwise would not be able to, due to a physical, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral
disability (USARC, 2007). RT also elicits the use of animals in many instances, as they have shown to have a positive impact on recipients of these services (Borgi et al., 2016).

Looking specifically at children with ASD, Borgi et al. (2016) suggested that RT is beneficial to “lessen the impact of symptoms on children’s functions” (p. 1). In this sense, RT is utilized to assuage symptoms and increase daily function in society. It is considered an intervention method and not a service or adaptation to create an inclusive environment for a given activity. Therein lies the difference in RT and AR. Those working in RT are typically highly qualified, trained, and educated individuals with specific skill sets to properly execute service provision and adapt to each situation a client or patient may present (Barney, 2013). RT professionals focus on using “people-first language” and strive to constantly place the individual above a diagnosis (Barney, 2013, p. 36). ARIs, also use people-first language, but in a manner that does not identify their instruction methods as therapy or an intervention strategy.

To successfully perform RT duties and services a person must be keenly aware of the methodologies and practices related to therapeutic recreation (Barney, 2013). With the adoption of legislation like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), therapeutic organizations and institutions are being held to higher standards. There is a need to be prepared to serve all populations, regardless of capability or designation (Barney, 2013). Education departments at the collegiate level have adapted their curriculums to provide ample instruction and testing on the skills and knowledge required to perform the responsibilities of instructors in RT and special education positions. This adaptation raises awareness of a standard that all therapeutic recreation instructors should strive for and possibly achieve for consideration for a job in the RT field (Barney, 2013; Richard, 2016).
Richard (2016) took this concept to specification by gaining insight from practitioners in the RT field. Findings highlighted the importance of revamping the certification process through the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC). RT started its recognized certification and education programming in the early 1980’s (Richard, 2016). Since then, there has been a need for a revision of program curriculums, internship requirements, and certification examination. With research and discovery providing a guiding light, the NCTRC has sought to set the standard for degree requirements in the field of RT in higher education majors (Richard, 2016). Stakeholders have implemented stronger standards regarding coursework hours, in-field experience, and their version of student teaching placement with a mentor that holds an active Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) certification. This implementation of stronger standards represents the need for hands-on learning and experience before actively providing RT services in any capacity. The research and details related to these standards highlight the question of whether agencies in AR have taken these same steps and if not, then why not.

Barney (2013) and Richard (2016) provided information on the specific details of RT, how it came to be, and where it is now. Application of these studies is apparent in research conducted on the outcomes of RT and how service provision can impact enrollees (Garcia-Villamisar et al., 2017). There is a distinction between AR and RT, but the question remains of how the two entities could benefit from each other, if at all. Borgi et al. (2016) used mixed-model ANOVAs to confirm the positive outcomes of RT as a complementary strategy for children \( N = 28 \) with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). These results introduce asking whether RT and AR can work together for the good of those involved. As described by Barney (2013), individuals seeking either service or experience must practice an “advocate’s voice,” to obtain
the best-suited activity for their desires and needs. The two arenas have similarities, but they are also distinctly different.

**History of Adaptive Recreation Instruction**

Although there is not much in the way of adaptive recreation certification history and curriculum development, the current literature highlighted various components of ARPs. The idea that ARIs are skilled and experienced enough to respond to novel, unstructured circumstances in a successful manner presented by Tozer, Fazey, and Fazey (2007), was one that other researchers have approached as well. Shields and Synnot (2016) also sought a better understanding of the level of expertise necessary to be an ARI by asking participants in AR how they perceived their ARI that provided AR services. The question of how much knowledge and experience is necessary to reach expert level in AR is still open. Tozer et al. strived to obtain knowledge of the roles of leadership skills, outdoor expertise, and expedition experience. An argument was made for whether experience or education was a more desirable trait in ARI efficacy at an ARP (Tozer et al., 2007).

Expertise was defined as “an organized body of knowledge that is deep and contextualized” (Tozer et al., 2007, p. 58). Using this definition, six key skills were identified as (a) markers of expert level knowledge in adaptation, (b) recognizing patterns and features unnoticed by novice individuals, (c) ability to organize knowledge around a central idea that guides their practice, (d) ability to quickly recognize items that are applicable in a given circumstance, (e) capability of retrieving knowledge without much effort, (f) not necessarily being good at enabling another person to learn, and (g) the ability to exhibit various levels of flexibility when adapting to each novel situation (Tozer et al., 2007). These different skills were noted as necessary to achieve an expert level of adaptation and may become part of an ARP’s
hiring process, as a means of gaining highly qualified individuals as ARIs. Unfortunately, there has yet to be found a certification agency holding individuals to a standard to be eligible for work as an ARI (Lundberg et al., 2011). A general conclusion from Tozer et al. (2007) was that expert knowledge of AR could propel individuals towards expert ability levels of ARIN. This information is a key finding in the development of ARI programming and service provision, as it may provide insight into what ARP managers and leaders need to create successful programs. It does not, however, elicit knowledge of what is required to be an effective ARI in AR, thus leading to a gap in the literature of a full understanding of the expected standards for ARIs.

Addressing the specific needs of ARIs requires knowledge of what these needs are. Research suggested various challenges that face instructors in the realm of AR and RT (Marchand, 2008). An overlap between persons distinguished as therapists, social workers, and instructors is evident in the current literature. The nature of each of these professions is one that comes with several obstacles and requires a unique skill set and philosophy to be successful (Marchand, 2008). The likelihood that ARIs and recreation therapy instructors (RTI) spend significant time with persons who have emotional and behavioral disabilities stands to impact their performance, aptness for burnout, and vicarious trauma in their lives, both personal and professional (Marchand, 2008). Vicarious trauma consists of the effects that an instructor experiences from not having a disability, but from working with it day in and day out. The impact can produce similar trauma on instructors as it does on the person with the disability. Quantifiable evidence was produced to confirm three main challenges for RTIs. The first was time and scheduling constraints. Difficulties related to anxiety were second, but without any designation as to where or what this anxiety resulted from. This lack of designation calls for a more in-depth contextualization of the nature of the positions of an ARI and RTI. The impact of
physical and emotional difficulty was the final attribute identified and hinted at the effect of working with individuals that have emotional or behavioral disabilities. Learning from studies like Marchand (2008) and Lundberg et al. (2011) highlights the ARI experience and need for more comprehension of job duties and challenges. These qualitative inquiries into this specific profession may allow programming, training, and support to alleviate causes of high turnover, burnout, and vicarious trauma on ARIs and RTIs.

**History of adaptive recreation instructor preparation.** Some researchers have suggested that the amount of knowledge, education, and experience can influence an ARI’s tendency to stay with the profession for an extended time (Hurd, Elkins, & Beggs, 2014). Confidence and self-efficacy come from a person’s sensation that they can perform duties related to their job description, responsibilities, and profession (Bandura, 1978). A measurement of competency in a given subject was used to determine whether graduates (N=118) of recreation programs were prepared for their futures in the field (Hurd et al., 2014). The assessment covered 48 different attributes of entry-level professionals in recreation and proved that the ability to work with others, adapt to fluctuations in circumstance, and maintain a positive attitude were the highest skills obtained during an education program in recreation (Hurd et al., 2014). The graduates did not feel equipped or prepared for disciplining staff using hiring and firing processes and procedures, comprehending financial practices, or developing and maintaining a budget (Hurd et al., 2014). Application of these findings to the realm of ARIs in ARPs could provide guidance on what should and should not be included in ARIN education pathways and answer the lingering questions of Lundberg et al. (2011), Marchand et al. (2009), and Marchand (2008).
An additional concept that appears to be lacking comprehension is the idea of whether traditional instruction methods in a classroom are enough to prepare students for professions in recreation, specifically AR. The question remains whether these preparation programs and classes should incorporate in-service hours for experience with concepts and methodology application and if an internship should be required to obtain degree completion and certification in AR (Hurd et al., 2014). As noted by Richard (2016), the evaluation and evolution of the CTRS program have resulted in additional in-service training and experience, as well as a lengthy internship under the supervision of an active CTRS. If ARIs are required to have this distinction is unknown at this point. The idea of certification for individuals working in ARPs is active and thriving, but more knowledge on the standard for ARIs, whether certification is required, and what type of educational background these professionals have is needed. This knowledge may provide avenues for ARP leadership, managers, and instructors to improve their work environment and alleviate some of the challenges and stressors identified by Marchand (2008), Marchand et al. (2009), Shields and Synnot (2016), and Shields et al. (2012). Combining these ideas with the results of Roper and Santiago (2014) who pointed out how experience through in-service learning can positively impact students’ special education training before entering the field, research could potentially pave the way to improved curriculum across several content areas. Special education strategies and methods may be relevant to RTIN and ARIN, as these groups interact with and service individuals with varied special needs and disabilities (Pazey & Cole, 2012).

**Certification and self-efficacy.** Another agency that offers certifications for recreation professionals is the NRPA. Among the three options for certification are Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP), Aquatic Facility Operator, and Certified Playground Safety
Inspector (Xie, Yeatts, & Lee, 2013). Of these, none contain specific curriculum related to providing services and instruction to persons with a disability (Xie et al., 2013). Findings by Xie et al. (2013) resulted in the identification of no real emphasis on obtaining a certification from the NRPA by professionals working recreation. They also did not place a vested interest in furthering their educational knowledge to attain a certification as they did not believe it to be important in their opportunity for advancement within an organization or the recreation field (Xie et al., 2013). With inclusion becoming commonplace in society, the need for these professionals to be aware and capable of servicing special populations is immense. Xie et al. also proved there was a need to place importance on certification in areas specific to inclusion, AR, and adherence to disability legislation. Given the participant population size of Xie et al. (N=42), there is room for growth in the area of understanding how recreation professionals view certification and education. It does, however, highlight the fact that there are missing pieces in the realm of comprehending the needs, duties, and experiences of ARIs in the recreation field.

When approached with questions regarding their self-efficacy, ARIs may or may not look to their credentials and experience as a foundation. The likelihood that ARIs self-efficacy influences an organization’s effectiveness is something that proponents of certifications believe in (Mulvaney, Beggs, Elkins, & Hurd, 2015). Grouping the idea that students prefer in-service experience as an aspect of their education program with that of a positive impact from being certified in a specific area, research can be used to support initiatives to hold ARIs to a standard (Hurd et al., 2014; Mulvaney et al., 2015). When the administration of an ARP assesses their institutional effectiveness, they may place value on the background, education, and experience of their instruction staff. Part of this value may include the certification type and accreditation of the certifying agency. Sampling within the field of park and recreation, Mulvaney et al. (2015)
identified a clear difference in levels of self-efficacy between CPRP workers and non-CPRP workers \( (N = 347) \). As defined by Bandura’s (1997) social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is a person’s perceived performance capability for a given activity.

A difference in self-efficacy exists among park and recreation professionals when looking at different levels of certifications and educational degrees (Mulvaney et al., 2015). About AR specifically, the question becomes whether ARIs have specialty certifications or if they have a generalist certification, for example, a CPRP. Mulvaney et al. (2015) set a precedent that certification and specialty certification largely influence instructor self-efficacy which then impacts an organization’s overall effectiveness and success. Marchand’s (2008) idea of three key challenges impacting the burnout, turnover, and vicarious trauma of RTIs molded together with Mulvaney et al.’s notion that certification level impacts self-efficacy, could draw a conclusion that certification, the process of obtaining it, and the experience gained during this process may decrease the challenges faced by ARI professionals. The link needed in this model is a true understanding of ARIs in the arena of an ARP. The context of this recreation professional is crucial to applying findings of Mulvaney et al. and Marchand. Thorough knowledge of the specific experiences, daily activities, and on-the-job training of an ARI can open possible connections between the fields of AR, recreation, and RT and create a commonality between their education preparation programming.

From the lens of the instructor, the idea of obtaining an initial certification may grant ARIs the confidence to interview and apply for positions they otherwise would not (Mulvaney et al., 2015). This confidence could potentially correlate with a better lifestyle and sense of self, resulting in lower amounts of job-related stressors identified by Marchand (2008) and Marchand et al. (2009). Furthering ARI education through specialty certifications could also open doors to
different job types and allow for a different perspective on a career in AR, giving relief from a stressor related to a specific position he or she may have been performing (Mulvaney et al., 2015). The question remains of whether ARIs and administrators of ARPs view certifications as a necessity, benefit, or potential for an increase in organizational effectiveness.

**Program Leadership and Administration**

A final sector of literature that provides insight into ARP instructor experience is that of the leadership and program administrators. From a study on how to implement ARP or APE departments and programs, one could learn about the skills necessary for successful instruction. Pazey and Cole (2012) investigated the aspect of social justice as it related to providing opportunities for all students to experience learning in encouraging environments. They noted that a “discussion of children with disabilities is rarely an integral part of leadership preparation programs” (Pazey & Cole, 2012, p. 245). Given this small snapshot of the overall larger study, one can deduce the lack of knowledge and understanding that many leaders in ARP and the traditional education environment have on what is needed to create promising learning experiences for students with disabilities. Larger issues have been more prevalent in leadership training, like race, gender, and socioeconomic issues (Pazey & Cole, 2012). For program leaders and administrators to properly provide opportunities to special populations, there is a need for comprehension of the attributes required to advocate for and empower these same populations. Without awareness of the experience and practice of providing ARP services, leadership cannot possibly acquire and retain qualified professionals to carry out the objectives of the program (Clark, 2014; Pazey & Cole, 2012).

Persons looking to become involved in ARP or APE need to know that the leadership, program directors, and stakeholders are knowledgeable in the characteristics of and
methodologies involved in ARP/APE services (Clark, 2014). Currently, the published research is related to proper leadership strategy, conflict resolution, public relations, and legal liabilities that have commonly created issues for institutions providing any educational service (Pazey & Cole, 2012). Hopkins (2014) highlighted the increased need for leaders to fill “the role of managing adolescent mental health conditions, both pro-active or preventatively, and reactively, in providing counseling, referrals, and support” (p. 20). When in an administrative position of an ARP, leaders must have the skills, knowledge, and experience to handle all situations that may arise from working with special populations. Stemming from leadership, if the instructors do not believe that their leader possesses these attributes, what is their motivation for obtaining them? This thought leads to further validation for researching the overall experience of ARP instructors and what they believe to be necessary to successfully provide APE or ARP services and experiences to special populations (Hopkins, 2014; Pazey & Cole, 2012).

Utilization of techniques found to increase the acquisition of knowledge, like that of Thomas, Pinter, Carlisle, and Goran (2015) may grant leaders and administrators a solid grasp of how teachers’ preparation programs, background, and experience can impact their performance in the fields of ARP and APE. Using student response systems (SRS) in training and preparation sessions was shown to improve student retention of knowledge (Thomas et al., 2015). Through engaging activities like SRS in-service learning, and encounters with special populations before actual career beginnings, administrators may feel confident in the instructors they hire to work in their institutions (Thomas et al., 2015). To date, there is no evidence in the literature that this is a factor in the acquisition of ARP instructors. For future programs to have a solid model to base their endeavors upon, a thorough conceptualization of the instructor experience, administrator
involvement, and organizational structure is needed (Lundberg et al., 2011; Marchand et al., 2009; Mullins, 2015; Pazey & Cole, 2012).

**Summary**

Through reviewing the literature on ARPs, ARIs, and AR, several aspects of ARP and APE need further understanding, structure, and application. Because ARP is a relatively new field, many components have yet to be studied and comprehended (Lundberg et al., 2011; Marchand et al., 2009; Mullins, 2015). There is ample research on proper traditional teacher preparation programs and the inclusion of in-service learning, such as student teaching (Roper & Santiago, 2014). However, there is little research on non-traditional learning avenues for persons looking to become an ARI (Marchand et al., 2009, Mullins, 2015; Stevens & Wellman, 2007). There are learning and organizational theories applicable to different environments, but a need exists for further research on how to successfully implement them in a manner that provides optimum results for students and clients looking to participate in activities or services provided by non-traditional institutions such as an ARP (McGrath, 2009). Capturing a full description of ARP instructors in a successful organization structure may provide future learners, educators, and leaders with a deeper awareness and familiarity with the requirements vital to the triumphant execution of ARPs around the world, essentially producing a detailed framework of what works in ARP implementation (Schlatter, 2009).

Through the application of Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory and Knowles’ (1980) adult learning theory, a qualitative case study of OSCAR’s instructors may reveal specific characteristics, skills, and perspectives imperative to positive performance (Schlatter, 2009). The participants in this study could contribute to the future of AR and the ability of programs to grant opportunities to persons with disabilities that they otherwise may never have been privy to
(Ryan et al., 2014). The findings may create inspiration for future program development and encourage future educators to become involved in AR or create instructor preparation programs so that others can take part in an environment of recreation they might not have thought possible before.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

A qualitative case study approach was used to fill the current gap in the literature by discovering the experiences and roles of adaptive recreation instructors (ARIs) at OSCAR. Research exists on adaptive recreation from both a quantitative and qualitative design approach; however, prior research focused on the outcomes of participation, the experiences of the participants, the job-related stress and retention of instructors, and the perceived barriers and facilitators of outdoor recreation industry personnel working with children with a disability (Bowen & Neill, 2013; Lundberg et al., 2011; Mullins, 2015; Shields & Synnot, 2014). This study focused on the role of the instructor, the pathway to becoming an ARI, the influence of background experience and education, and the instructor training provided by the study site, OSCAR. A need exists for a detailed outline of the approach, design, procedures, and data analysis for future replication studies (Creswell, 2013). Efforts to maintain trustworthiness and ethical standards are also imperative to the validity of a case study to create a rich, thick context of this specific role in the realm of AR (Yin, 2014). The findings allow for program development, instructor training curriculum development, and implementation strategies for both development and training. These findings fill the current gap in the literature, as evidenced by Lundberg et al. (2011), Marchand et al. (2009), Mullins (2015), Munirova et al. (2013), and Shields and Synnot (2014).

I provided a detailed description of the design and explained why I chose it. The specific research questions were listed to outline the information sought through this case study. I also provided a brief description of the study site, its general geographic location, origination, and purpose, to understand the reason for choosing it. I included an outline of the participant
population and procedures. The role of the researcher was detailed, and all data collection tools and methods were presented to disclose details needed to replicate the study if desired. This information includes standardized interview questions to elicit the various perspectives of participants, observation methods, documents to be analyzed, and the reflective journal prompts. I described data analysis methods and practices and the steps taken to achieve trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. I follow this information with an explanation of all ethical considerations taken into account during the study’s proposal, implementation, and review.

**Design**

For the benefit of awareness and true comprehension of an ARI, a qualitative approach was chosen (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative inquiry allows the researcher to obtain a full picture of an experience, situation, or case, rather than seeking to prove or disprove a single idea or hypothesis (Creswell, 2013, 2015; Yin, 2014). There was no pursuit of a simple answer to a single question; rather the researcher sought to find and cultivate an in-depth description of the subject (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). The very basis of qualitative study granted the researcher the ability to ascertain the meaning and definition of a specific phenomenon within the social constructs of its natural setting (Creswell, 2013). In the end, this study design allowed for lessons learned to contribute to the literature on AR and ARIs in a way that it was previously missing (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014).

The case study design allowed for an immersion in the setting of OSCAR and granted the opportunity for triangulation of findings through analysis of various types of data gathered from various stakeholders within the same organization (Yin, 2014). The case study design, beginning in psychology, sought to determine the how and why of a phenomenon (Yin, 2014). The nature
of AR requires an in-depth and all-embracing perspective to properly obtain a true description of the phenomenon of ARIs’ preparedness and confidence to serve effectively (Marchand et al., 2009; Yin, 2014). Bromley (1986) described this description as the captivating component of case study research. The case study design allowed for an understanding in a real-world context, giving integrity to the findings and contextual descriptions created (Yin, 2014). The nature of intrinsic research amplifies the description as it seeks to study a specific case due to its unique perspective (Creswell, 2013).

The intrinsic nature of this case study allowed for the unique set of circumstances at OSCAR to be thoroughly identified (Yin, 2014). An evaluation of the program structure and service provision at OSCAR provided details for future program creation and procedure structure (Creswell, 2013). The context and surroundings of the case were components of this evaluation that were necessary to fully comprehend the uniqueness of quality ARIN (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014).

**Research Questions**

Research questions sought to answer previous researchers’ identification of missing pieces and served to combat the gap in the literature. As Marchand et al. (2009) pointed out, there is missing evidence of how the working environment and an ARI’s experiences and interactions impact their ability to provide AR services successfully. Also, the learning theories of Bandura (1986) and Knowles (1980) were needed to truly comprehend how an ARI obtains the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their daily job tasks. Based on findings from the research of Lundberg et al. (2011), acquiring the personal perspective of an ARI’s pathway to becoming part of AR was also necessary to better provide preparation curriculum. Lundberg et al. acknowledged the need to better understand the identity association of adaptive sports and
recreation instructors. Four research questions were used to eliminate these gaps in the current literature.

1. How does an individual’s background and education influence an adaptive recreation instructor’s ability to provide adaptive recreation services to clients?

2. What instructor preparation training takes place at OSCAR?

3. What do the adaptive recreation instructors at OSCAR gain from observing each other, the executive director, the program director, and patron interactions?

4. How do daily interactions with other ARIs, the program director, the executive director, and the marketing director influence instructor ability to perform their job duties successfully at OSCAR?

**Setting**

OSCAR was founded in 2006 in northwestern Colorado in a mountain town of about 10,000 residents. Information regarding this setting came from their website not identified or cited here to protect confidentiality. There is a large market for tourism and the founders of OSCAR have personal interests in providing special services, as they have children with disabilities, have a disability themselves, or have had a friend or family member acquire a disability over their lifespan. The nature in which the organization began adds to the appeal and sincerity of OSCAR over any other program like it; everyone involved with its founding had a personal interest in its success, mission, and vision for the future, due to the presence of disability in their family life. The program is smaller in size and dedicated to creating recreational experiences for all visitors, residents, and staff who may otherwise not be able to participate in physical activity and adventure. An executive director, program coordinator, marketing director, and a team of 13 to 20 instructors providing services serve as the
organizational structure of this non-profit organization.

One of the founders, invested since the inception of the organization, is the current executive director. Services include kids and teen adventure camps; summer camps for children, teens, and military; adaptive race camps for all ages; seasonal programs for all ages and sports; Special Olympics race training; Fun Friday school year events; and private lessons for a multitude of sports. The adaptive sports included in camps, training, racing, and Fun Fridays span summer and winter sports. They include bicycling, hiking, kayaking, horseback riding, sailing, rock climbing, golfing, and fishing. It also includes swimming, pickle ball, paddle boarding, track and field, gymnastics, dance, ice skating, waterskiing, wakeboarding, basketball, volleyball, frisbee golf, tubing, archery, snow skiing, ski-biking, and snowboarding.

**Participants**

The sample size was 14 instructors, the executive director, program director, and marketing director, allowing for maximum variation in experience, education, and years on the job (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). These titles, as well as individual pseudonym names, were given to protect the confidentiality of the participant population. A participant tracking sheet was created and held in a password-protected file on a computer of which only I have access. The size was selected based on the number of full-time ARIs currently working at OSCAR. Full-time instructor status at OSCAR was part of the criterion used to select the participants. The participants had variation in years of experience and provided a broader perspective of the ARI role, pathway to career, and on-the-job training. All participants in this study took part in member checking via review of the transcripts of their interviews to ensure the accuracy of their words (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014).
Procedures

As part of the preparation for this study, I met with the executive director of OSCAR, to obtain written approval to study the program. Also, during the preparation phase of this study, I sought individuals to conduct an expert review of the data collection methods, forms, and reflective journal guide to ensure face and content validity. From the feedback of this review, I made edits to the interview questions, data collection, and documentation forms. I conducted these reviews several times, each time resulting in improved data collection tools, including the addition of separate sets of interview questions for each participant position: executive director, program director, marketing director, and ARIs.

Before beginning this study, I received approval from Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB; see Appendix A). Upon approval, I conducted a pilot study with three individuals in the position of an ARI in an ARP. These individuals came from a separate program, located in eastern Colorado. The data collection practice took place through interviews, observations, and completion of the reflective journal. From this experience, I learned to be concise when asking my questions, refrain from assisting the participant in finishing their thoughts when it seemed they were searching for words and remain objective throughout the interview occurrence. These are things that I was not aware that I did and found this pilot study extremely useful in learning my own style of interviewing. The pilot study also provided an opportunity for my nervousness to subside and I was able to become comfortable in the setting of research interviews. I ensured this program that the task was to practice my data collection methods and I destroyed all information obtained within one week of the actual encounter.

After completing the pilot study, I took the informed consent forms to the executive
director of OSCAR for distribution to the instructors, program director, and marketing director. As noted by Yin (2014), I executed clarity and full disclosure through a discussion of the research plan with the executive director and with the use of recruitment letters and consent forms (see Appendix B and C) for all participants in this study. All efforts were made to ensure confidentiality through use of pseudonyms for both the study setting and all participants, as well as storing data on a password protected computer and cloud.

I conducted the semi-structured interviews in a private office located within the organization’s building at Mount Nibali (pseudonym). I recorded these conversations using my iPhone and transcribed them later. In case of iPhone failure, I used the recording feature provided by my iPad Pro. I conducted the transcription process, without the use of an outside transcriptionist. Use of an iPad Pro allowed for in-field note-taking, recording of observation sessions, and reflection memoing upon completion of the observations. I went to a private office within the OSCAR building, to reflect upon observations immediately following them. The third step in data collection, document analysis, occurred in the executive director’s office, as these items are sensitive in nature. I examined the documents maintaining the participants’ confidentiality. Before giving these forms to me, the executive director stripped the application forms of all identifying information, to alleviate any cross-referencing of identity from interview answers to application information (Yin, 2014). This removal of identifying information allowed for complete confidentiality within the case in the reporting of findings.

Data analysis took place in my home office, after transcribing all interviews and observations into word documents. Use of a blackboard and whiteboard enabled triangulation of themes and categories and allowed me to create enumeration charts, tables, and graphs for the codes, themes, and categories (Yin, 2014). Identification of the order of events in an ARI’s
instructor training and experience occurred through these categorical synthesis processions (Yin, 2014). This identification allowed me to confirm true attainment of saturation in my findings (Creswell, 2013).

**The Researcher's Role**

As a human instrument, I took proper steps to relate any biases during interviews, observations, and when reviewing the reflection journals (Creswell, 2013). To remain open-minded, I have researched the organization’s origination, its services, the organizational structure, and the population it serves by way of internet reviews, the organization’s website, and newspaper articles. I also held a brief meeting with the executive director to obtain preliminary approval to study OSCAR (personal communication, 2016). I acted as a sponge, absorbing all details of the program, the instructor role, and the hierarchy of the program (Yin, 2014). As someone in education, I do admit my tendency to praise higher education and professional certification in the area of one’s profession. Discovering the background of the participants provided details against this traditional view, demanding that I omit any judgment from the findings that may give a sense of derogatory sentiment toward instructor training.

**Data Collection**

I, as the human instrument in qualitative research, made every effort to be properly prepared for fieldwork (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) advised that data collected through interviews, observations, documents, and reflective journals provide rich details about the case under investigation. I used each of these data collection tools to obtain rich details regarding ARI training, practice, and professional experience. Interviews allowed for verbal information to be obtained in a personal manner and were semi-structured and in-depth (Yin, 2014). Observations were purposeful and granted prolonged engagement with the working
environment of OSCAR and provided the researcher an opportunity to be involved in the activities of the case (Yin, 2014). Documents strengthened the findings through triangulation and convergence (Yin, 2014). The reflective journals were also a source of triangulation for codes and themes identified in interview transcripts, observation notes, and document analysis (Yin, 2014).

**Interviews**

In semi-structured interviews, Patton (2015) suggested that participants answer open-ended questions from an interview guide. The questions I created were directly related to the research questions of the study. I catered the timing of these interviews to each participant’s schedule and availability. I conducted them within the offices of OSCAR, in a private room with a “do not disturb” sign on the door to avoid possible interruptions. I tried to direct conversation to the focus of the topic within each question. The interview guides (see Appendices D, E, F, and G) allowed for focused conversation, expression, and responses (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2014). I recorded these interviews with my iPhone and an iPad Pro that is password protected that I own. The data collection strategy addressed all four of the research questions.

**Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions for ARIs at OSCAR (see Appendix D)**

1. How did you first learn about OSCAR?
2. Why did you decide to apply for the ARI position at OSCAR?
3. Please describe your on-site training at OSCAR.
4. Please describe all of your education and training background prior to working at OSCAR.
5. Please describe your work experiences prior to working at OSCAR.
6. How did your work experience and education impact your decision to work as an ARI?

7. What was your view of ARPs before coming to work at OSCAR?

8. How have you developed the knowledge and skills for your approach to working with individuals with disabilities at OSCAR?

9. How do your observations of your supervisors working with clients at OSCAR influence your own approach to your work?

10. How has the culture of the field impacted your ability or desire to become educated in special education strategies or methodologies? Why?

11. What has enabled you to feel like you successfully provide AR services to clients?

12. What challenges do you face working as an ARI? How do you cope with these?

13. What would you recommend to someone looking to become a part of an ARP as an ARI?

Question one was directly related to the first of the research questions, understanding the specific training and preparation of OSCAR for their ARIs. Maumbe (2014) identified the notion of there being three distinct methods for learning recreation instruction. Questions two and three were related to obtaining a true description of the background, experience, and view of AR from each ARI. This description was important to the overall context of the role of an ARI, as it relates to the pathway by which a person comes to work at an ARP. Additionally, this information further advanced the methodology of Maumbe and provided knowledge on whether the current three instruction methods are appropriate or if they need revision. Question nine also correlated with these, as an afterthought of what a current ARI would recommend to future ARIs. Jull and Mirenda (2016) asserted that there was a need to understand the precise nature of
instructor relationships with clients, client compliance, and skill acquisition. Question nine addressed this concern. Questions four and five looked at the culture and interactions within OSCAR, eliciting viewpoints of how the structure of the organization and observation of colleagues impacts an ARI’s daily practices and methodologies in providing services in an ARP. Knowles (1980) asserted that adult learners must grasp the why behind the what in their skill use and performance. Questions four and five were directly related to this theory due to the likelihood that ARIs learn from observation and interaction, as well as self-identify with the culture in which they are working. Questions six, seven, and eight were related to the final aspect of the research, how the work environment influences their ability to be successful as an ARI at OSCAR. This perspective was imperative to the overall goal of obtaining a full understanding of the role of an ARI, by way of Bandura (1986) and the idea that a person perceives their environment to shape and control their behavior and attitude.

When addressing the role of the Executive Director of OSCAR, the interview questions sought a unique perspective on ARIs and their job role, selection, and performance within the program. These interview questions utilized the study’s research questions to obtain in-depth knowledge on each, by way of specific inquiry into various facets of AR, program management, service implementation, and the ARI’s role. These were also firmly based in the literature, using previous study designs to formulate each question (see Appendix E).

Standardized Questions for Executive Director Interview

1. How did you come to be the Executive Director of OSCAR and not another ARP?
2. What do you believe Adaptive Recreation (AR) means?
3. What training have you had in AR?
4. Please describe your education background, as it relates to AR.
5. Prior to working at OSCAR, what work experience did you have?

6. Were you an ARI at any time in your career?

7. How has your education and training impacted your work approach at OSCAR?

8. What do you believe an ARI needs to be successful?

9. What are you looking for when you begin the process of hiring an ARI?

10. What on-site training do you offer your ARIs?

11. Do you participate in the AR training?

12. What aspects of your ARIs make you feel OSCAR is successful?

13. What challenges do ARIs face?

14. How do you support your team of ARIs and supervisors?

15. What recommendations would you give to a person looking to get involved in ARPs?

Question one related to the attraction of the study setting, in relation to other programs in the country. Shields and Synnot (2014) expressly suggested that the program’s perspective to client families influenced the likelihood of engagement in AR. The study site’s success over the last decade testified to the truth of this statement, furthering the weight of the idea in the realm of AR. Question two was important to gain a true understanding and identification of AR from the standpoint of the leader of an ARP. Sheehan (2015) identified the role of management in improving the outcomes of AR programs and question two may make a connection between instructor behavior and performance and the experience of clients at an ARP. Taking Sheehan a step further, questions three, four, five, and six provided insight into how a leader or founder of an ARP approaches the training and preparation programs for their ARIs, as well as what they believe to be influential in at ARI’s ability to perform job duties. Questions seven, eight, and nine approached the same idea of discovering a leadership perspective and how the leadership
has chosen to pursue hiring ARIs, what is desirable, and how their own experiences have shaped the leadership’s viewpoint of what constitutes qualified ARI candidates. These answers further developed the findings of Mulvaney et al. (2015), in that certification and education achievement impacts the probability of hiring a person as an ARI at an ARP. Also, Mulvaney et al. suggested that management may be inclined to offer incentives for staff to further their training by stating their high value on certification. Question 10 was important to fully understand whether this is important for management and how much support and training an ARP should provide to their staff of ARIs, and if this on-the-job training is beneficial or a requirement. Question 11 continued the advancement of Mulvaney et al. by asserting the idea of achieving state of the art skills and knowledge for more than just ARIs. Additionally, it unveiled answers to the research questions regarding observing other ARIs and supervisors, as well as comprehending the influence of interactions with supervisors during service provision. Question 12 was based on Xie et al.’s (2013) identification that certification held value amongst recreation educators and allowed for better documentation of what characteristics, skills, and instruction philosophy are important for an ARI to be successful. Questions 13 and 14 coincided with one another, as they worked together to enlighten the aspects of ARIs’ job duties and experiences that call for added support, training, and experience, which also provided evidence for Xie et al. and the idea that certification is a necessity in recreation. These two questions spanned all four of the research questions and helped identify areas that needed improvement. The final question covered all ideas that have been brought to light by the previous questions, to cover any possible caveats relevant to the research questions. This executive director participant was crucial to the goal of this study, as the leader of an ARP shed light onto the ARI role from a lens of experience and management, as noted by Mulvaney et al. and their suggestion to research if “degree attainment,
degree type and field of study, organizational effectiveness, primary job responsibilities, and job status” (p. 108) are important components to an ARP’s ability to be successful.

The next participant to be interviewed was the program director and was needed due to the intimate nature of the relationship between program implementation and instruction. This interview sought to understand better the details behind choosing ARIs and how to prepare them for program provision. It shed light on the relationship between a direct supervisor and the ARI. Understanding how these positions work together was a crucial component in obtaining the full description of an ARI within an AR program (see Appendix F).

Standardized Questions for the Program Director Interview

1. How did you come to know OSCAR?
2. What do you believe Adaptive Recreation (AR) means?
3. What training have you had in AR?
4. Please describe your education background, as it relates to AR.
5. Prior to working at OSCAR, what work experience did you have?
6. Were you an ARI at any time in your career?
7. How has your education and training impacted your work approach at OSCAR?
8. What do you believe an ARI needs to be successful?
9. What are you looking for when you begin the process of hiring an ARI?
10. What on-site training do you offer your ARIs?
11. Do you participate in the AR training?
12. What are your goals when you begin to create programming for OSCAR?
13. How often do you redevelop your programming structure?
14. What types of programs do you offer?
15. How do you keep programming synonymous with the mission of OSCAR?
16. How do you create curriculum for various populations?
17. Do you have a specialty in a given area?
18. What aspects of your ARIs make you feel OSCAR is successful?
19. What challenges do ARIs face?
20. How do you support your team of ARIs and supervisors?
21. What recommendations would you give to a person looking to get involved in ARPs?

The program director had a unique perspective on questions one, two, three, and four. Their ability to create curriculum and instruction methodology for an ARP’s approach to servicing special populations relied on their knowledge in the area and expanded the findings of Mulvaney et al. (2015). Taking the idea of Mulvaney et al. that discovering what qualifications are important for an ARP to be successful, questions five, six, and seven outlined the necessary education, skills, and work experience to carry out functions of AR and RT appropriately. Questions eight and nine helped to determine whether the program director had experience as an ARI and allowed capturing of ideas related to the needs of an ARI. This perspective was critical to the discovery process of identifying the role of an ARI in an ARP. This information provided evidence of service learning, as highlighted in Zimmerman et al. (2014), as a means of acquiring the required skills and knowledge to provide AR services. Additionally, question 10 provided knowledge on the what, when, where, and how of ARI on the job training and preparation, which advanced the implications that ARIs learn from their environments as stated in the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Question 11 applied the adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980) and was crucial to understanding the influence of relationships, observation, and supervision experience on an ARI. If the director, as a supervisor, participated in training with
their staff, the implications were large. Regarding the mission of programming at an ARP, questions 12 and 13 shed light on the lifespan on any given training and service program and confirmed the idea of evaluating programs and curriculum, as noted by Richard (2016). With the constant discovery in the realm of instruction, it was wise to ascertain how often a director assesses programming and training. For the program director to adequately provide services to clients and training for staff, questions 14, 15, and 16 elicited specifics of each program, the training needed to provide that program, and how they relate to the mission of AR and RT. Schlatter (2009) found that needs assessments should often occur in recreation programs, so these questions provided evidence that needs assessments should often happen in AR programs as well. Utilizing Schlatter a bit further, I directed question 17 towards discovering whether there are specialties within ARIN and ARPs. It highlighted a need for specification within training and preparation programs for ARIs, answering research questions one and two. In relation to the study setting, question 18 sought to understand why OSCAR has been successful and what aspects of their organizational structure allowed it to thrive. This information advanced the findings of Shields and Synnot (2014) that it is the program’s approach and attitude towards AR that allows instructors to feel effective and clients to feel welcomed. Questions 19 and 20 correlated with research questions one, three, and four, and provided a better understanding of the relationship between supervisor and ARI, the support system necessary to retain qualified ARIs, and how on the job training impacts ARI performance. These connections and relationships provided evidence for the learning pathway of an ARI and expanded the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). The final question presented an opportunity for the interviewee to express any lingering thoughts, ideas, or comments stirred during the interview. It was an informal open mic to allow additional expression from the program director.
The marketing director’s view of OSCAR was another unique perspective, as she must understand the mission, structure, and implementation of the organization to market it to the appropriate people. She had insight on ARIs that differed from the executive director and program director, as she did not necessarily take part in the hiring process for ARIs and did not participate in the same training or have the same experiences. These questions were based on previous study design and sought to answer the gaps in the current literature (see Appendix G).

**Standardized Questions for Marketing Director Interview**

1. How did you come to know OSCAR?

2. What do you believe Adaptive Recreation (AR) means?

3. What training have you had in AR?

4. Please describe your education background, as it relates to AR.

5. Prior to working at OSCAR, what work experience did you have?

6. Were you an ARI at any time in your career?

7. How has your education and training impacted your work approach at OSCAR?

8. What do you believe an ARI needs to be successful?

9. What are you looking for when you begin the process of marketing a new program or development?

10. What aspects of your ARIs do you highlight in your marketing strategy?

11. How do you market on-site training to the staff?

12. Do you participate in the AR training?

13. What challenges do ARIs & ARPS face?

14. How do you support your team of ARIs and supervisors?

15. What recommendations would you give to a person looking to get involved in ARPs?
This participant’s response and perspective were unlike others. They highlighted aspects of an ARP that were different from those of a person working in programming, providing services, and practicing ARIN. From a marketing standpoint, this interviewee was able to offer insight into how the public perceives ARPs and AR and whether society widely accepts their mission of creating inclusive recreational environments. Questions one through six were related to whether the marketing director had, in fact, had any experience as an ARI and if that brought personal investment in AR to the program. Using Knowles (1980), this question unearthed a connection between knowing why ARIIs must have certain knowledge and skills and how they correlate to providing successful AR services. Answers highlighted aspects of AR that the other participants did not quite see, as they were performing the services and not objectively observing them. Questions one through six were related to research questions one and two. Given the likelihood that the marketing director had an educational background outside that of ARIN, question seven elicited more diverse answers than those of interviewees in other groups, for example ARIs, executive director, and program director. This question also expanded the knowledge gained from Roper and Santiago (2014) by showing how service learning can change a person’s perception of a given service or experience. Question eight related to how the marketing director viewed ARIs, ARPs, and AR in general and used Knowles’ (1980) idea that a person must fully understand the why behind the what, when they learn a concept or methodology. It was related to answering research questions two, three, and four. Responses to questions nine and 10 answered how the public views AR and whether ARI background, education, and training were important when advertising ARPs, and added another layer to research questions one and two. These answers furthered the findings of Lundberg et al. (2011) and ascertain areas that ARIs self-identify or not. Within the ARP, responses to questions 11 and
12 identified how ARI perception of self-efficacy impacted the investment in on-the-job training and preparation programs and whether the marketing director experienced these enough to market them to staff. It was directly related to research questions one, three, and four, as well as the assertion of Mulvaney et al. (2015) that certification and education impacted self-efficacy in recreation professionals. From a non-contact viewpoint, I directed question 13 at gaining knowledge of the struggles and challenges that ARIs experience from what the marketing director has observed. This information confirmed and advanced those stressors found by Marchand (2008), Shields and Synnot (2014), and Umhoefer et al. (2015). Question 14 followed this by asking what a marketing director can do to encourage ARIs through their trials. As with all other interviews, the last question presented an opportunity to express any ideas or thoughts not covered during the interview. It encouraged expansion of previous answers and offered a chance to point out unforeseen concepts not mentioned in the interview guide.

**Observations**

Through immersion in the daily activities of ARIs at OSCAR, I observed how instructors interacted with clients, how they communicated with one another, and how they communicated with their supervisors. I also observed the support they received from supervisors and one another, and why they used certain tactics to successfully provide ARP services to individuals with varying disabilities (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). The protocol for memoing these observations followed the lead of Creswell (2013) and had a sheet formatted with two columns: descriptive notes and reflective notes (see Appendix H). The two perspectives, descriptive and reflective, granted the researcher an in the moment idea, as well as an after the fact. They assisted in identifying themes from the interviews and other observations. The descriptive notes were from the actual observation and provided a chronological order of what transpired during
each observation session (Creswell, 2013). The reflection notes, in addition to previously mentioned assistance in conclusions, allowed for theme development and a visual picture of the actual event that took place during the observation. Care and special consideration for the participants were my burden, not the participant’s (Yin, 2014). I scheduled these on a day and time that the researcher was present and the participant was available for observation with a client. They lasted as long as the participant’s sessions and schedule allowed.

Document Review

A review of instructor applications was conducted to understand better the who, where, when, and what of instructor background. This document review helped to highlight what characteristics, education, background, and work experiences the executive and program directors view as desirable. These responses assisted in answering research questions one and two. From applications and preparation program tests, I identified what the required standard level of knowledge was for successful program implementation and service provision. It also showed which certifications, if any, were appropriate for conducting work as an ARI.

Review of OSCAR’s on-site curriculum and supporting documents allowed for a thorough comprehension of how much information ARIs receive during their training phase, how they use that information in practical application, and what they must test out with to progress to the next level of instructor training at OSCAR. There were detailed pathways for ARIs entering active instruction that outlined the differences in on the job training required of ARIs at OSCAR. These documents allowed understanding of the parallels between instructor background, education, and experience with AR at an ARP.

Reflective Journal

The participants completed a reflective journal (see Appendix I) after I conducted the
interviews and observations. I used an eight-question template as a guide, in hopes of creating an open mic environment for anything an ARI did not or forgot to say during their interview or after an observation of an AR session with a client. These allowed for triangulation of data, coding, and themes within the other data collection methods (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014).

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis, according to Yin (2014), consisted of examining, categorizing, and reconnecting evidence to provide empirical findings. Initially, I transcribed the interview conversations. They were provided to the participants to complete member checking, an important component of the examination step in data analysis. The transcripts of the interviews were then reviewed by myself, and memos created in the margins to identify recurrent themes or reactions and larger categories created from these themes (Yin, 2014). A matrix of categories was developed to show a flow of ideas, with efforts made to timeline the development self-efficacy in relation to experience and training. This step in the process provided a thorough search for me to find concepts and grant identification of priorities within the data for further analysis and understanding (Yin, 2014).

An enumeration chart (see Appendix J) was created to outline open codes identified in each data collection tool (Yin, 2014). Enumeration of each code found in the data was tabulated within the chart and noted as such to show validity. From the open codes, a synthesis provided the relationships between codes, noted as characteristics in the enumeration chart, and allowed for linkage between them and the original research questions (Yin, 2014). Characteristics identified within the open codes surfaced as occurring at similar points in each ARI’s timeline that led to him or her working at OSCAR. These allowed for the discovery of similarities or differences between each of these experiences. Identification of these links noted as themes on
the enumeration chart led to a conceptualization of the data and creation of a rich, detailed description of the ARI experience (Creswell, 2013).

Relying on the theories of Bandura (1986) and Knowles (1980), I was able to investigate the data to pinpoint relevant conditions within participant experiences that granted an explanation for themes discovered (Yin, 2014). The foundation of this approach rested on the strategy of developing a comprehension of plausible other influences in an ARI’s pathway to working in the field of AR. The foundation also served to create awareness of the role of an ARI, and assist in highlighting the needs and experience of working in AR (Yin, 2014). It also allowed for the discovery of rival explanations of themes within the data, from identification of differences between each participant’s experience (Yin, 2014). Consideration of alternative or conflicting explanations was a crucial component of data analysis in case study research and required that I attend to every piece of data obtained during the collection stage. I attained confirmation of codes, characteristics, and themes identified through critical checks via experts in the field and following the case study protocol of beginning with propositions and ending with analytic generalizations (Yin, 2014). Following the logic model from Yin (2014), a flow of events within OSCAR was identified to explain further and describe the needs, stressors, and levels of self-efficacy of ARIs.

**Trustworthiness**

I conducted this qualitative research in a manner that allowed for trustworthiness, including credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The four pieces of trustworthiness directly relate to the repeatability and consistency of the research, its procedures, and its findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through multiple data collection tools, I achieved triangulation. Member checking and peer debriefing
were also used to increase the study’s trustworthiness. Finally, I conducted a peer review after data analysis and after identifying the findings.

**Credibility**

In the undertaking of observations and interviews, I recognized my role as an observer and facilitator of questions alone (Yin, 2014). I was also aware of the likelihood that I would become a supporter or advocate of AR, specifically for OSCAR’s AR services. Within my bracketing journal (see Appendix K), I included an entry to set aside my biases in situations that these feelings arise. The bracketing journal allowed me to recognize any bias that surfaced at any time during this study and I took steps to reduce the likelihood of these biases within the data. I made a concerted effort to focus on taking observational notes and detailing the events witnessed; although I was willing to become the participant-observer if the opportunity presented itself (Yin, 2014). If a situation arose where the researcher must become a participant, then the researcher would discard the observation reflection notes, as they pertained to actions taken rather than mere observations (Yin, 2014). Because there were several sessions and instructors working at the same time, I made every effort to view each participant in their respective sessions, at one particular place of occurrence. As such, I experienced prolonged engagement throughout day-long endeavors to observe several instructors over their entire day with a client (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). This engagement granted the findings credibility, as they were not mere assumptions from a single encounter (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants reviewed transcripts of interviews, a process known as member checking. As noted by Yin (2014), persistent observations like this assisted in the triangulation of data to develop themes and codes that confirmed and created credibility within these findings.
Dependability and Confirmability

A sample size of 17 participants was selected to achieve a true description of the role on an ARI at OSCAR. This size allowed for maximum variation in the demographics of the overall sample (Creswell, 2013). I collected and analyzed data from all participants to reach a detailed and honest identification of the role of an ARI. An enumeration chart served as a chain of evidence (see Appendix J) and allowed for peer review of the codes, themes, and findings (Yin, 2014). By creating an audit trail (see Appendix L) from the beginning of this study to its completion, readers of the study can trace the steps of the study in either direction. I completed this audit trail in the form of a dated journal, listing each step taken, when and how, and the outcome.

The peer review from experts in the field of recreation allowed for the findings of this study to be confirmed for accuracy related to the purpose and problem statements (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2014). A peer review validated my conclusions of themes, categories, and description of the phenomenon (Yin, 2014). This review granted awareness of mistaken perception of ideas or feelings from the interview responses and reflection journal document evaluation and maintain the objectivity of conclusions drawn during analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2014).

Transferability

The study design, data collection methods, data analysis steps, and findings from this case study were described in thick, rich detail (Yin, 2014), allowing for future study to be performed in the same manner as the current one (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability is imperative in naturalistic inquiry, to allow the research to apply to other studies and populations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The audit trail was imperative to conduct a proper peer review. As
such, a residue of records was kept in journal form (see Appendix L), which allowed peer
reviewers to follow the precise track of procedures and actions taken to create, implement, and
conclude this study. The categories included in this journal cover (a) initial site approval,
(b) study design and creation, (c) data collection/raw data, (d) data analysis methodology, and (e)
pilot study development (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Those seeking futures in AR, looking to found or develop an ARP, and curriculum
developers in the realm of health and physical education wanting to judge applicability of
findings to their own sites and populations might be able to benefit from the current study,
because of the identification of both the sending and receiving contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
OSCAR represented a study site allowing for expansion of theory, obtaining insight into normal
processes, and acquiring lessons learned that could provide information. Such information
includes the social, educational, and organizational role of ARIs, meeting the goal of
transferability to future study on AR and its components (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2014).
Future researchers may decide this study’s transferability to their hypothesis is appropriate or
not, depending on the similarities of the contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I described the details
of the study design, collection and analysis methodology, and audit trail in a manner that will
allow for repetition in future studies.

**Ethical Considerations**

As with all research, designers must make efforts to protect the study site, participant
population, and him or herself from breaching any ethical rules. I gave the organization studied
a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality. Also, to ensure confidentiality, I gave all participants a
pseudonym. I kept a record of these pseudonyms in a separate locked file in which only I have
access. I housed all information, recordings, documents, memos, and electronic files on an
iCloud drive that has password protection. I kept any tangible paper documents, memo tablets, or descriptive notes in a locked filing cabinet within my locked office. The data will be held for three years, after which I will destroy it using the secure delete function on all devices used for data collection, iMac, iPad, and iPhone. Secure deletion rewrites information stored by using a series of characters to encrypt each file to the point of no recovery. Participants signed individual consent forms, acknowledging that their position at OSCAR was not dependent upon their involvement in this study.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided the study design, research questions guiding the study, methodology of the study procedures, and data analysis methods. I outlined the intricate details related to the data collection tools including interview questions, documents analyzed, and observation notes. I also laid out the role of the researcher in a manner that allowed a true understanding of bracketing out biases and acknowledgment of preconceptions related to the researcher’s personal paradigm. In addition to the outlines of the study’s methods, I described the measures taken to ensure trustworthiness to allow for repetition of the study, its approach, and method of analysis. The information included here can grant future research the ability to replicate all aspects of this study in other cases and sites.

A qualitative approach was used to study a specific case (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014) to obtain an understanding of the role of an ARI. An intrinsic case study design provided a unique setting, transferable to other ARPs looking to better understand the detailed nature of the ARI function (Creswell, 2013). Through interviews, observations, and document analysis, I obtained a plush description of the phenomenon. Analyses were confirmed and validated through member checking, expert review, and assessment by the executive director, program director, marketing
director, and participant population (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). The findings granted a detailed description of ARI identity within a successful ARP and how to attain successful ARI skills, practices, and experiences.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter Four contains the details of results from performing data analysis. Descriptions of the participant population overall and individually are in this chapter, allowing a thorough understanding of perspectives contained within the results. The purpose of this study was to determine the experiences and pathways by which a person comes to work in AR as an ARI. It looked at a single program, from various levels of experience, management, and years working in AR. I presented the data in the form of narrative, charts, and graphs. Each theme identified is correlated with the research question it most appropriately aligns. I addressed all research questions within this chapter.

Participants

The participant population for this study featured 17 total participants, with one executive director, one program director, and one marketing director. Participants were randomly selected, allowing for a variation in years of experience from one year to 25. Each participant participated in an interview, observation, and reflective journal. Some participants were formal employees of the study site organization, while others were volunteers. There were also a few that have transferred from formal employee to volunteer and vice versa. All participants voluntarily committed to participation in this study and were aware that their participation in this study did not impact their service with the study site.

Bo

Bo has volunteered with OSCAR for two years. He previously worked as a statistician, with large corporations and on a consultant basis. His interest in AR began many years ago, as he had family members that were on the autism spectrum. Bo’s wife, along with several other
family members, were encouraged to service special populations after their family had several positive experiences with ARIs at OSCAR. Bo’s approach to AR instruction was one that was strongly centered on racing capabilities of clients utilizing adaptive equipment at OSCAR, primarily for winter sports such as skiing, snowboarding, and ski biking. After seeing OSCAR instructors on the hill, Bo recognized, “particularly, there’s very little for special needs adults. I mean, it’s mostly, not just mostly, virtually, all for children” (Interview, December 1, 2017). As a family member to adult individuals with autism, Bo was drawn towards the programming at OSCAR. He saw services being provided to age groups he connected with personally and desired to make an investment in the programs. “You have, many people have a . . . an emotional understanding and appeal that they should have to help these people, but they’re not easy to help” (Bo, Interview, December 1, 2017). Bo believed that he be the person to help those unique older clients, perhaps in a way that other ARIs could not.

**Hank**

From decades of experience in AR, Hank witnessed more than his fair share of ups and downs in AR instruction. He credited his experience as a ski racer with his introduction to AR. Working in seasonal sport, “we were having some issues financially with the ski team and whatnot” (Interview, December 1, 2017). His manager recommended that he find other means of income and Hank “fell in love with adaptive and left the racing community pretty much. It wasn’t for the money; I’ll tell ya that much” (Interview, December 1, 2017). With 25 plus years of experience in AR, Hank had a unique perspective. He worked in public, private, non-profit, and government institutions. This diversity granted Hank insight into the various avenues and pathways of ARI training and certification. He valued certification, but also believed,
the main vision or the culture that we’re changing is a culture of specialists. We want adaptive instructors, not just people that say, ‘I only work with this individual’ or ‘I only do this, or this particular discipline, because I didn’t feel comfortable with that one.’ (Interview, December 1, 2017)

As an examiner for certification clinics, Hank could appreciate the importance of a standardized level of knowledge. He also believed the approach to AR instruction as unique to each specific organization and program. Even within a single organization, there could be multiple locations, each with its own culture, approach, and clientele demographic. For instance, The challenge that I had, just talking about that, is there’s two different cultures at their two main mountains. That even though they were only 55 miles apart, the process of training versus what you get, and everything was completely different, and the outcomes were different as well. (Hank, Interview, December 1, 2017)

Through experience and leadership, Hank’s outlook and insight into training, education, and certification were imperative to the overall findings of this study.

**Theodore**

Theodore provided specific information related to the experience of a client with a physical disability, from the vantage point of an ARI, as he is both. The ability to instruct clients on various sport types is also a unique quality that Theodore possesses. After spending years in corporate America, Theodore decided to capitalize on his own personal experiences of losing physical ability through an acquired disability. He based his definition of AR on the belief that, “when you become disabled because of a traumatic accident, it doesn’t actually change who you are . . . It . . . You are who you are. If you loved adrenaline sports before, you still do” (Interview, December 1, 2017). From this, the idea of AR can change from sports for special
populations to sports for anyone, regardless of equipment used. Theodore’s years of investment and learning in AR is extensive, personal, and extremely insightful. He felt his purpose within OSCAR was to assist them in their organizational model and allow improvement in areas that they lacked substantial knowledge, for example, donation relations, brand management, and financial responsibility. Theodore had managed his own AR company and started as just a volunteer with OSCAR, before advancing to a full-time employee. He believed that his experiences allowed financial growth and training advancement throughout the organization. He also had hopes of continuing to invest in training development and increasing the overall impact that OSCAR could have within its own community and around the country.

**Peyton**

Peyton came to OSCAR by way of desire for a ski pass. Unbeknownst to him, he would fall in love with the work and end up trading careers to work as an ARI full-time. He openly admitted the desire for perks from working for OSCAR but also acknowledged the change that occurred in him upon completing the in-house training clinics on ARIN and “sensitivity training for just how to deal with people” (Peyton, Interview, December 1, 2017). Like several other participants, Peyton had a family connection with AR and personally witnessed the benefits of participating in recreation sport via adaptive equipment. He took part in every on-site training clinic and believed them to be beneficial, educational, and evolutionary from each year that passed. Given the extent to which Peyton worked as an ARI, his perspective and approach were invaluable to the findings of this study.

**Duke**

Duke came to OSCAR by way of a few other ARIs already working at OSCAR. He spent time around the country working in various AR venues, including Parks and Recreation,
for-profit recreational agencies, and non-profit organizations. His commitment to quality assurance and risk management was what made Duke’s participation in this study distinctive. Duke’s years of experience as an ARI across multiple sport disciplines allowed him access to knowledge on where risks were present and how to best alleviate the rate of occurrence of those risks. He saw “putting together curriculum and training individuals on how to train, as well as all of the line staff, to make and maintain safe practices” as cornerstones of successful AR service provision (Duke, Interview, December 5, 2017). Duke’s choice to work with OSCAR stemmed from years of research and practical application in the arenas of AR and RT.

**Amber**

Amber worked in various camp settings and utilized her skills and knowledge in a different way than some other participants. Working primarily with the families and friends of clients, Amber exercised caution and informational communication to provide comfort and peace for those individuals who looked to work with OSCAR. Due to her work experience and educational career in outdoor education, Amber had organizational awareness that allowed potential clients, their friends, and families the opportunity to schedule services that allowed everyone in a group to get outside and be active together. She saw this as them wanting to feel accepted and maybe that’s a way that they can feel like, ‘Look, I’m out here too just like my friend who is ambulatory and I’m not.’ Um . . . so . . . it’s a lot bigger than just, ‘Hey, we’re skiing.’ (Amber, Interview, December 7, 2017)

Amber’s contribution to OSCAR was from a communication standpoint and added clarity to the overall impact and experience of working at an ARP, for both the client and the ARI.
Frank

Although Frank had only been in the industry for two years, he was exclusive in his level of formal education in sports and adaptive physical activity. He came to OSCAR via a master’s degree plan and stayed on as a full-time employee. Frank described this inclination for AR as “doing whatever it takes to find success in the person” (Interview December 11, 2017). He attributed his finding OSCAR to the search for an internship for his master’s degree. Frank enjoyed the on-site training and experience so much that he believed in taking an income cut to stay with non-profit AR, in a place he believed was bringing state of the art instruction to clients from around the world. His evaluation, from the viewpoint of a formally educated ARI versus a certified or in-house trained ARI, granted interesting assessment findings in this study.

Barney

Coming from a background in adaptive sport coaching in the private sector, Barney brought specific teaching and coaching strategies to the ARI team at OSCAR. He trained with a multitude of adaptive equipment, including mono ski, bi ski, tip connectors, outriggers, and ski links. Barney also coached children and adolescents with cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and physical disabilities in multiple sports. He believed that ARIs learned the most from experience. For example, “being out on a cold day and having a child or person meltdown. Skiing with them anyway. Knowing them enough to continue. Just time and experience” (Barney, Interview, December 28, 2017). Barney also firmly believed in the idea that success as an ARI came from, 90% experience, 10 book learning. Because the book part is really the easy part. The hard part is when you go out . . . because everybody is different. Because you have to learn how to improvise and how to . . . Be flexible. (Interview, December 28, 2017)
Over 30 years of experience coaching backed the value and credibility of Barney's viewpoint and instructing athletes with disabilities.

**Champ**

Champ was amongst several civil servants volunteering their off days to OSCAR. His time working with members of several communities throughout Colorado afforded him with knowledge and communication skills he believed necessary to work as an ARI. “A good perspective on some of the mental illness and disabilities that people suffer from” has helped Champ “tremendously” in his work as an ARI (Champ, Interview, January 4, 2018). Even though he only worked formally with OSCAR for one year, Champ felt that he was ahead of some others that had not had many dealings with society from the standpoint of civil service. He went so far as to say, “I can’t imagine what my perception of it would be if I didn't know what I knew from being on the job” (Champ, Interview, January 4, 2018). Champ had years of training in personal contact and how to communicate with individuals in uncertain circumstances. His years of experience and training created a strong basis for Champ’s viewpoint of the on-site training provided by OSCAR.

**Maria**

As someone who has been with OSCAR longer than most, Maria had seen the ebbs and flows of the organization and provided distinct opinions of the development and evolution of training, programming, and organizational communication within the program. Knowing where the program started and where it is today was a crucial component in the overall impact of the findings in this study. Maria’s perspective was one that was well founded in years of experience and encounters at OSCAR. Her background in administration, instruction, and training added to the personal aspect of Maria’s view of AR and ARPs. She, like many others, came to AR
because of a familial acquisition of disability. Maria believed that her family could benefit from experiencing sports together and sought a place to make it happen. That was when she found OSCAR. After several years as a client, Maria became involved in the organization and eventually moved her family so that she could work full time with OSCAR. She believed that OSCAR offered families “an opportunity to help them succeed and their kids succeed” (Marie, Interview, December 29, 2017). Maria saw the family piece of the puzzle as a foundation piece to AR being successful for both the client and the instructors.

We are part of the circle of, the medical circle of kind of like care . . . of continuous care and you know, they always talk about you know . . . your born date and your end date . . . and that dash in the middle. We’re that dash in the middle. (Interview, December 29, 2017)

Like several other participants, Maria had the benefit of seeing AR from the eyes of a client and an ARI. Understanding both sides of the instruction benefits and adds a layer of comprehension that no other attribute can.

Maggie

A 7-year veteran of OSCAR, Maggie sat in the middle of the other participants in years of work with the organization. She came to OSCAR a bit differently than most others, through their summer sports offerings. Maggie was a long-time water ski instructor and had previous experience working with special populations at another out-of-state program. She brought a sustainability perspective to OSCAR and utilizes her knowledge of mental disabilities to work with more challenging clients. Maggie also had formal education in the realm of psychology and mediation tactics. In her words, “the mediation work does kind of play into . . . you know, looking at different ways of either communicating or making sure your communication is
understood” (Maggie, Interview, January 4, 2018). Maggie’s view of training and instruction was also unique in that her previous work experience afforded her comprehension of how important awareness of the multiple facets of an individual was to success as an ARI. She described this briefly as,

making sure they are comfortable and getting them into equipment and gear that’s maybe not so comfortable. If they’ve got sensitivity issues and that sort of thing . . . So, yea . . . I think there’s a lot of awareness on a lot of different levels. It needs to happen.

(Maggie, Interview, January 4, 2018)

Maggie was an asset to the participant population, because she brought varied vantage points into a single perspective of ARIs and their training.

**Bella**

Work experience in other non-profit venues was a component of Bella’s contribution to the findings in this study. She understood the multifaceted compartments of non-profits and the challenges that these organizations faced. Her use of understanding outside OSCAR was advantageous to obtaining highly qualified ARIs and maintaining a high standard of practice within the team of both paid and volunteer instructors. Bella attributed her success at OSCAR to “shadowing lessons and kind of watching the ups and downs of what clients and their families go through . . . when they become familiar with Adaptive Sports” (Interview, December 19, 2017). Given the search for understanding the on-site training for ARIs, Bella’s opinion of shadowing and experience as a means to perfecting technique and instruction methodology was important. Her perception of on-the-job training at other non-profits was also unique and added a layer of comprehension to the findings in this study. Bella believed that the on-site “training is particularly important” in an ARI’s ability to adapt to each client and their likelihood to find
success in every situation, as they varied greatly from client to client and day to day (Interview, December 19, 2017).

Archie

Archie came to OSCAR about 11 years ago and had a familial connection to children with disabilities. This connection brought about his desire to work with OSCAR and reach other children while forming relationships with other ARIs. He believed the community of instructors was part of why he stayed with OSCAR as long as he had. Like other participants, Archie had a previous career outside of AR and felt that he made the choice for a change to fulfill a void he felt in the corporate world. Archie took advantage of 16 hours of on-site training during his first year at OSCAR and continued to engage in 9 hours of training each year. Because of his previous career, Archie believed in continuing education, even if you participated in the same clinic the year before. He stated, “my learning style is very much read it; see it; do it” (Archie, Interview, December 28, 2017). Archie also pursued a formal certification in ski instruction. Because he experienced both on-site and formal instruction on how to be an ARI, Archie’s viewpoint was multifaceted and imperative to the overall comprehension of what it takes to be successful as an ARI.

Chaco

Similar to other participants, Chaco had the benefit of understanding AR from both sides, client, and instructor. As someone who had taken advantage of AR services, his experience as a client prompted him to become involved from the standpoint of an ARI. Chaco stated that his training added to his ability to assist clients in “how to get through tough things and how to think and improvise and overcome . . . Every situation is different” (Interview, December 28, 2017). He believed in the importance of experience and exposure. Chaco also took advantage of the on-
site clinic training. Explaining, “there is a lot of trial and error, gaining experience from people who have done it in the past . . . Building on top of clinics . . . on top of clinics . . . The education helps” (Interview, December 2, 2017). His work experience in the world of health and fitness allowed him to understand better how to explain techniques to clients and added an additional facet of understanding to his approach to AR instruction. Work experience also pushed Chaco to become more knowledgeable in the realm of AR, and he felt it allowed him to be more successful with certain clients.

**Joey**

Joey was a part of the original group that founded OSCAR. He put a total of 10 years into the organization’s beginning, evolution, and success. Joey worked formally for OSCAR for seven years. He took a break from AR to focus on a few things with his family and returned the year of this study. Like a few other participants, Joey had a personal connection to AR, as he experienced an acquired disability some years ago and made the choice to use his knowledge to better the outcomes of others in his same position. He also worked in various positions within OSCAR, which granted him special, yet wide-ranging, perspectives on ARPs, ARIs, and the support necessary to maintain a successful team of instructors over multiple years. Joey believed in non-profit work, stating, “I mean . . . nonprofit work fills you up big-time, right here (motions to chest). You know emotionally. It really takes care of you, but it doesn't pay great” (Interview, January 4, 2018). His investment in improving lives of special populations allowed him to continue to grow, and the programming at OSCAR to have triumphs in more than a single sport, with more than a single disability, and with their team of ARIs.
Kona

Kona came to OSCAR a few years ago but did not fully commit to working as an instructor until the year of this study. He worked as a volunteer for breakfasts, camp check-ins, and other introductory positions during his first year with OSCAR. Kona missed the cut off for on-site training clinics his first year, but still desired to learn the organization and give back in whatever capacity they had available. He credited these experiences with impacting him enough to come back and try again in subsequent years. Kona stated, “I wanted to do something on the mountain besides just for myself” (Interview, January 16, 2018). He went through clinics for the bi ski, mono ski, and snowboarding this year. Kona experienced many emotional challenges and physical hurdles during his training experiences, allowing him to understand the necessity of instructor training fully. He desired a formal certification, which he believed would amplify what he already learned from OSCAR’s in-house trainings and experiences. This first-year perspective was one that was important to this study and provided a scale of opinions from a beginner.

Rose

Rose had a personal connection to AR, by way of a family member with cognitive and physical disabilities. She saw first-hand how important physical activity was for her family and thought that she could provide some insight and positive experiences for clients coming to OSCAR. Rose did not have formal education in special populations but believed that her personal interaction with her family members granted her a deeper understanding of what it took to work with a person with a cognitive disability. She focused on the less risky sports, like snowshoeing, horseback riding, and hiking. Rose made this choice, as she saw the fear factor take hold of clients and wanted to provide other options to those clients not intrigued by faster
sports and the equipment that comes with them. She worked with OSCAR for a total of eight years. Her husband also worked with OSCAR, and she firmly believed in their positive experience and addition to the team of ARIs, as they both had a deep appreciation for the therapeutic effect of AR. Rose also witnessed OSCAR go from a small, volunteer-only organization to a larger, further reaching successful non-profit institution. Her perspective included impact on the community, visitors to the community, and the local school system’s ability to provide APE services to students with disabilities year-round.

Results

The data collected were analyzed, coded, and developed into information that directly answers the four research questions presented in this study. The analysis took place via coding to identify open codes, participant word choices, and overall themes. It was also necessary to clarify which codes and themes I anticipated versus those that were unexpected. Use of participant words was important to include here, as these were instrumental in finding true, detailed answers to each research question. Codes and themes were also correlated with the background, experience, and education of participants, as these three items impacted participant language and opinion on training, certification, education, and ability to instruct successfully.

Characteristics of Code

The characteristics associated with certain words and phrases amplified the original codes in a way that more deeply described the theme. It placed words and phrases into a larger idea that outlined specific attributes within the theme. These characteristics created a bridge between simple words and short phrases and the larger theme identified. Appendix L provides a chart showing the graduation from initial code, to characteristics, and then, themes. Characteristics can be combined with either participant words or a theme, to provide a well-rounded idea of each
research question’s answers. In essence, these three categories combined paint an in-depth picture for each finding.

**Theme Development**

Through transcription, review, and synthesis, larger themes were developed based on repetition within specific wording, answers to interview questions, descriptions within documents reviewed, and responses to reflective journal prompts. These themes were identified to answer one of the four research questions presented in this study. Some overlapped and some did not. There were also ideas and perspectives discovered that I had not anticipated. Each code, characteristics of codes, and theme gained strength by the number of times they appeared within the data sets. I provided a detailed breakdown of these in Appendix L.

**Theme one: Background education and experience.** Theme one came to surface as many of the participants responded to interview questions and upon observation of conversations between instructors during observations. It identified the value that ARIs place on their background and education in relation to how they can successfully work as an instructor within an ARP. Participants made many statements regarding the importance and relevance that life experience, through education, impacted their approach to ARIN. Theme one explains largely the influence that a person’s work, education, and background can have on their involvement in AR, specifically as an ARI.

Participants repetitively stated that there was a need for formal certification to understand teaching technique, learning styles and skills, and communication methods with special populations. Specifically, Joey stated,

When I went to work for OSCAR, I started studying and practicing and working with a couple of really good adaptive instructors, to help me understand what I need to do to get
certified to teach skiing. So, the first couple of years with OSCAR, I got my level 1. Then, my level two adaptive certification through PSIA and then, the rest is really just . . . I mean the best way to learn to teach is just to get ahold of the knowledge and get out there and do it . . . Fill your . . . Fill your bag full with tools and you know you need the book learning to be able to have a base to do that with. (Interview, January 4, 2018)

He believed in the progression models provided by PSIA to be the best possible method for approaching ARIN. Joey also noted he became a better skier. You want to be a good skier? Learn how to teach. So, you know, that was the training that I had just . . . the PSIA training and the testing and the certifications, along with just . . . on hill experience. (Interview, January 4, 2018)

Barney’s response to how his previous experiences influenced his approach to ARIN was a resounding “yes.” He stated, “Even though they were largely pool based, my experience in learning as you go made all the difference in the world” (Barney, Interview, December 28, 2017). His ability to adapt on scene came largely from his previous work experiences with Special Olympics training and water sports instruction with special populations.

Many participants also felt that the formal pathway to certification amplified the knowledge and skills gained through OSCAR’s on-site training clinics. Some went so far as to say they went hand-in-hand due to the foundation of OSCAR’s curriculum on the PSIA progression model. With the clinic offerings at OSCAR, ARIs have a chance to utilize knowledge gained in their formal certification pathway before real-time ARIN with clients.

Frank used himself as an example, “Well, I fall in between,” because he has the formal education degree in “disabilities,” but does not yet have years of experience in ARIN, nor does he have his PSIA certification. There is a need for a little bit of both so that the book knowledge gained in a
person’s educational background can merge with their life and work experience in a way that benefits the outcomes when instructing with special populations. In Frank’s words, “there’s always more you can learn about disabilities. The industry is always changing . . . the equipment is changing . . . the technology” (Interview, December 11, 2017).

Communication is a key component of how background education and experience influence ARIN. For ARIs to learn and grow, they must have a communication line open all of the time. It is beneficial to share experiences with other ARIs, so that others may avoid adverse experiences when out on a lesson. Duke believes this is an aspect of the training pathways and teachers that has allowed those coming to work at OSCAR as an ARI, to grow, learn, and be successful. Communication, from a teaching standpoint, is imperative. Duke described this as

Not everybody has the desire to learn . . . Um, most of the folks that walk through the door have a really good heart and it’s just a matter of if we can get them to the appropriate skill level. They need training on specifics to be able to operate the equipment and carry out a safe lesson, in a safe environment. (Interview, December 5, 2017)

Those leading the clinics at OSCAR must have rapport and communication skills that allow and encourage conversation about the hard things, the negative outcomes, and how to combat a trying situation in a way that allows for everyone, the ARI, and the client, to come out positively on the other side. Relationships within the ranks of the entire team at OSCAR provide open communication lines, opening opportunities to learn from each other, benefit from each other’s mistakes and successes, and celebrate victories, no matter how small.

Each interaction between ARIs, their supervisors, clients, and their friends and families are pieces of the larger puzzle that create an opportunity for a client to learn something new.
Hank described the larger goal of AR as “reaching unmeasurable goals” (Interview, December 1, 2017). When an ARI receives the task of working with a client, they face a mission of providing that client with a learning experience that grants that client the opportunity to learn something new. That something new may not always be measurable on a scale of aptitude, physical ability, or level of improvement. That achievement may merely mean “getting someone to step on the snow in boots and skis for the first time in their life” (Maggi, Interview, January 4, 2018).

Learning experiences in AR are not what some may perceive. They are “creating a chance to let someone experience something outside in a way that they otherwise would not be able to” (Maria, Interview, December 19, 2017).

Situational awareness was a factor in all participant’s view of how their background education and experience has impacted their provision of services in the world of AR. Duke mentioned this concept by saying,

Asking myself, ‘are we giving some sort of benefit to the client?’ That does not matter to me whether its cognitively, effectively, or physically . . . and I’ll go back to that all the time. So, it could be from the social aspect. It could just be getting them to interact with someone else. It can be them actually physically making new or improved physical movements . . . or, even the same movements . . . something that they don’t normally do at home . . . getting them out of their norm. But, getting them to make . . . make a connection or make a change or improvement would be fantastic! (Interview, December 5, 2017)

Being aware of each client’s circumstances, their needs from the standpoint of cognitive function, physical ability, behavioral function, and emotional capability is essential to an ARI’s success in administering ARIN to any given client. Outside circumstances are included in this
awareness concept, as many disability types are sensitive to outside stimulation from other people, their clothing, sounds, sites, smells, and equipment necessary for them to move around. ARIs must take into consideration all things when preparing themselves and their client for a lesson.

Peyton credited the certification pathway of PSIA with giving him the knowledge necessary to be sensitive . . . sensitivity training to be able to deal with people . . . ah . . . in the way they need to be dealt with. There are words to use and not to use . . . old words that are not available anymore . . . and so . . . that is important to know about. (Interview, December 1, 2017)

All participants noted how having a solid foundation of knowledge in the realm of disabilities allowed them to be aware of each situation and how those situations could impact a client, specifically with their disability. The recurring idea of accepting that no two clients or lessons will be the same led to the conclusion that this aspect of the overall theme related to the importance and value of education and experience was a cornerstone in the foundation that ARIs bring to an ARP.
Theme 2: Value the on-site training. OSCAR has revamped their curriculum for training numerous times. Because of this, Duke believed that they were reaching a point in their training that retained a high volume of “expert instructors” (Interview, December 5, 2017).

We have an entire curriculum, that’s still being developed . . . being morphed, but that’s not different than anywhere else. Any other programs that you go to that . . . When you come in, there’s always ways to improve it and there’s ways to make it more robust. What you’re effectively doing is making a gap analysis. Here’s where we are at and here’s where we gotta go and here’s the gap . . . What do we need to do to fill that gap? . . . while maintaining a minimum level of all of the other skills and attributes that go into the program . . . (Duke Interview, December 5, 2017)

Because OSCAR has allowed supervisors to use the information obtained from these types of gap analysis, their curriculum and training pathways produce high-level ARIs and have allowed the program to have minimal negative outcomes, for example, minimal law suits, high
standard of safety, and minimal injury reports. Amber stated that she “came in with a good knowledge base already, but I benefited greatly from the training clinics for the summer programs” (Interview, December 7, 2017). Even with Frank’s substantial formal education in special populations, he believed the clinics to be “very in depth and very informational. Like, I’ve learned a ton. It’s now time to apply it all to my own skiing and see where I can take it” (Interview, December 11, 2017). Bella stated, “

Training is particularly important, but I also think that every client is going to be a little different. Instructors have to also adapt to those needs of the client and so much of it goes back to making the client feel like this is a normal thing . . . you know . . . that they are not the special needs kind of person . . . There are so many adaptive athletes now that it shouldn’t seem like a different thing. (Interview, December 19, 2017)

The ability to adapt to each individual comes with time and experience, but those are grounded in the pathways through which each ARI at OSCAR progresses. The foundational knowledge gained in the first-year pathway is the framework from which all other clinics and trainings build. The in-classroom clinics lay a solid foundation with instruction on general disabilities, the history of AR/RT, terminology appropriate to be used, paperwork trails within the organization of records on each client, and understanding the structure of the organization (Documents, December 14, 2017). These clinics allow ARIs to feel ready to take on whatever lies ahead of them and “opens your eyes to what all is out there” (Chaco Interview, December 28, 2017). Barney described the wide span of general knowledge as “You want to have your arrows, but they’re always going to be different. Just as soon as you grab the arrow you think you need, you have to change the arrow” (Interview, December 28, 2017).
The knowledge gained in the in-classroom clinics during the first year was somewhat synonymous with the concept of situational awareness. Maria believed this to be a game of “if I don’t know it exists, how do I come up with a plan for it?” (Interview, December 19, 2017). Bo relied heavily on his in-classroom experience in his first years working as an ARI, stating “even with years of experience with family members that have a disability, I was still a novice” (Interview, December 1, 2017). ARIs can understand special populations, from work experience, traveling, and school, but the ability to utilize that knowledge comes from in-depth, specific discussions in a classroom setting on the topic of working as an instructor with a person that has a disability or disabilities.

Upon graduation from the first-year clinics, ARIs at OSCAR move into outdoor clinics, specific to a sport, disability, or level of experience in a sport. Bo and Rose describe their second-year clinics as readying them to “instruct the next para-lympian” (Interview, December 1, 2017; January 12, 2018). The second-year clinics provide training and experience by way of specific equipment pieces, level of cognitive function, and sport. They are primarily out of the classroom, although some begin inside and graduate to practical application later (Documents, December 14, 2017). The second-year ARIs can repeat the previous first-year clinics, to brush up on general education and see if any new things that have developed since the last time they attended the first-year sessions.

Hank described the second-year curriculum as “not reinventing the wheel but growing a good bit from the previous stuff” (Interview, December 1, 2017). Several of the participants believed that the second-year level of clinic instruction was on par with the PSIA certification material and examination. This sentiment was amplified when participants discussed their experience in the advanced clinics offered upon completion of the second-year training pathway.
The amount of “expertise provided by instructors in specialty clinics was very surprising . . . It gave me confidence to continue on in my learning and want to develop my own philosophy of instructing snowboarding” (Kona, Interview January 16, 2018). Maggie described her experiences in the advanced clinics as

See and do. You spend time doing it with the clinic; you become comfortable with it. You have a chance to try things in a safe environment because you are surrounded by others who already know how to do those very same things. It’s safe and encouraging.” (Interview, January 4, 2018)

The overlying idea that clinic progressions were crucial to being able to perform the duties of ARIN was evident throughout the interview responses, observations, and reflective journal responses. Every participant expressed their value and appreciation for the caliber of on-site training. The understanding that a person begins with the scaffolding of general education on working with special populations, unique recreation equipment for special populations, and the teaching methodology that allows it all to happen resonated throughout the data sets. From document review, I felt these attitudes in the care and effort put into curriculum creation by the staff at OSCAR. That same care and effort carries over to the actual instruction during clinics and between the clinic leader and those attending.
Theme 3: Learning from each other. Throughout interviews, observations, and reflective journal data sets, participants attributed their successes and evolutions to those they were surrounded by within OSCAR. Maggie emphasized the importance of the “family” she found at OSCAR, after moving to Mt. Nibali from out of state. “They are a large part of why we moved and why we have stayed. Without the family that I found within the ranks at OSCAR, I doubt my husband and I would still be here” (Maggie Interview, January 4, 2018). These statements are rooted in the amount of communication that goes on between ARIs, supervisors, family of ARIs, and the board members of the organization. Creating a sense of belonging within a somewhat stressful working arena has been influential in the retention of ARIs and clientele at OSCAR.

The repetition of the idea of building relationships between instructors was overwhelming across all data sets. Due to the non-profit nature of ARPs, participants noted how important the relationships have been to their continued service at OSCAR. Many mentioned
how the sense of belonging outweighed their desire for higher pay in another industry. In Joey’s words,

non-profit work fills you up big time, right here (motions to his chest). You know emotionally . . . It really takes care of you, but it doesn’t always pay great. So, for the family that you end up with, it’s worth it . . . really worth it. (Interview, January 4, 2018)

When ARIs battle with the daily struggles of working in AR, they need to feel supported and have avenues through which they can vent or reach out for comfort. Bella responded that the environment at OSCAR

It’s a really open group of people and they do talk about experiences and certain problems that they’ve come across and what to do moving forward. So, I know they actively seek new solutions and want to share those with other . . . especially new instructors. (Interview, December 19, 2017)

She also noted how management strives to keep communication lines open and as often as possible, in person. Peyton stated that “there is a sense of urgency that is felt throughout the ranks. We feel supported and valued by our supervisors. When they know something, we know it not far behind them” (Interview, December 1, 2017).

Through this constant and open communication, awareness surfaced as being a huge benefit. Communication allowed relationship and fellowship amongst the entire staff at OSCAR. ARIs felt important and their experience, opinion, and perspective valued. Supervisors did not practice “top-down leadership” (Joey, Interview, January 4, 2018). This leadership was something practiced in the past and identified as needing changed (Documents, December 14, 2017). Learning from the past was something that Maria, Joey, Hank, Duke, Peyton, Barney, and Archie all mentioned as highly influential in the success of OSCAR (Reflective Journals,
January 4 – February 20, 2018). Duke mentioned the importance of gap analysis and this brought about the notion of organizational assessment, to better understand the needs of staff. Maria noted this as “awareness is part of our mission. Not just for clients, but for ourselves” (Interview, December 19, 2017).

Understanding that no lesson or client will be the same follows the line of thought that without awareness, ARIs cannot successfully service clientele. All participants echoed the notion that through relationships and communication, they have become aware of the varied nature of ARIN, the uncontrollability of all circumstances, and the need to have your wheelhouse well stocked with methods of instruction. Phrases that supported this thought process included, “Stocking your quiver,” “you adapt to them; they don’t adapt to you,” “things change,” and “accept change as it comes” (Interviews, December 1, 2017, to January 16, 2018). When this type of thing occurs, “you always place the client first. She was cold, so I gave her my scarf and gloves. It was about her experience that day, not whether my hands were cold” (Rose, Interview, January 12, 2018). Most participants reflected to an instance where something like this occurred and compared it to being a parent and wanting the best for your child. Theodore reflected

There is no handbook that comes with parenting. You just learn as you go and sometimes . . . That is what we have to do here. We can’t have expectations. The client’s family and friends can’t have expectations. We all take what the day brings and hope for the best. Nine times out of ten, we are all blown away. That’s just the nature of adaptive. (Interview, December 2, 2017)

Having the understanding that “it’s just the nature of adaptive,” comes with time and experience (Theodore, Interview, December 2, 2017). Barney and Archie phrased this as “time . . . it all comes with time” (Interviews, December 28, 2017). Frank noted the importance of “now
“it’s time to apply it all” when asked about his education and its impact on his provision of ARIN (interview, December 11, 2017). Chaco echoed this sentiment by stating,

There’s a lot of trial and error . . . gaining experience from people who have done it in the past, building on top of clinics, on top of clinics, and um . . . I’d say . . . education helps, but it’s really time and experience. Shadowing sessions helps. (Interview, December 28, 2017)

Time and experience watching other ARIs instruct lessons during that first year was viewed as helpful and connects with the idea that learning from each other is important in the overall process of becoming an ARI.

The theme of learning from each other was grounded in the notion that awareness comes from communication, communication comes from relationship, and relationship comes from being around and working with each other every day. Hank, Maria, Duke, Peyton, Kona, Champ, and Chaco believed that the amount of time shared between supervisors, on staff ARIs, and volunteer ARIs created an atmosphere of openness, shared responsibility, and unified effort. These all combined to allow for safe learning experiences for clients, evolutionary ARIN tactics, and a positive work environment.
Figure 3. Learning from Each Other

**Theme 4: Organizational culture is re-creational.** Throughout interviews and observations, participants emphasized that they were striving to recreate an experience that a client had in the past that was not quite deemed positive. The notion of recreating outdoor experiences and activities for those that have not had positive pastimes reverberated throughout all data sets. The term “re-creational” surfaced as a word used throughout the OSCAR organization. Some focus on learning and achievement, with a little bit of fun. While others focus on safety and fun, with achievement coming second. Maria distinguished three separate ideals, “Safety. Fun. Learning. In that order” (Interview, December 19, 2017).

The importance of reduced risk and maintaining a safe environment was above all else in all participant’s reflective journals. Fun was an important part of ARIN, but the overall goal was
to provide a service in a manner that allows recreation sport to occur without risk. Chaco described this process, “

Step number one is realizing that you don’t have it all figured out, when you come into the lesson. You know . . . you need to leave the room for a minute maybe. You may have all these expectations and they may not happen. We need to celebrate our successes and being able to redefine that as you go is important . . . you need to have room for things to change . . . It is important. (Interview, December 28, 2017)

ARIs at OSCAR receive training and preparation for these changes and take into consideration that elements may not always be the best, but it’s about the client and how they experience the lesson first.

Through this philosophy of “Safety, Fun, Learning,” participants expressed the value in their actions enabling others to be active in circumstances that they otherwise would not be able to. The goal of lessons is to, in participant words, “provide fulfilling experiences,” “open different perspectives,” “better ourselves by bettering them,” and “using what is best for the client, even if it isn’t the instructor’s favorite” (Interviews, December 11, 2017 to January 16, 2018). Finding the equipment, tools, and gear to allow a client to participate in any given sport was a predecessor to the actual lesson occurrence. In every observation, participants were seen taking great links to ensure that the equipment was perfect, the client had every accessory possible, and their behavior and emotional stressors were as limited as they could be. ARIs at OSCAR spent added time ensuring that all items were available for their clients. Sometimes this included going to other shops in town and asking for loner devices, outerwear, or technology, but each one took the initiative and did what it took to have all these things on hand, upon their client’s arrival to the OSCAR office.
The amount of time, precise planning, and emotional preparation that each ARI puts into their sessions was evident throughout observations. The terms Adaptive Sports and Adaptive Recreation are terms given by higher education institutions and other various governing bodies. They do not come close to encompassing the layered elements that it takes for these two things to occur daily, for any given individual. Sport and recreation are synonymous within the realm and culture of AR. Those that have come upon a disability in their lifetime do not lose their inclination towards competition sport and should not be discounted as no longer viable as an athlete. Participants, across data sets, commented on the ability of their clients to perform, outperform often, those individuals without a disability. Several participants have, themselves, an acquired disability and remarked on the lack of loss of their competitive spirit. The person does not change, just the way they perform certain activities. Hence, the theme presented as “Re-creational,” rather than recreational.

*Figure 4. Organizational Culture is Re-creation*
Participants Words

In response to interview questions, upon observation of interactions, and within the reflective journal responses, participants used phrasing and terminology worthy of categorizing as a code. From these phrases and word choices, an overall idea came to surface. Word choice was largely dependent upon a participant’s educational background, work experience within AR, and knowledge base specifically related to their training and certification history in recreational sport, at times specifically in AR sport provision. As with most education-based fields, there are specific ways to refer to an individual who has a disability and the methodologies related to interacting and communicating with them in an instructional setting. Some common phrases participants shared across data sets included terms such as, “person with a disability,” “specialty certification,” “no disability is the same, from person-to-person,” “autistic,” “child with autism,” “on the spectrum,” “autism spectrum,” “cognitive disability,” and “nonverbal/noncommunicative.”

Research Question Responses

The themes identified correlated with a specific research question and granted a short answer, rather than a list of words and phrases. Analysis was required to process the codes and characteristics down to a simple, less wordy theme. These were utilized to discover specific ideas related to the research questions and assisted in a clear answer. These began with open code and participant word similarities. They were then formed into characteristics specific to each question but found within the entire data set. Through the process of deduction, I produced the overall themes.

Research question one. How does an individual’s background and education influence an ARI’s ability to provide AR services to clients? First, those participants with formal
education and certification placed heavy value on the need for all ARIs to have some formal training. Barney stated that he was “compelled to improve myself” (Interview, December 28, 2017). From experience and time spent in the profession, several participants shared the assertion that education and certification “really helped my provision of services” (Archie, Interview, Reflective Journal, December 28, 2017; Barney, Interview, Observation, December 28, 2017; Chaco, Interview, December 28, 2017, Reflective Journal, January 29, 2018; Champ, Interview, Observation, Reflective Journal, December 30, 2017; Duke, Interview, Observation, Reflective Journal, January 5, 2018; Kona, Interview, Observation, December 31, 2017; Maggie, Interview, January 4, 2018). There are a few certifying agencies that are believed to be highly impactful in AR service and instruction. These include Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) and American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AAIA).

A second recurrent theme was that book knowledge can only get a person so far, and there is a need for communication with fellow instructors, to better prepare and understand the level of adaptability an ARI must have to be successful. Frank, having advanced degrees in education, stated the importance of “knowledge on how to connect with certain disability types” and being aware of your own “desire to stay within a single discipline or disability type” (Frank, Interview, December 11, 2018).

Many participants believe that there is a need for expert level knowledge to truly provide learning experiences for clients, which is a third theme to answer research question one. ARIs face the challenge of providing “unmeasurable” outcomes with clients. This challenge presents a hurdle that many ARIs attempt to overcome through a “progressive teaching model” based on traditional education methodology. Instructors gain this knowledge through on-site training clinics, as well as through the PSIA instructor certification pathway. Twelve of the 17
participants agreed that acquiring an initial PSIA certification allowed them to “learn the tricks of the trade,” to become “more confident,” and “reinforced” their self-awareness of the need to adapt their approach to instruction on a client-by-client basis (Archie, Interview, December 28, 2017; Barney, Interview, December 28, 2017; Bo, Interview, December 1, 2017; Joey, Interview, January 4, 2018; Kona, Interview, January 16, 2018; Maggie, Interview, January 4, 2018).

Situational awareness, the fourth theme identified for research question one, brings the previous three together. All 17 participants asserted the importance of knowledge, communication, and situational awareness to providing positive learning experiences for clients. For ARIs to be aware, Barney, Frank, Hank, Theodore, and Maria believed that an ARI must first have knowledge of special populations, the equipment necessary for certain disabilities, and experience in the world of AR (Interviews, December 1, 2017 to January 4, 2018). These components come directly from training, education, and certification in the field of AR. Fifteen of the 17 participants related awareness to interaction and experience working with special populations and stated, being “surrounded by clients allows instructors to be prepared for change” in a way that “book learning cannot provide” (Interviews, December 28, 2017, to January 16, 2018).

**Research question two.** What instructor preparation training takes place at OSCAR? This question was answered in a series of five stages using document reviews and observations as data collection methods. First, OSCAR provides a first-year pathway of learning, for those individuals coming to work or volunteer as an ARI for the first time. Individuals are not separated out of this first-year pathway, even if they have provided AR services at another institution or with another ARP. Participants placed high value on the knowledge gained and experiences provided by these initial clinics. Words used to describe them were “informative,”
“helpful,” “exciting,” and “understanding” (Interviews, December 1, 2017, to January 12, 2018). I found descriptions of first-year trainings in the curriculum documents. Information shared with me revealed that these begin with general education on disabilities, the history of AR/RT, terminology appropriate to be used, paperwork trails and procedures, and understanding the hierarchy within OSCAR. To move forward in the training pathway, ARIs must complete “6 hours of general education to advance to specialty clinics” (Documents, January 4, 2018).

The second step in OSCAR’s on-site training curriculum is to move to the second-year pathway of learning. These individuals can retake the required introductory courses for first-year ARIs. Or, they can move directly into sport specific and disability specific training clinics. At the beginning of each season, ARIs are required to take no less than nine hours of training before providing their first service or lesson of that season. Seasons are separated by winter and summer, running November to April and May to September respectively. The second-level clinics were described by participants as “intermediate,” “challenged,” and “see and do” (Archie, Interview, December 28, 2017; Chaco, Interview, December 28, 2017; Hank, Interview, December 2, 2017; Frank, Interview, December 11, 2017; Kona, Interview, January 16, 2018; Peyton, Interview, December 1, 2017). OSCAR assesses ARIs coming out of secondary clinics, to see if they are ready for Lead Instruction. If not, the individual will remain in the supportive role of “Assistant Instructor.” The management staff relies on PSIA’s testing and assessment protocol to evaluate ARIs and place them in the best possible instruction position. These assessments are not taken lightly and require specific notations by the assessor to advance from assisting to leading.

Advanced pathways of obtaining specialty learning is a third portion of the on-site training and education at OSCAR. Participants entering these clinics described them as
“accomplished,” “spending time in it,” “tiring,” and “interactive” (Barney, Interview, December 28, 2017; Chaco, Interview, December 28, 2017; Duke, Interview, December 5, 2017; Hank, Interview, December 2, 2017; Kona, Interview, January 16, 2018; Maggie, Interview, January 4, 2018; Peyton, Interview, December 1, 2017). The training documentation stated that an ARI must have three years of service, volunteer or paid, to enroll and complete the advanced clinic curriculum. At times, the information presented in these advanced trainings contains remedial information from the initial six-hour general education clinics. The belief is that there is an advantage to reintroducing general education to those ARIs that have been in the AR instruction role for a few years. Information can change slightly over time, and it assists in bringing back forgotten prior knowledge (Hank, Interview, December 2, 2017; Theodore, Interview, December 2, 2017; Duke, Interview, January 5, 2018). Those that complete these trainings advance to the level of Lead Instructor after successful assessments by program supervisors, designated as PSIA examiner.

All trainings and education have a designation as indoor or outdoor clinics. The indoor is primarily book learning, conversation about the how and why of certain techniques, and introduction to specific equipment used for a specific sport and sports-level ability. A hands-on introduction to these materials is important in a controlled environment, as it provides ARIs a chance to look closely at information and devices without creating risk for any person involved. ARIs gain general knowledge on the history of OSCAR, AR/RT, fundamentals of working with special populations, scenario workshops, and procedure and protocol for checking in clients and documenting each session or lesson provided. These indoor classes lay the foundation for ARIs, new and old, as the risks associated with AR provision are omitted due to the controlled learning
environment (Bo, Interview, December 1, 2017; Duke, Interview, January 5, 2018; Kona, Interview, January 16, 2018).

Outdoor training brings the risk level to reality, but also allows ARIs to practice use of equipment, learning progressions, and self-awareness with fellow ARIs. The risk is not the same as working with live clients. Peyton, Champ, Hank, Kona, and Maria described these experiences as a “transfer of mental notes,” “one-on-one interaction,” “more supportive,” and “breaking it down” (Interviews December 1-2, 2017, December 28, 2017, January 4, 5, 16, 2018). There is an emphasis on the “how to teach” methods not found in some other clinics, according to five participants. The PSIA methodology is the underpinning of all teaching progressions, which encourages learning by seeing, doing, and applying (Bo, Interview, December 1, 2017; Hank, Theodore Interviews, December 2, 2017). Sport and disability specifics in these outdoor clinics serve as the basis for the choice of equipment, use, and application.

**Research question three.** What do ARIs at OSCAR gain from each other, the executive director, program director, and participant interactions? The idea of “awareness” resonated by and large within the themes identified for this research question. Awareness comes in many facets and varieties, as stated by Maggie, Hank, Kona, Champ, Duke, and Maria. “Knowing what is controllable and what is not” is imperative to successful and effective ARIN (Interviews, January 4 to January 16, 2018). An ARI must be self-aware to “know when to ask for help, admit you aren’t the right fit for a client, or you are the best fit for a client” (Maggie, Interview, January 4, 2018). Situational awareness, as well as awareness of a client’s tendencies, allows an ARI to have a plan for if, and when a “common trigger for a certain disability type” presents itself (Hank, Interview, December 2, 2017). This plan leads to an ability to avoid those triggers
and prevent overstimulation in clients that may have sensitivity issues, focus point agitations, or struggles in following instruction. Many special populations have more than a single disability, often coinciding with cognitive or behavioral disabilities. Being aware of the situation, self, equipment, and client create a “circle of awareness” critical to positive outcomes for ARIN clientele (Maria, Interview, December 19, 2017). Fifteen of the 17 participants asserted that self-awareness and situational awareness must merge with social awareness, due to the public nature of lessons with clients at OSCAR. Having a firm foundation of “language to be used and how to order things” can grant positive perception of these lessons and the instructors by the public when observing a lesson (Barney, Interview, December 27, 2017). ARIs must practice the philosophy that “clients come first, the client always comes before me” (Amber, Interview, December 7, 2017; Archie, Interview, December 28, 2017; Barney, Interview, December 27, 2017; Bella, Interview, December 19, 2017; Champ, Interview, January 4, 2018; Duke, Interview, December 5, 2017; Frank, Interview, December 11, 2017; Hank, Interview, December 2, 2017; Joey, Interview, January 4, 2017; Kona, Interview January 16, 2018; Maggie, Interview, January 4, 2018; Maria, Interview, December 19, 2017; Theodore, Interview, December 2, 2017).

Communication is a second theme presented in the data and viewed as an added layer to the first. All participants agreed that awareness and communication go hand-in-hand when working as an ARI. Duke believed that

if you are aware of your own shortcomings in a specific situation, you know you need to ask for help. We have those lead instructors that know the ins and outs. They are more than happy to help you work through whatever situation or apprehension you are experiencing. (Interview, December 5, 2017)
Ten of the 17 participants stated the importance of “building that relationship and trust” between instructors, supervisors, and clientele. It is extremely important to have rapport amongst the ranks, as well as throughout the client base. Communication was the resounding factor in participants’ beliefs of how to achieve this respect and relationship.

A second part to communication was its importance in relaying information and knowledge of clients between instructors. Fifteen of 17 participants noted how valuable lesson reporting is to a client’s ability to advance in their learning and experience. When ARIs can read through and understand previous happenings with a client, the ARI is better able to service the client because they are aware of details and occurrences they may not have known previously. Archie, Barney, and Duke described this as “knowledge of previous instructor’s success and steps that may have been skipped” and can then more effectively meet a client based on their needs (Archie, Interview, December 27, 2017; Barney, Interview, December 27, 2017; Duke, Interview, December 5, 2017). This awareness increases safety, reduces risk, and sheds light on any dangers or concerns allowing the ARI to prepare mentally for a variety of possible circumstances. Thorough lesson reporting via written communication can also lead to a verbal conversation before a lesson, for questions of previous instructors, family, and friends of the client. Reintegrating of all types of communication between various groups associated with any given client is extremely important.

Communication highlights the aspect of ARIN that no two clients or lessons are the same. All 17 participants expressed that preconception and expectations are not welcome. In Amber’s words, “you set yourself and the client up for a letdown” (Interview, December 7, 2017). Phrases used to describe this theme were “accept change as it comes,” “be adaptable,” and “ability to alter your approach” (Bo, Interview, December 1, 2017; Chaco, Interview,
Ten of the 17 participants noted the difference between a client that wants to be there and one that does not. Theodore’s philosophy on this was to “ask yourself, why is the client here? And then decide, mentally, how to best approach them” (Interview, December 2, 2017). Often, clients are coming to OSCAR because their parent or family member believes they need the experience, not because they asked to be there. In these situations, Hank stated the importance of “you adapt to them. They don’t adapt to you” (Interview, December 2, 2017). ARIs must understand the many attributes of a client, their situation, and their mental state.

All participants made mention of the fact that time and experience equal success and understanding. This fourth theme triangulated the previous three. Through time and experience, an ARI becomes equipped with awareness, communication, and ability to service no situation being the same. Fifteen of the 17 participants highlighted the need to experience first-hand, certain disability types, as they did not believe practice lesson or in-classroom learning could equip an instructor to be prepared to handle the circumstances brought by it. Duke, Theodore, Hank, Champ, Barney, and Chaco all spoke passionately about the trial and error nature of working with AR. Years of experience support their knowledge and opinion in many different institutions and settings throughout AR and RT. In Hank’s words, “Time. It all takes time” (Interview, December 2, 2017). Frank seconded this sentiment and took it a step further by stating, “We need to be able to learn, grow, and evolve to become good at anything” (Interview, December 11, 2017).

**Research question four.** Three main themes were identified to answer the question of how daily interactions with other ARIs, the program director, the executive director, and marketing director influence an ARI’s ability to perform their job duties successfully at OSCAR.
The first is simply the goal of OSCAR. OSCAR believes in providing recreational experiences to individuals with disabilities through safety, fun, and learning. Maria emphasized this as, “Safety. Fun. Learning. In that order. That is the only way it works” (Interview, December 19, 2017). They strive to lower the risk at all cost, keeping clients and instructors safe. Archie, Rose, Peyton, and Joey used the phrase, “Nothing is easy” to describe the need for team support and how important day-to-day interactions are to their ability to service clients successfully.

“Fun comes second, and learning is the last achievement” (Duke, Interview, December 5, 2017). There are aspects of the job that require ARIs and supervisors to put their goals and expectations aside while creating fun and excitement for a client. Ten of 17 participants stated their ability to create positive situations for the client and themselves by using assistant instructors and at times, supervisors, in a lesson. This use of extra personnel creates a safety net for ARIs, as more hands mean more support. If ARIs feel confident, the overall atmosphere of a session lightens up, and everyone involved relaxes. This lightening of the atmosphere can also be achieved through mere conversations, communicating knowledge of a client, piece of equipment, or learning progression. Peyton described these interactions as an “environment that is comfortable, pressure-free, and accurate for each individual” (Interview, December 1, 2017). Having a fellow ARI to confirm your equipment choice, attire choice, and approach to a specific lesson is an interaction that creates confidence and comfort for an instructor. As Hank stated, “You know the old saying of it takes a village? Yea, we have to have that here” (Interview, December 2, 2017).

Enabling others to be active is a second piece of the mission of OSCAR. Within this theme, there are several pieces that allow it to come to fruition daily. Barney, Chaco, and Archie all used the phrase, “stock your quiver,” to describe what is necessary to enable any client to
perform any given activity (Interviews, December 28, 2017). Many elements must come together for a lesson to take place. Equipment choice, outside conditions, attire, client attitude, instructor attitude, and physical condition of the instructor are all parts that must merge for a lesson to occur. ARIs must be able to celebrate the small victories and not impose their expectations on a client. Phrases used to relate this were “positive mission,” “keep it simple,” “don’t highlight shortcomings,” and “go for small improvements” (Bella, Interview, December 19, 2017; Bo, Interview, December 1, 2017; Hank, Interview, December 2, 2017; Duke, Interview, December 5, 2017; Frank, Interview, December 11, 2017; Kona, Interview, January 16, 2018). The interactions and conversations within the ranks on a day-to-day basis provide support and understanding of client goals, family goals for the client, and how to best bridge the two. Maria emphasized how important communication was to having progression in each lesson and believed that the relationships and rapport within the team at OSCAR was what allowed them the amount of success they had over the years.

The third and final theme identified was the identity ARIs, from the executive director down to the first-year volunteer, associate with AR and adaptive sports. All participants believed that recreation and sport are synonymous. They can be “re-creational” while being “competitive” (Bo, Interview, December 1, 2017; Chaco, Interview December 28, 2017; Kona Interview, January 16, 2018; Theodore, Interview, December 2, 2017). Alternatively, they can be one or the other, depending on the client’s goals and desires. Lessons are also described as “activity” or “therapy,” depending on the client and their reason for being there (Barney, Interview, December 27, 2017; Bo, Interview, December 1, 2017; Chaco, Interview, December 28, 2017; Champ, Interview, January 4, 2018; Hank, Interview, December 2, 2017; Kona, Interview, January 16, 2017; Theodore, Interview, December 2, 2017). Having an open mind
and not defining a lesson before it begins was seen by all participants as a cornerstone of successful instruction. Ten of the 17 participants credited their first-year, in-classroom education experience with allowing them to have the knowledge and awareness to recognize which type of lesson they would be servicing. At times, a lesson can also move from a sport achievement to a therapeutic experience. Individuals come to OSCAR seeking support to perform a sport or activity; they may leave having experienced that lesson from more than just a physical perspective. The experience in and of itself, as Maria stated, “revolutionizes an individual by undoing negative past memories . . . undoing the ‘I will never’ mentality” (Interview, December 19, 2017).

All 17 participants saw their identity as an ARI as a “chance to advocate,” “listen emotionally,” and “fulfill dreams” (Archie, Interview, December 28, 2017; Bo, Interview, December 1, 2017; Hank, Interview, December 2, 2017; Kona, Interview, January 16, 2018; Rose, Interview, January 12, 2018). Conversations and interactions within the office are “heartfelt” and the culture created is “pressure free,” “enjoyable,” and “sensitive” to all populations and people types (Maggie, Interview, January 4, 2018; Rose, Interview, January 2, 2018; Theodore, Interview, December 2, 2017). The change in viewpoint and opinion of special populations created a “paradigm shift” in the industry of recreation (Archie, Barney, Chaco Interviews, December 28, 2017). ARIs no longer view this as a way to deal with persons having a disability, but rather recreating with them through use of unique, specifically designed equipment. The way ARIs interact, communicate, and approach each other at OSCAR is evidence of the level of support, respect, and engagement the entire staff has. All participants stated that without these things, the program and service provision at OSCAR would not be of the caliber that it is today.
Summary

I presented four research questions in this study. The themes identified were categorized according to the question with which they best correlated. These included a) background education and experience, b) value on-site training, c) learning from each other, and d) organizational culture that is re-creational. The experience and knowledge that a person brings to the position of an ARI is crucial to their success and ability to grow in their approach to ARIN. It guides a person’s teaching philosophy and allows them the skill set necessary to learn from fellow instructors and the on-site training provided by their ARP. Awareness of the detailed nature of ARIN comes from previous knowledge and experience in varied settings, including working with a variety of populations ranging in age, demographic, ability level, and cognitive function. The requirements of ARIN are broad, unique, and mandate a mindset that encourages recreating a positive experience for a client, through activity, sport, or recreation. For ARIs to have the awareness, skill set, and outlook on their instruction technique, they must first have a solid foundation of knowledge in working with special populations, the equipment necessary to participate in various sports and activities, and how much of the environment they can control. All these attributes converge via a supportive work environment to allow for successful, positive outcomes for both the client and the instructor.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to examine the experiences and pathway through an individual becomes an ARI to produce a thick description of what characteristics, background, and skills are necessary to be successful as an ARI. In this chapter, a summary of the findings of the study is presented, relating to the current literature. Theoretical and empirical implications are outlined, as well as those related to ARIs, ARP leaders, certification agencies, and individuals interested in becoming involved in AR from the instruction role. Chapter Five will conclude with details regarding limitations, delimitations, suggestions for future research, and a summary of this study.

Summary of Findings

This study took place at Oscar’s School Center for Adaptive Recreation (OSCAR), an ARP located in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. There were 17 total participants, with 14 of those being ARIs, one the executive director, one the program director, and one the marketing director. Participants shared experiences via in-person interview, on-site observations, document review, and reflective journal responses. I identified a total of four themes from the data that correlated with research questions. In this chapter, these themes are utilized to provide a thick, detailed picture of what an ARI’s characteristics, background education and work experience, and skill set should look like to provide ARIN services successfully. Specifically, what formal education and certification are desired, the on-site training necessary, an individual’s ability to learn from others, and how influential the culture of the organization is to a person’s success as an ARI.
The first research question guiding this study was: How does an individual’s background and education influence an ARI’s ability to provide services to clients? All participants shared positive feedback on how beneficial their previous work experiences were to their current position in AR. The people skills, organizational skills, and ability to communicate with others learned from work environments were all noted as largely influential in participants’ ability to communicate with clients, their families, friends, and other ARI’s at OSCAR. Working in professional positions was also noted as a means to understand better what was and was not okay to use as an approach to instruction in AR. Knowledge and awareness of how circumstances can impact any person’s perception or reception of ARIN and the ARI providing it was mentioned by all participants as being highly important and that this knowledge could only come from experience in the “real world” and communicating with fellow ARI’s, throughout their time at OSCAR.

The second question in this study was: What instructor preparation and training takes place at OSCAR? The curriculum is divided up into specific clinics and pathways, according to years of experience and time served within OSCAR. Document review provided thorough knowledge on the pathways through which ARI’s progress, to obtain the title of ARI. Not everyone reaches this point and may spend several years as an assistant ARI, depending on their skill and knowledge level. Participants whole heartedly valued the on-site training as imperative to successful ARIN. The progression from the first-year pathway to the second year and on to the specific clinics was respected, and almost all participants made statements regarding the importance of following the progression in the order that OSCAR suggested. Jumping ahead to specialty clinics was not seen as beneficial, as there is foundational knowledge to gain before being able to specialize in a given sport or disability. Knowledge of those terms and
methodologies accepted in AR was a fundamental component of participant experience and self-efficacy as an ARI. Many participants noted the crux that can present itself if knowledge and skills are not founded correctly upon teaching progressions based upon special education methods and practices. Individuals can only gain such foundations through on-site training and curriculum rooted in the PSIA certification model.

The third research question was: What do ARIs at OSCAR gain from observing each other, the executive director, the program director, and participant interactions? Learning from each other presented itself as a fundamental theme throughout the data sets. All participants were adamant that time and experience lead to successful ARIN. Multiple participants noted that “book learning” was only part of the road to ARIN and that some things can only come from seeing or experiencing a situation to be able to handle it. “No two clients are the same” was a phrase used by all participants throughout interviews, observations, and reflective journals. Communicating personal trials and successes with fellow ARIs was something that participants saw great value in and believed that without open communication lines, they would not be where they were today with their skill and ability level in ARIN. From this communication, many participants believed that their awareness of circumstances and how controllable or uncontrollable they were largely developed from learning and watching other ARIs during client sessions and through outdoor clinics.

The fourth question asked: How do daily interactions with other ARIs, the executive director, the program director, and the marketing director influence an ARI’s ability to perform job duties successfully at OSCAR? The culture of the organization at OSCAR was described as “re-creational” by many participants. Participants defined this term was define as being able to recreate an experience for a client in a manner that provides safety, fun, and learning. The vision
of OSCAR was to provide life-changing experiences through recreational sport. To accomplish this, participants stated the daily operations and interactions as breathing this vision into every encounter, every lesson, and every action. Participants noted the importance of living this vision through their devotion to each other, the clientele, and the professional within AR. Many participants referenced the idea of constantly evolving their knowledge and skill set to better enable others to service and participant in AR activities. All participants recommended the priority list to be safety, fun, and learning, in that order. Sport and Recreation are unpredictable, but participants firmly believed their training and interactions with others at OSCAR provided them with the tools necessary to perform their duties as ARIs at OSCAR.

**Discussion**

With AR being a relatively new field, not much research has existed on the specifications required for instructors to provide successful services to clients. This study was developed to identify the various attributes desired by hiring managers and believed to be necessary by ARIs themselves, to have a successful career as an ARI within an ARP. The findings revealed that background education, work experience, on-site training, learning from other ARIs, and the evolving culture of AR are impactful on an individual looking to become an ARI, as well as one currently working in the field.

**Theoretical**

Bandura’s social cognitive theory (1986) stated that a person’s environment “becomes a force that automatically shapes, orchestrates, and controls behavior” (p. 344). The themes identified further this idea by showing how influential the culture at OSCAR is on its employees. Merging situational awareness with communication between instructors and the on-site training provided, participants overwhelmingly felt the “force” from their environment at OSCAR. This
feeling was a positive influence that created a high standard of practice and expectations from both ARIs and management staff. By providing the best possible work environment, OSCAR has been able to retain and improve their instructor base over the past decade. Just as Bandura (1986) showed, this study also found that individuals learn and grow exponentially in supportive environments, allowing them high self-efficacy and confidence in their performance. This positive attitude was also stated to be paramount in an ARI’s ability to sustain their career in AR, due to the exaggerated strain on their bodies, mental wherewithal, and emotional stature. The wear down of these three components of a person in AR is significant, but participants felt that they were revived and renewed through their interactions with coworkers, conversations with supervisors, and support meetings, trainings, and get-togethers (Fetherston & Sturmey, 2014; Halpern & Tucker, 2015). All of which amplified the notion laid out by Bandura (1986) that an individual’s environment is influential on their willingness to learn more and evolve their approach to instruction within AR.

As adult learners, the participants stated the impact that clinic instructors’ presentation of material had on their ability and desire to attend them. Other than the clinic progressions being a requirement for employment, participants described clinics as “highly beneficial,” “very informative,” and “great ways to understand the why to the how.” The foundation that adults desire to know why they are learning, what they are learning, and the impact that that knowledge can have on an adult’s ability to retain said knowledge, and their likelihood to apply it in their lives serves as the basis of Knowles (1980) adult learning theory. Given the findings of this study, this theory advanced Knowles (1980) in specific relation to job training in AR. Without the on-site training and clinics, ARIs at OSCAR would be “disengaged,” “feel lost,” and “never really understand why we do what we do” (Barney, Interview, December 28, 2017; Champ,
Interview, January 4, 2018; Hank, Interview, December 2, 2017). The learning pathways utilized in OSCAR’s curriculum are built on progression from general education all the way to hands-on sport and disability specific instruction technique (Documents, January 12, 2018). This progression supports Knowles’ (1980) belief that an adult’s readiness to learn stems from their understanding of why they are learning what they are. Because OSCAR’s first-year pathway of clinics provides the foundation pieces of general education, special education, history of AR/RT, and how the field has evolved since its inception, ARIs learn the reasons behind techniques, methods, and philosophies. From this foundational learning, participants stated they became “ready to know more,” “ready to become involved,” open “to being aware of many different ideas on disabilities, personalities, terminology,” and “desired more training on teaching and how to instruct” (Bo Interview, December 1, 2017; Chaco Interview, December 28, 2017; Duke Interview, December 5, 2017; Maria Interview, December 19, 2017; Peyton Interview, December 1, 2017). The attitudes and perceptions of the on-the-job training provided at OSCAR paralleled Knowles’ (1980) assertion that adults become ready to learn once they understand why that learning is important.

**Empirical**

The current literature on ARIs is limited at best. There are programs across the country providing services to special populations, but not many studies on the how, why, when, and where of ARI hiring, retention, and successful service provision. The themes identified here seek to answer those questions and provide a model for existing programs, as well as future ones. Supervisors and instructors alike value the background work and education of an individual. Maria, Joey, Hank, Duke, Peyton, and Barney all confirmed the existence of a level of baseline knowledge a person must have to fulfill the job duties of an ARI. The fundamentals of working
with special populations “doesn’t just happen” and there is a unique set of characteristics “innate in a person” that managers of ARPs desire (Hank Interview, December 2, 2017; Kona Interview, January 16, 2018). Zimmerman et al. (2014) touched on the notion of learning by doing during service learning portions of a curriculum. Participants echoed this sentiment in their responses to questions about background work and education experience. “It’s all about the delivery, and if we can’t deliver in a way that the client understands, then we’ve failed” stated Joey, when asked about how his previous work experience influenced his ability to provide ARIN (Interview, January 4, 2018).

The second theme of valuing on-site training trends just behind the first. It mimics the practice of formal education, just without tuition, professors, or extra-curricular activities. The clinic progressions and pathways at OSCAR were all viewed in a positive and beneficial light by the participants. They placed value on the relationships built during these clinics, the communication lines made available by them, and the practical application opportunities experienced during them. Several past studies have highlighted the importance of in-service learning, internship hours, service approach, and training (Munirova et al., 2013; Pazey & Cole, 2012; Roper & Santiago, 2014; Sheehan, 2015; Stevens & Wellman, 2007). The current study’s findings advance these in a way specific to on-the-job training, rather than preparatory programs in higher education, certification programs from recreation agencies, or practical work experience. OSCAR requires all their ARIs to advance through clinics they provide, be tested on skills and knowledge, and practically apply techniques and methodology safely before ever providing any service to a client. This pathway creates a standard of practice quite like that outlined by Munirova et al. (2013) and Stevens and Wellman (2007). The second theme also proved Knowles’ (1980) and McGrath’s (2009) ideal of adult learners’ aptitude to learn and
retain information after they are made aware of why something is pertinent to their daily work or life practices.

Learning from each other emerged as a vibrant theme across all data sets and reached into several specific facets of the learning and work environment at OSCAR. Awareness became situational awareness after an ARI builds time and experience in the field. Circumstances surround each lesson and client an ARI services. Some of these are controllable, and some are not. Being aware of the circumstances that create the situation in which an AR provides a lesson allows an ARI to adapt and evolve throughout that lesson. Participants stated the importance, the necessity rather, of communication between instructors to achieve this awareness. They stated the communication often led to the resounding fact that no two clients or situations were the same. From this realization, ARIs use their communication avenues to advance their knowledge base via learning from others’ experiences, spending time with other instructors, and broadening their awareness of situations that are common amongst AR clientele. Pazey and Cole (2012) asserted the idea that knowledge and awareness can create socially just teachers and the theme of learning from each other advances this idea in a way specific to ARPs and the ability of ARIs to provide services safely, using the appropriate methodology, terminology, and perspective.

The fourth and final theme is unique to OSCAR, as it is the organizational culture provided there. The attitude of “re-creational” sport resonated throughout participant interview responses, observations, and reflective journal responses. Without the cornerstone idea of providing life-changing experiences for their clients, OSCAR employees would not be able to approach each lesson with the attitude that everyone involved ends the day on a positive note. Savill et al. (2014) and Sheehan (2015) ascertained the sources of self-efficacy and the role of management in recreational instructor performance. In the current study, I was able to take these
findings to a specific level, unique to ARPs and the specialized role of an ARI. Feeling supported, part of a family, and encouraged were all aspects of OSCAR that the participants repetitively stated made a key difference in their desire and ability to stay at this specific program site. Many worked in other programs around the country, but they have all chosen to stay at OSCAR because of the culture and sense of belonging they found there. The steps taken by OSCAR to ensure that all instructors are fully prepared to provide ARIN services, combined with the passion and drive to enable others to be active are aspects of OSCAR that all participants believed allowed it to become so successful in such a short amount of time. Several attributed this to the “pressure free” workplace that “engages in each instructor’s experience” and seeks to “better themselves by bettering them” (Archie, Interview, December 28, 2017; Peyton, Reflective Journal, January 30, 2018; Rose, Reflective Journal, January 29, 2018). The culture at OSCAR was something that had to be tended to daily, and the vision must be “breathed into it everyday” [sic] or else “things start to shift, and people can feel it” (Joey, Reflective Journal, January 30, 2018; Maria, Interview, December 19, 2017).

Implications

The results of this study on ARIs who address the needs of athletes with disabilities can have a significant impact on other ARPs, ARI preparation programs and curriculum, and supervisors looking to reevaluate their programs throughout the field of AR/RT. This study provides awareness of specific clinic progressions that can raise the standard of practice at ARPs that may have struggled to maintain and retain qualified staff. It also highlights parts of organizational communication that may be missing or in need of alteration at an ARP, to fully support and encourage staff to stay engaged, feel valued, or work towards further certification/education in the realm of AR/RT. Important aspects of background experience and
education found in this study may also provide insight into the need for exposure to varied work environments, participation in volunteer settings, and social interactions with special populations.

**Adaptive Recreation Programs (ARPs)**

The findings of this study provide ARPs with knowledge on the avenues through which they can find qualified instructors, train them up in a fashion that encourages capability and retention, and continuously support them throughout their career. Seeking individuals with background, formal or otherwise, in AR is highly desirable. Maria shared,

> It is general knowledge that we prefer those with some sort of previous connection to AR, whether that be from a direct family member, an internship at a health facility, camp leadership, or some sort of working environment where disabilities were a day to day experience. It isn’t necessary, but it’s a great start. Those are usually the ones that have that, you know, ‘it’ factor. You can’t learn that from school or certifications or research. It’s just part of you. (Interview, December 19, 2017)

All 16 other participants echoed this sentiment, using phrases like “you can’t learn that,” “it’s just inside of you,” “either you have it, or you don’t,” “I can’t teach that to someone,” and “I think you’re just born with it.” ‘It’ meaning an ability to connect with unique individuals socially and emotionally in whatever communication method that works for them.

Some participants noted that this correlates with education training when individuals enter teaching training programs and learn about learning styles and skills. Knowing whether a person receives information best via auditory communication, visual demonstration/reading, or kinesthetic stimulation is an important factor, but it must also be able to be recognized on site. Hank described this as:
reading the client the moment you see them. Are they ready for the day? Is something already irritating them? Can you make adjustments to the environment to assuage some of those stimulations or irritants? What is controllable and what isn’t? (Interview, December 2, 2017)

Some of this is teachable, and some is not. Peyton and Joey thought it was important to admit that these things can take time to master, but at some point “you just have to call it like you see it. Either they can, or they can’t” (Interviews, December 1, 2017; January 4, 2018). Maggie and Rose echoed what some others said, by stating “sometimes you have to recognize your shortcomings” and “become a volunteer, rather than an instructor” (Interviews, January 4, 2018; January 12, 2018).

For an ARP, it is important to give applicants time and training to see if they can provide ARIN as a full instructor. At the same time, the organization should also have other ways individuals can serve and support that does not require specific skill sets or capabilities. The findings of this study point out the importance of these other positions and provide fellow ARPs with examples of how a person can be a part of AR and provide services outside of recreation instruction alone. These positions are of value and can impact a client, their family, their friends, and other employees of the ARP as much as servicing a client via hands-on instruction. Hank spoke of these other positions by stating,

you know . . . some people get upset about being put on the volunteer list, but what they don’t realize is those people coming to the breakfasts or that person coming into the office to speak with someone about enrolling their newly disabled child in a service are hugely impacted by that volunteer’s interaction, communication, and . . . people skills . . .
the type of clients we deal with . . . it’s all about people skills. (Interview, December 2, 2017)

Joey and Theodore added to this notion of equal importance by referencing their personal benefits from servicing a lesson, having a client meltdown and it came down to the volunteer sitting in the office that was able to console and reignite excitement in a client. All positions are important in an ARP, volunteer, paid, full-time, part-time, and seasonal.

**ARP Leadership and Administrators**

The findings of this study also impart the substantial impact that leadership style has on the whole organization. The culture of a field like AR is one piece, but the culture within the organization within the field is larger. The overwhelming sentiment that the current leadership at OSCAR evolved and progressed in a manner that promoted self-worth, feeling valued by your supervisor, and knowing that the staff was there for support all the time supported this. Many of the participants stayed with OSCAR since its inception. There have been on years and off years, just like any other institution, corporation, or organization. Through these tides, participants used specific phrases to describe that management has learned “not to practice top-down leadership” as it “deeply impacts the entire staff in a negative way.” Recognizing the need to allow employees to feel valued, cared for, and supported is imperative to an ARP’s ability to sustain growth and provide positive experiences for their staff and their clientele.

Themes identified show that leadership must keep open communication pathways with every layer of the organization. They need to hear their volunteers when they ask for more hands at service banquets and when an ARI says that their on-site training pathway did not prepare them for what they experienced in their lesson that day. Goals should be set in a way that they strive for improved, positive operations daily to provide clients with the take away desired from
each specific lesson. Several participants noted this as not asking an employee to do something they (management) would not do themselves. Having a true sense of teamwork rather than delegating certain tasks to the person perceived as the lowest on the line can enable all employees to be more passionate about their work. Also, all employees can become invested in the organization’s long-term goals, and desire to improve themselves for the benefit of the team, not for themselves.

The environment, communication, and interactions observed at OSCAR elicited knowledge proving that adults learn better when they understand the why behind the what. When leadership in an ARP allows new hires, returning hires, and year-round hires to work through the same clinics, practice skills before active service provision, and provide one-on-one meetings to work on specific equipment, teaching technique, and instruction progression they create a sense of bonding and shared purpose. The identification of learning from other ARIs, as well as supervisors, shows leaders of other ARPs how important it is to stay involved in the training, lesson provision, and day-to-day operations. Maria noted, “When you lose touch with the people actually doing the work, that’s when you lose touch with your purpose for working here” (Interview, December 19, 2017). Hank, Joey, Kona, Peyton, and Theodore all emphasized how influential it was to have a supervisor “out on the hill” everyday [sic] (Reflective Journals, January 29-30, 2018). Administrators need to allow their staff to see them, talk to them, and feel connected to them. Relationship, fellowship, and daily leadership are imperative to the work environment at an ARP, as evidenced by the findings of this study.

**On-site Training and Curriculum Development**

This study implies that leadership should also be involved in the on-site training and clinics, from curriculum development to day of presentation and examination. The involvement
of supervisors in day to day activities grants them insight into what ARIs need to know in order to carry out their job duties. Without current experience working as an ARI, curriculum developers can only use research and past knowledge to provide educational materials to staff members working through the clinic progressions. If curriculum writers have not been out in the field in a few years, their knowledge base is more than likely irrelevant to those instructors preparing to work a season of ARIN. Current personal experience as an ARI is the linchpin to adequately training a staff of ARIs. The findings of this study support this importance by way of participant experience as an attendee of these trainings. The clinics were described as “revolutionary in my approach,” “the glue that holds it all together,” “the only way I can do what I do,” “the foundation of everything else,” and “monumental in evolving my own approach.” Many stated that they returned to the first-year clinics, “just to see what I’ve forgotten or missed.”

Curriculum and training developers can use the progression models themselves and take from them various levels of application tactics and testing practices based on the years of existence of PSIA. OSCAR has chosen this agency, as its teaching progressions and examinations have stood the test of time and those ARIs that have gone through the on-site training at OSCAR have attested to their stature, standard, and relevance. Just as Stevens and Wellman (2007) proposed a board for scholarly review in recreation, this study can be used to build further curriculum, set a standard for AR specific certifications in various sports and activities, and provide other ARPs with a guide for their on-site training for ARIs. Professional development is something that many employees seek from their place of employment and through the evidence discovered in this study, has been shown to be valued and necessary for successful ARIN as an ARI.
Delimitations and Limitations

The delimitation of this study was the purposeful selection of the study site, due to its amplified success over a short period of time. The participant selection was open to all employees working at OSCAR who have ever worked as an ARI within the organization. I chose this demographic to achieve maximum variation within the participant population who had lived experiences as an ARI during the time that OSCAR has been in existence.

This study was limited to a smaller participant population, as the organization itself is not large, and the ARI staff are seasonal, volunteer, part-time paid staff, and full-time paid staff. The influx of clientele during the study’s duration also limited the number of participants, as many ARIs worked two jobs and did not have much spare time to commit to interviews, observations, and reflective journaling. Initially, the participant response was slow and very small in numbers. The response time was extended to allow for more ARIs to come into town for their season of employment to begin, thus enabling me to reach the desired number of participants. This extension of time delayed the interview, observation, and reflective journaling process, but did not shorten the duration of exposure to the organization for observations and document reviewing.

Further limitations were the research and interview questions I selected. I selected these questions to hone in on the ARI role and experience alone, not organizational structure, organizational communication, or organizational development specifically. Ideas related to these concepts presented themselves at the discretion of the participants but were not sought out in detail. These aspects of an organization can largely impact the experience and perception of a person in their role as an employee within that organization.
Recommendations for Future Research

There is a need to look at the organizational structure, communication, and development, as related to specific positions within an ARP to truly understand the various influences that an ARI experiences within their workplace. The aspects of the organization discovered in this study are merely the surface, and future researchers should delve deeper in future study. Separating supervisory roles from others is also a consideration, as these individuals will have different perceptions on the role of the ARI, and they, themselves, may not have had personal experience acting in the position of instructor in an ARP.

Other research might focus on other variables related to ARI service provision, their self-efficacy, and desire to stay in the role of ARI long-term. Participants mentioned many of these variables in passing, but none were highlighted specifically. Future studies may use multiple cases to cross correlate findings, which may add to the weight of the findings here. Opening the participant population to varied programs across the country and world could also uncover potential advantages to working in a specific geographic location, a specific sport-centered program, or a program solely based on a single disability, learning outcome, or achievement. For instance, programs focused on preparing Paralympic athletes to compete or those that focus on physical disability alone may have different stressors, on-site curriculum needs, or organizational foundations, for example, nonprofit, for-profit, public, private, and so forth.

Finally, there is a need to gather evidence from a similar participant population at the beginning of a season as well as the end, to see if there are differences in attitudes, perspectives, and needs in each level of employee in the program. The leadership of an ARP may recognize shortcomings mid-season, attempt to play catch up throughout the season, and at the end desire to regroup and construct a better offensive before the next season beginning. The ARIs
themselves may also have varied opinions of the program from the start, to the middle, and at the end. It would be largely beneficial to follow up with the exact participants from this study later, to reassess using the same research questions, interview questions, observation methods, document analysis, and reflective stimuli. The findings would have a stronger foothold and possibly enlighten relevant populations of other aspects of the ARI not apparent in the current data.

Summary

In this study, I discovered the true perceptions of the role of an ARI, from the perspective of ARIs and other various supervisory positions within an ARP. The attitudes identified were largely positive and reiterated the importance of a person’s background experiences from work and education, as well as the amount of professional development, training, and work environment support supplied by the organization that employ ARIs. Participants consistently shared the importance of communication, constant and open, between ARIs and between them and their supervisors. The amount of learning-centered interactions, conversations, and trainings held within OSCAR have afforded their staff with ample knowledge in the realm of ARIN, organizational communication, and organizational support. I felt the sense of compassion and encouragement throughout my observation sessions, as well as with each participant during their interview. The “it” factor resonated throughout both offices and anyone visiting the organization could not help but leave feeling uplifted and excited.

I did not focus on instructor self-efficacy, but it was a sentiment that presented itself throughout the data collection methods. Participants consistently noted that they felt effective and prepared for their daily duties from the on-site education and practice they were given and receive each year. Working with fellow instructors, having conversations at the end of the day,
and fellowshipping with the team outside of daily work hours had a significant impact on instructor retention. Several participants made a point to say that without the support and sense of family at OSCAR, they would have moved on a long time ago. There is no real monetary pull to work in AR, but these instructors came to serve in a place they know and love.

This study revealed key components of a person’s pathway to becoming an ARI, the on-site training and instruction they receive, and the relationships available at an ARP that allow them to be successful in their job. Communication, awareness, and support must come from the leadership and trickle down to the volunteer serving the food at a camp breakfast. The mission must be breathed into life each day and every person providing a service, support, or information to potential clientele exudes that mission. The overall experiences of the participants in this study revealed that a person comes to AR by way of personal connection, whether it be familial, personal, or friendship. They brought with them a sensitivity necessary to understand the communication methods needed to interact with special populations and they wanted to learn ways to educate, enhance, and improve recreation experiences for others. This desire to learn is what ARP leadership should seek out and recognize as necessary to provide the best possible learning experience and achievement for a person coming to them for services.
REFERENCES


Leisure Studies and Recreation Education, 2, 28-34.


November 28, 2017

Jenna Jordan
IRB Approval 3051.112817: An Intrinsic Case Study Examining Adaptive Recreation Instructors Who Address the Needs of Athletes with Disabilities in Northwestern Colorado

Dear Jenna Jordan,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971
Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

[Insert Date]

[Recipient]
Oscar’s School Center for Adaptive Recreation
0807 Gunner’s Way
Mt. Nibali, Luna

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. This letter is an invite for you to participate in a research study. If you would like to participate, the deadline for participation is [Date].

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview, unannounced observations, and a reflective journal. Each should take approximately 1 hour for you to complete the procedure(s) listed, respectively. Your name and/or other identifying information will be requested as part of your participation; however, you will be assigned a pseudonym so that all information will remain confidential.

To participate, contact me to schedule an initial interview, observation time, and appointment for your reflective journal.

A consent document is attached to this letter. The informed consent document contains additional information about my research, please sign the informed consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview or via email at jennaljordan@icloud.com, to indicate that you have read it and would like to take part in my study.

Sincerely,

Jenna Jordan, Ed.S.
Candidate for the Doctor of Education degree
jennaljordan@icloud.com
229.563.4327
Appendix C: Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 11/28/2017 to 11/27/2018
Protocol # 3051.112817

CONSENT FORM
ADAPTIVE RECREATION INSTRUCTORS AND SPORT PROVISION IN NORTHWESTERN COLORADO: AN INTRINSIC CASE STUDY
Jenna Jordan
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of adaptive recreation instruction. You were selected as a possible participant because of your involvement in adaptive recreation as an instructor, executive director, program director, or marketing director. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Jenna Jordan, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to obtain a full understanding of adaptive recreation instructors, the preparation and training they experience, their background/education, and their role within an adaptive recreation program.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
1. Participate in a semi-structured interview, which will be audio recorded and last between 30 minutes and 1.5 hours.
2. Allow unannounced observations so the researcher may record observations on a data collection form. The length of this observation will be according to the length of the service session.
3. Complete reflective journal responses via a handwritten stimulus sheet. The amount of time spent is up to the participant.

Risks and Benefits of Participation: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include:
• Possible development of education and training standards for ARPs and ARIs.
• Raised awareness of these programs, what they offer, and how accessible they are.
• Raised awareness of what ARIs need to achieve self-efficacy and provide the best possible experience for participants.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.
• Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Reflective journals will be completed in the privacy of an office with the door closed.
• Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
• Interviews will be recorded and I will transcribe them. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Steamboat Adaptive Recreation Sports (STARS). If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Jenna Jordan. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at [email protected] You may also contact the researcher’s faculty advisor, Dr. Gail Collins, at glcollins2@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____________________________  ________________________
Signature of Participant                  Date

_____________________________  ________________________
Signature of Investigator                  Date
Appendix D: Interview Questions for ARIs at OSCAR

1. How did you first learn about OSCAR?
2. Why did you decide to apply for the ARI position at OSCAR?
3. Please describe your on-site training at OSCAR.
4. Please describe all of your education and training background prior to working at OSCAR.
5. Please describe your work experiences prior to working at OSCAR.
6. How did your work experience and education impact your decision to work as an ARI?
7. What was your view of ARPs before coming to work at OSCAR?
8. How have you developed the knowledge and skills for your approach to working with individuals with disabilities at OSCAR?
9. How do your observations of your supervisors working with clients at OSCAR influence your own approach to your work?
10. How has the culture of the field impacted your ability or desire to become educated in special education strategies or methodologies? Why?
11. What has enabled you to feel like you successfully provide AR services to clients?
12. What challenges do you face working as an ARI? How do you cope with these?
13. What would you recommend to someone looking to become a part of an ARP as an ARI?
Appendix E: Standardized Questions for Executive Director Interview

1. How did you come to be the Executive Director of OSCAR and not another ARP?
2. What do you believe Adaptive Recreation (AR) means?
3. What training have you had in AR?
4. Please describe your education background, as it relates to AR.
5. Prior to working at OSCAR, what work experience did you have?
6. Were you an ARI at any time in your career?
7. How has your education and training impacted your work approach at OSCAR?
8. What do you believe an ARI needs to be successful?
9. What are you looking for when you begin the process of hiring an ARI?
10. What on-site training do you offer your ARIs?
11. Do you participate in the AR training?
12. What aspects of your ARIs makes you feel OSCAR is successful?
13. What challenges do ARIs face?
14. How do you support your team of ARIs and supervisors?
15. What recommendations would you give to a person looking to get involved in ARPs?
Appendix F: Standardized Questions for the Program Director Interview

1. How did you come to know OSCAR?
2. What do you believe Adaptive Recreation (AR) means?
3. What training have you had in AR?
4. Please describe your education background, as it relates to AR.
5. Prior to working at OSCAR, what work experience did you have?
6. Were you an ARI at any time in your career?
7. How has your education and training impacted your work approach at OSCAR?
8. What do you believe an ARI needs to be successful?
9. What are you looking for when you begin the process of hiring an ARI?
10. What on-site training do you offer your ARIs?
11. Do you participate in the AR training?
12. What are your goals when you begin to create programming for OSCAR?
13. How often do you redevelop your programming structure?
14. What types of programs do you offer?
15. How do you keep programming synonymous with the mission of OSCAR?
16. How do you create curriculum for various populations?
17. Do you have a specialty in a given area?
18. What aspects of your ARIs makes you feel OSCAR is successful?
19. What challenges do ARIs face?
20. How do you support your team of ARIs and supervisors?
21. What recommendations would you give to a person looking to get involved in ARPs?
Appendix G: Standardized Questions for Marketing Director Interview

1. How did you come to know OSCAR?

2. What do you believe Adaptive Recreation (AR) means?

3. What training have you had in AR?

4. Please describe your education background, as it relates to AR.

5. Prior to working at OSCAR, what work experience did you have?

6. Were you an ARI at any time in your career?

7. How has your education and training impacted your work approach at OSCAR?

8. What do you believe an ARI needs to be successful?

9. What are you looking for when you begin the process of marketing development?

10. How do you market on-site training to the staff?

11. Do you participate in the AR training?

12. What aspects of your ARIs do you highlight in your marketing strategy?

13. What challenges do ARIs & ARPS face?

14. How do you support your team of ARIs and supervisors?

15. What recommendations would you give to a person looking to get involved in ARPs?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/14/2017</td>
<td>Peyton</td>
<td>Working with adult age client, high on the autism spectrum. Tools are crucial in managing stimulation from outside sources. Headphones = imperative. Communication choices mean everything. Communicating with multiple people, simultaneously, for the benefit of the client and his reactive state to surrounding circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/14/2017</td>
<td>Hank</td>
<td>Simultaneous observation with Peyton. Hank remained in the supportive role, allowing Peyton to maintain control of the client’s experience, reactions, and focus. Even with more experience, Hank recognized his role and stuck to it. This creates a mutually beneficial outcome for Peyton and Hank. The main person in control should stay that person, especially with a client like this who can react to change in pace of the situation irrationally. Awareness was imperative to this situation dissolving and the client refocusing on why he was there, what the goal of the day was, and how to “get out the door” to go do that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/16/2017</td>
<td>Barney</td>
<td>Coincidentally, same client as Hank and Peyton. Different overall feel, client was much calmer and there were not as many people in the office preparing to go out. Barney was alone, until he asked if there were available asst. instructors. He voiced he wanted to be prepared for “what may come” later in the day. This specific client can become agitated easily and Barney wanted to be sure he had the support he needed while out on the hill. Goes back to being aware of the client, the circumstance, and availability of tools, e.g. tangible equipment and asst. instructor support. It was best that I remain at the office, as the client is uncomfortable with added interactions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 12/16/2017 | Champ       | First year instructor. No support instructor. High functioning client. Champ eased into the conversation, making the client comfortable with communication before suiting up to go out. He asked her what she wanted to do and began to guide her choices, without pressuring her into them. Champ was aware of a battle not worth fighting and succumbed to her request that he carry her gear through the flats to each chair lift. This is an
imperative skill! It created rapport between instructor and client. She was very comfortable and it seemed they were able to do more than expected, because he did not pressure her to do something she did not want to do. There is a line between creating learning experiences and forcing clients to do things they don’t want to “so they can learn.” Some would argue this to be coddling them, but Champ and his client did not seem like they were encouraging bad behavior. He was merely aware of whether something was worth a potential breakdown or not.
Appendix I: Reflective Journal Stimuli For Participants

1. What do feel was most important about your session today?

2. How did the observation experience influence your provision of services?

3. What about the environment of the observation and/or interview influenced your responses?

4. How did you feel in this environment?

5. How did you perceive the clients to feel during the observation?

6. What would you do differently?

7. Will you change your approach to clients after the experience of the interview and observation?

8. Lingering thoughts on the experience of participating in this study?
## Appendix J: Enumeration Chart

Research Question 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Characteristics of Code</th>
<th>Participants Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valuing formal education and/or certification</td>
<td>Seeking certification</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling qualified for the job</td>
<td>Compelled to improve myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using past knowledge for current application</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Book learning added to experience and time</td>
<td>Valued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Really helped my provision of services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Help me learn the tricks of the trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PSIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Book learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing learning experiences for clients</td>
<td>Understanding various disabilities</td>
<td>Unmeasurable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge on how to connect with certain disability types</td>
<td>Progressive teaching model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to stay in a single discipline or disability type</td>
<td>Cognitively, Effectively, and Physically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling adequate</td>
<td>Happy and fulfilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehension of the differences between disability type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with fellow instructors</td>
<td>Feeling supported by others</td>
<td>Calm and collected answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open communication lines with supervisors and fellow instructors</td>
<td>Surrounded by clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning from other instructor’s experience and knowledge</td>
<td>Prepared for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assisting each other in situations, lessons, interactions, etc.</td>
<td>Learn and grow as an instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing my knowledge and experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational awareness</td>
<td>Understanding no two clients are the same</td>
<td>Open, willing, and wanting to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being aware of personal connection with client</td>
<td>Personal connections or experiences can be helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ability to admit they may not be the best fit for a client or disability type
Language used towards, around, and with clients, their families, and others
- Comes from knowledge of special populations, terminology, and acceptance of PC verbiage

or hurtful to the instruction provision
Always changing my approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 2:</th>
<th>Characteristics of Code</th>
<th>Participants Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First year pathway of learning</td>
<td>Begins with general education on disabilities, the history of AR/RT, terminology appropriate to be used, paperwork trails and procedures, and understanding the hierarchy within OSCAR No testing Must complete 6 hours of general education to advance to specialty clinics and/or sport specific instruction clinics</td>
<td>Ready Excited Helpful Informative Continue to train Better understanding Limited amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year pathway of learning</td>
<td>Can retake introductory 6 hour clinics, if desired Advance to sport specific and disability specific clinics Must take, at minimum 9 hours of clinics prior to servicing first client/session of the season Not up for lead instructor positions unless specifically noted by program director</td>
<td>Intermediate Challenged Not reinventing the wheel Should highlight certification if you have it More time See and do, equals success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced pathways of obtaining specialty learning</td>
<td>3 plus years of service, volunteer or paid</td>
<td>Accomplished Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance to specific clinics, remedial if desired&lt;br&gt;Lead Instructors&lt;br&gt;Must take 6 hours of foundation clinics to proceed to specialty designation within Lead Instructor category</td>
<td>Spend time in it&lt;br&gt;Tiring&lt;br&gt;Tasks&lt;br&gt;Efforts versus benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom Clinics</strong>&lt;br&gt;History of OSCAR&lt;br&gt;History of Adaptive Sports/AR/RT&lt;br&gt;Fundamental terminology&lt;br&gt;General Disability knowledge&lt;br&gt;- Multiple disabilities in a single person&lt;br&gt;- Connection between certain disability types&lt;br&gt;- Ages of clients&lt;br&gt;General procedure of how many instructors per client type, sport type, equipment type&lt;br&gt;General procedure of check-in, note/charting, and end of day practices</td>
<td>Improved&lt;br&gt;Learning&lt;br&gt;Provisional&lt;br&gt;Opens you up to being aware of a lot of things: disabilities, personalities, terminology&lt;br&gt;More training on teaching and how to instruct is needed&lt;br&gt;You can be told about it, but not comprehend it.&lt;br&gt;Get to know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor Clinics</strong>&lt;br&gt;Specific to instruction methodology: HOW TO TEACH&lt;br&gt;Teaching pathways based on PSIA methodology&lt;br&gt;Progressions&lt;br&gt;Teaching Styles and Skills&lt;br&gt;Learn by seeing, doing, and applying&lt;br&gt;Sport based instruction and learning&lt;br&gt;Equipment use, choice, and application</td>
<td>Transfer mental notes&lt;br&gt;One on One interaction&lt;br&gt;Breaking it down&lt;br&gt;Think about it and apply it&lt;br&gt;More supportive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theme</strong></th>
<th><strong>Characteristics of Code</strong></th>
<th><strong>Participants Words</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Watching how seasoned instructors and supervisors interact with clients, their friends and family, and other OSCAR employees</td>
<td>Checking for predeceasing steps that may have been skipped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language used</td>
<td>Comes with experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Word order and choice</td>
<td>Feel it in my heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowing common triggers for certain disability types</td>
<td>Share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoiding over stimulations and/or under stimulation</td>
<td>Get to know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Requires thorough knowledge of client</td>
<td>Client first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowing what is controllable and what is not</td>
<td>Client comes before me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Weather</td>
<td>Clothes are important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Equipment</td>
<td>Sensitivity issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Personal frame of mind (of client)</td>
<td>Care enough to ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowing when to ask for help, admit you aren’t the right fit for a client, or you are the best fit for a client</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Keep open lines with supervisors</td>
<td>Build that relationship and trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speak up immediately</td>
<td>Open up a conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Safety</td>
<td>Provide details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Positive outcome</td>
<td>Situational triggers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Negative outcome</td>
<td>Client’s ability to communicate and how they do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dangers/concerns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaving appropriately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>detailed notes in client charts for the next instructor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correctly communicating how the session went with family and/or friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ask questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Clients</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Previous instructor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supervisors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No situation is the same</td>
<td>Don’t come with preconception of how the day will go</td>
<td>Wanting to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accept change as it comes</td>
<td>Triggers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be adaptable</td>
<td>Verbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Profiling is okay, until it isn’t</td>
<td>Nonverbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ability to alter personal approach if person isn’t what you anticipated</td>
<td>Why is the client there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• knowing what you can and cannot handle</td>
<td>Ready to be challenged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On your toes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You adapt to them, not them adapting to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Always changing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience and time equal success and understanding</th>
<th>Personally experiencing certain disabilities is the only way to learn how you should approach it</th>
<th>Time. It all takes time.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trial and error</td>
<td>Book smarts is only a part of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interacting with special populations leads to comprehension of them</td>
<td>Hands-on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal comfort level increases with exposure</td>
<td>Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge base grows with time, exposure, and application of knowledge</td>
<td>Awareness grows with time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learn, grow, and evolve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sticking to one area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Struggles happen</th>
<th>Defeat is bound to happen</th>
<th>Never set expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t beat yourself up if you don’t reach all goals</td>
<td>Client expectations over your own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clients and instructor are both works in progress</td>
<td>You can’t control everything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“bad days”</td>
<td>Don’t set goals for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncontrollable circumstances</td>
<td>Positive reinforcement, even if it’s just stepping onto the snow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• client</td>
<td>Don’t try to force them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attitude/mindset</td>
<td>Pushing them isn’t necessarily right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• instructor</td>
<td>We push when it’s appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attitude/mindset</td>
<td>Don’t dwell on it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• weather</td>
<td>Don’t dwell on it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• equipment</td>
<td>Tomorrow is another day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• clothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• fears</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• physical ability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledge when help/assistance is necessary

| Certification is important, but not the means to an end | Certification provides methodology and knowledge. Certification is a model to bridge the gap between knowledge gained via certification pathway and experience. Personal development of methodology includes:
- from certification
- from experience
- learning styles
- teaching styles
Using all knowledge, experience, and skill from throughout instructor’s life. | Certification isn’t everything. Certification is a great start. PSIA is our model. We are based on a model. Training comes in progressions. Teaching progression is key. Book learning is important.

PSIA model: See it. Do it. I’ll show you. Then, you can do it. Model the how.

| If you don’t know, ask | Admitting is the first step. Asking brings rapport, support, and knowledge. Learning from someone else’s mistakes is important. Avoiding risk shows caring and concern. Awareness is more important than appearance. | People should ask more questions about their goals. I’m always available for any questions. Open, inviting environment. Comfortable. Studied.

Don’t be afraid to ask. |

Research Question 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Characteristics of Code</th>
<th>Participants Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety, Fun, Learning</td>
<td>In that order. Safety comes first, over anything else. Fun for the client, not the instructor. Do what the client wants, not the instructor. Providing safe activity, in a fun manner, that may or may not produce actual learning or skill production.</td>
<td>Safety, fun, and learning, in that order. Lower the risk at all cost. Keep them safe, first. Fun comes second. Learning is our last achievement. Parents goals versus client goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Adaptive Sports or Adaptive Recreation | Sports and recreation are synonymous  
Sports can be recreational or competitive  
Recreation can be sport activity or therapeutic | Pressure free  
Enjoyment  
Work better  
Culture  
Sensitive  
Listen emotionally, react accordingly  
Seen as therapy or recreation |
| RE-creational | Revolutionizing an individual’s experience with sport and/or activity  
Undoing negative past experiences or memories  
Undoing the “I will never” mentality | Chance to advocate  
Heartfelt  
Reach our mission  
Paradigm shift  
Needs to change  
Difference between an ARI with or without a disability themselves |
| Enabling others to be active | Equipment  
Outside conditions  
Animals versus equipment  
What works best for the individual, may not be the instructor’s favorite  
Its not about me | Fulfilling experiences  
Different perspectives  
Better ourselves by bettering them  
Fulfilled  
Excited  
Engaged |
| Nothing is easy | Equipment choice  
Clothing choice  
Client perception of how things will go/are supposed to go  
It takes a village | Overstimulation  
Environment is comfortable, pressure free, and accurate for the individual  
Mindset  
Be adaptable |
| Celebrate the small victories | Client goals versus family or parental goals  
Reinforcement according to what works for the client  
Communication is key | Positive mission  
Keep it simple  
Going for small improvements  
Not spotlight shortcomings |
| Stock your quiver | Clients have layers of disabilities  
No two sessions will be the same | Knowledge is power  
Being comfortable in the adaptive environment  
Experience leads to knowledge and skill |
Recognize what is important and what isn’t. Awareness breeds knowledge:
- the more that is known, the more activity that can take place safely and successfully.

Personal connection can be helpful or too close.
## Appendix K: Bracketing Journal for Myself

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Being Studied</th>
<th>My Opinion</th>
<th>Opinion after data collection</th>
<th>Opinion after data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARI education background and experience</td>
<td>Formal education is important</td>
<td>It depends on the person’s background and connection to AR</td>
<td>It is important, regardless of personal connection and/or experience with AR and special populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor influence on ARI performance</td>
<td>Supervisors are important and have high impact on ARI performance</td>
<td>It depends on the ARI, their relationship with current leadership, and their self-efficacy level within AR</td>
<td>Communication is crucial between ARIs and leadership. Lessons can be learned from those that have attained leadership roles within the organization. It is important to be able to reach out when in need, as well as learn from others mistakes and achievements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix L: Audit Trail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action Taken</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/9/2016</td>
<td>Contact via email to meet ED of study site</td>
<td>Meeting scheduled with ED and John, acquaintance to myself and the ED</td>
<td>Thankful for John’s willingness to assist me in the introduction to the ED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/9/2017</td>
<td>Email ED to obtain written approval for study site</td>
<td>Response email stating permission to work with OSCAR</td>
<td>ED is open and excited about the potential of the study. She is also very swift to respond!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/8/2017</td>
<td>Email ED to obtain signature/formal approval for study site</td>
<td>Signed PDF stating permission to work with OSCAR</td>
<td>ED is quick to respond and looking forward to the study commencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1/2017</td>
<td>Submit proposal to Chair, for committee review</td>
<td>Reviewed and set date for Proposal defense</td>
<td>Intense process, but well worth the experience. Defending brings about confidence in a person that otherwise they may have never knew existed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/18/2017</td>
<td>Proposal Defense via WebEx</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>Extremely nerve wracking, but again very beneficial to overall professional knowledge and experience when interviewing, presenting budgets to boards, and other seminar like events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/22/2017</td>
<td>Submit IRB application</td>
<td>Reviewed and returned with edits</td>
<td>Waiting periods are hard. Interesting to experience two sets of reviews, given the revamp of the IRB application process at LU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/27/2017</td>
<td>Resubmit IRB application</td>
<td>Accepted and submitted to LU’s schoolwide IRB review board</td>
<td>Seems like the new process sought to make this quicker, but in reality made it much longer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/3/2017</td>
<td>IRB application review by School wide review board</td>
<td>Reviewed documents returned with edits to be approved by me</td>
<td>Nice to have this submitted to step two within the same week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/23/2017</td>
<td>Application and documents returned to me to be approved</td>
<td>Edits were reviewed and approved, application materials were resubmitted to schoolwide IRB review board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very small edits that didn’t necessarily seem worth the 20 day wait, but that is why there is a review board to help me recognized that all things matter. Even the little ones.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/28/2017</td>
<td>Formal IRB approval</td>
<td>Application materials were approached</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Finally!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/29/2017</td>
<td>Complete Pilot Study</td>
<td>Arranged interviews and observations with 3 instructors from a separate recreation program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It was interesting to discover interview characteristics about myself. I need to keep my mouth shut and allow them to think through their responses. Very helpful!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/1/2017</td>
<td>Begin Interviews</td>
<td>Interviews were scheduled and completed on a first come first serve basis. Not a lot of initial interest, but things began to open up the more often I appeared on scene at the study site. People began to understand who I was, what my purpose was, and were interested in helping the cause.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It is hard to get overworked and underpaid persons to want to volunteer additional time and interaction at their place of employment. The more I opened up to them, the more they opened up to me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/1/2017</td>
<td>Begin Observations</td>
<td>Attendance at all clinics/trainings; observations in the office, out of the office, and around the mountain area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very smooth communication, people don’t get up in arms if things aren’t going perfectly, very strong team effort.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/4/2017</td>
<td>Begin Transcription</td>
<td>Initial interviews were transcribed before the bulk of the interviews took place.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Start transcribing as soon as possible. This is a long, tedious process. It is beneficial to do yourself, as you can analyze and better understand the interviews with each pass you make at the transcription.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/11/2017-1/14/2018</td>
<td>Document review</td>
<td>More documents than anticipated were shared. The full training curriculum was able to be reviewed. Very helpful. Curriculum knowledge was largely beneficial to understanding why participants place so much value in their on-site training.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/16/2018</td>
<td>End Interviews</td>
<td>A total of 17 participants were interviewed. Asking for people’s time is a hard thing, as well as trying to schedule an hour to an hour and a half between my schedule and theirs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/20/2018</td>
<td>Complete Transcription</td>
<td>All 17 interviews completely transcribed. Beneficial process to thorough understanding of each participant, but very time consuming.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/25/2018</td>
<td>Transcript Edit completed</td>
<td>All 17 transcripts were reviewed and edited to be sent out to participants for their review. Obviously quicker than the actual typing, but again very helpful to look back over all of them again. You learn something every time you do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/26-29/2018</td>
<td>Transcripts sent out for member checking</td>
<td>All 17 transcripts were sent to each participant and returned with questions, concerns, or edits. Only one participant tried to “clean up” their speech, as he felt it made him “sound like a moron.” All participants noted they were surprised by how often they use certain words, phrasing, and pausing. Not uncommon when a person hears/sees their conversation on paper.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/29-30/2018</td>
<td>Reflective Journals sent out</td>
<td>All 17 participants received a reflective journal prompt A few were quick to respond, several were not.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/1/2018</td>
<td>Reminders to complete reflective journal sent out</td>
<td>A total of 7 participants did not return the journal promptly. Irritation, but understand that its an added task in an already busy day for everyone.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/7/2018</td>
<td>Reflective Journals completed</td>
<td>All 17 participants completed the reflective journal. Several took more than one reminder, but in the end they were all completed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/8/2018</td>
<td>Data analysis conducted across all data sets</td>
<td>Compile all interviews into a single document for coding, categorizing, and eventually theme identification. I had much more data than anticipated. Exciting, yet daunting.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/14/2018</td>
<td>Create enumeration chart</td>
<td>Cross reference codes and themes between data sets and research questions to identify correlations between the two. Commonality amongst the data sets was interesting, but not surprising.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/20/2018 - 3/28/2018</td>
<td>Chapter 4 and 5 Complete</td>
<td>Revisions of data description, narrative, and charts created. With how much data was collected, it was hard to fine tune it in a manner conducive to reading comprehension.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/1-10/2018</td>
<td>APA edit review</td>
<td>Manuscript ready for publication. Sense of relief and appreciation.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>