THE SOCIALIZATION OF FIRST-TIME ATHLETIC TRAINING EDUCATION PROGRAM DIRECTORS

A thesis presented
by
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Abstract
Starting in 2004 athletic training students had to graduate from accredited athletic training education programs to become certified. Institutions had to accredit their athletic training education programs to continue offering students the opportunity to become certified. These institutions needed to transition current employees or hire new individuals to fill the role of program director to meet requirements of accreditation. This research study examined the transition of individuals from athletic training professional to first-time program director in an athletic training education program at the undergraduate level. Nine program directors were interviewed to understand their transition and socialization into their new roles and responsibilities. The data from the participants were analyzed through interpretative phenomenological analysis and four common socialization experiences emerged: understanding perceived interest and actual position, experience of learning new role and responsibilities at the institution, experience of learning new role and responsibilities within the profession, and support during transition. The program directors transitioned with diverse experience and understanding of responsibilities in the institutional and professional roles. However, they all experienced socialization in both institutional and professional areas. The main difficulty at each institution was socializing into their roles within faculty governance. The program directors also experienced difficulty adjusting to the accreditation responsibilities of their new professional roles. All of the program directors assembled a support network at the institution and within the profession, which was vital to facilitate their transition and socialization. This study is a new viewpoint to understand the first-hand experiences of individuals becoming socialized into program director position in athletic training education.

Keywords: athletic training, program directors, educational leadership, role socialization
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Problem

Significant changes have taken place in athletic training education in higher education since the 1990s. The number of accredited education programs increased from 73 in 1990 (Delforge & Behnke, 1999) to 358 in 2009 (Hoch, White, Starkey, & Krause, 2009). This resulted from a change in the certification requirement; the new certification excludes students who did not graduate from accredited institutions (Starkey & Ingersoll, 2001). Previously these students could become certified after graduation from either institutions with accredited programs or from institutions with internship programs. However, internship programs had a less formalized curriculum and a higher requirement of clinical experience necessary to qualify for the certification exam. The accreditation change and subsequent increase in the number of newly accredited athletic training education programs resulted in a larger demand for individuals with educational and administrative experience to facilitate these programs.

The change to accredited athletic training education programs was initiated to bring athletic training in line with other medical professions and facilitate standardization of curriculum from institution to institution (Delforge & Behnke, 1999). Many times the individuals in charge of internship programs did not have traditional faculty roles. Instead, they were mainly associated with providing clinical sports medicine care for the athletic department. However, once the requirement for program accreditation was developed, some institutions transitioned individuals who had been in charge of internship programs to the academic administrative role of program director (Leard, Booth, & Johnson, 1991), which is a requirement for accreditation (CAATE, 2008). Not only did they transition into an academic administrative position within the institution but they also moved into the traditional faculty role with
requirements of teaching, service, and research. Other institutions hired program directors from outside the institution. However, the number of programs making this transition resulted in a lack of individuals with the experience needed to initially meet the expectations and responsibilities of the program director positions (Dewald & Walsh, 2009).

The program director provides administration, organization, and coordination for the curriculum, fiscal management, and classroom and clinical education for the athletic training education program (CAATE, 2008). They are also required to meet the institutional standards for teaching, scholarship, and service (CAATE, 2008). However, CAATE does not require specific training, education, or socialization for the individuals entering this role (CAATE, 2008). Institutions were allowed to hire inexperienced individuals into program director positions.

Previous research has focused on quantitative analyses of athletic training education program directors’ employment, education, and leadership characteristics (Kutz & Scialli, 2008; Perrin, 1988; Rich, 2009; Starkey & Ingersoll, 2001). Those investigations have shown trends and provide valuable information on the main characteristics of program directors across the country. Previous qualitative studies on program directors have investigated reasons for becoming a program director (Judd & Perkins, 2004; Leone, Judd, & Colandreo, 2008), the challenges of the position (Leone, Judd, & Colandreo, 2008), leadership behaviors (Laurent & Bradney, 2007), and the responsibilities of the program director position (Leard et al., 1991; Sciera, 1981). While those studies have provided insight into the program director position, none has attempted to evaluate how program directors without previous educational leadership or faculty experience transitioned into these positions and became socialized into their new roles. Research is needed that reveals how program directors, without educational leadership or faculty
experience, have negotiated the transition into the leadership, curricular, and administrative aspects necessary to succeed in athletic training education.

Dewald and Walsh (2009) stated that many newly-appointed program directors are not ready for the requirements of CAATE, to have full faculty status, or to meet the “teaching, scholarship, or service consistent with institutional standards” (CAATE, 2008, p. 3). Leone, Judd, and Colandreo (2008) added that program directors needed to seek out more education in leadership, administration, and pedagogy. While these studies indicate what program directors may want to do, they do not provide information on what specific program directors are experiencing while overcoming challenges and meeting the specific responsibilities of the position.

These difficulties make it important for the future of athletic training education to understand the transition individuals make into the program director position. Because there are no formalized programs to facilitate this transition, the socialization process these program directors experience becomes an important focus. Investigating the transition of individuals into the program director role and researching how program directors experience socialization into their new roles, provides information to understand the process these individuals experienced as they learned their new role and its responsibilities.

**Significance**

There was a deficiency in both the number of and experience level of individuals entering into program director positions (Dewald & Walsh, 2009; Leone, Judd, & Colandreo, 2008). This investigation identified participants who are in their first program director position of an undergraduate athletic training education program. It examined how these first-time program
directors experience the transition into this administrative position in higher education. The transition was explored through the theoretical framework of role socialization (Beck, 1995) to understand the experience of the athletic training program directors as they become socialized into their new roles. As such, this research study was designed to create an understanding of the transition new program directors must make, fill a gap in the literature, add to the literature on program directors, and explain the process of socialization into a new role from the first-hand experience of program directors who have made the transition.

Definition of Terms and Titles
The following terms and titles are defined for use in this research study.

Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Athletic Training (JRC-AT). The JRC-AT was incorporated in 1991 and transitioned into the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education in 2006. The JRC-AT was the original accreditation committee for athletic training and was housed under the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs (CAAHEP).

Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). The purpose of CAATE is to maintain the standards of entry-level athletic training education programs. It develops the accreditation standards and reviews athletic training education programs to ensure maintenance of these standards. It is sponsored by the National Athletic Training Association (NATA), American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine (CAATE, 2008).

Athletic Trainer. This is a nationally certified health care professional who works with physicians and other medical personnel. They provide prevention and care for injuries and
illnesses in a variety of settings (CAATE, 2008). They are required to graduate from an accredited undergraduate or Master’s curriculum. These individuals should not be confused with personal trainers or strength and conditioning specialists.

**Athletic Training Education Program (ATEP).** A CAATE accredited program in higher education is focused on the education and training of athletic trainers and preparing them for national certification (CAATE, 2008). These programs may also be referenced as education programs, athletic training programs, and athletic training education in this research project.

**Athletic Training Education Program Director (ATEPD).** This individual is a faculty member at an institution of higher education who provides the primary administration and leadership for athletic training education programs (CAATE, 2008). They will also be referenced as directors or program directors in this research project.

**Junior Faculty Members.** These individuals will be considered faculty with little experience in teaching, research, or leadership who have not earned tenure. Junior faculty members will encompass individuals with either a master’s or doctorate as their highest degree attained.

**Research Question**

The over-arching question of this research investigation is: *How do athletic trainers experience their transition into the position of a first-time Athletic Training Education Program Director?*

While it has been determined that Athletic Training Education Program Directors (ATEPDs) need more training for their positions (Leone, Judd, & Colandreo, 2008), additional research is needed in order to understand the experience of ATEPDs as they transition into their new roles and become socialized into other new roles. This study was designed to investigate
the transitions of the ATEPDs and provide more information on their socialization. Specifically it investigated the socialization process a new ATEPD experiences during the transition into the administrative role and responsibilities associated with their new role in the institution, and into the responsibilities associated with the accreditation standards of CAATE.

**Organization**

This thesis is contained in five chapters: statement of problem and theoretical framework, literature review, research design, research findings, and discussion. The theoretical framework provides an understanding of role socialization and how role socialization provides the specific lens for the current investigation. The literature review delivers recent history of athletic training education. It examines the role and requirements of the athletic education program director position and current career paths as understood through the literature. The research design proposes an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis design that was used to develop this new stream of literature on program directors. It includes the research questions that drove the research study, the sample that was used, data collection, and data analysis. The validity and credibility are discussed, providing specific measures that were used to reduce researcher bias and threats to validity throughout the research process. The last section in the research design chapter discusses the protection of human subjects. The fourth chapter outlines the findings of the research. It includes the individual themes and super-ordinate themes that emerged when analyzing results from each participant, recurrent themes across the population, and a discussion of these commonalities between and among participants. The last chapter of the thesis presents an analysis of the research findings and a discussion of the research findings in relationship to the theoretical framework. It also provides information on implications of the findings in relation to current and future research on program directors.
Theoretical Framework

Learning throughout life consists of both social and personal aspects (Billett, 2008). The social process is a fluid and evolving experience in which the individual interacts with and learns from the environment (Weidman & Stein, 2003). Effective leadership in one environment may not be effective in another (Zenger, Ulrich, & Smallwood, 2000). Jones (1986) has identified two main types of social learning. Formal learning or socialization takes the individual out of their environment to learn a new role and its responsibilities (Jones, 1986). Informal learning or socialization takes place in the job setting (Jones, 1986). Formal role socialization is less influential than informal (Jones, 1986) and has been referred to as generic and thus dissatisfying because it does not address the needs of the individual or organization (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). One method Orr (2007) used to increase the learning in a formal setting was to base the training around real-life experiences and problems. This type of formal learning improved the ability of individuals to apply the new leadership techniques (Orr, 2007). Pettitt (1999) agreed with this by suggesting that the training has to be designed with the context of the working environment and the previous experience of the individual in mind.

The norms, values, and culture of the institution cannot be separated from the effectiveness of the leader (Zenger et al., 2000). Learning is an ongoing process that happens through interactions individuals have with others and with their environment. In fact, the best type of learning for future administrators requires immersing the individual in experiential learning opportunities in real world settings (Browne-Ferringno & Muth, 2004). This has also been discussed as informal role socialization (Jones, 1982).

Social learning requires the individual to participate in the environment and not just be a part of it (Billett, 2008). Participating in the environment requires interacting and working with
members of the organization (Jones, 1986). Pittitt (1999) suggests informal training is superior to formal training because of the authentic activities and connection to an actual job. Informal learning has also been referred to as more productive and meaningful because the learning is individualized and based in real world contexts (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). During informal socialization the individual does not just internalize the social information but also develops meaning and knowledge from it. Browne-Ferringno and Muth (2004) suggested placing prospective administrators into “quasi-administrative positions” (pg. 483) for clinical practice was more important than formal classroom based preparation models. Leadership is a combination of actions and traits of an individual and not a position or title (Jago, 1982). The relationship between the leader and followers based in a certain environment defines leadership (Jago, 1982). Informal training in the environment is important because the leader-follower relationship changes as the environment changes (Jago, 1982). Informal and formal socialization are considered parts of role socialization when an individual is transitioning into a new position (Smith & Stewart, 1999).

**Role Socialization.** The theoretical framework of role socialization was used as the lens through which the researcher investigated the experiences of first-time athletic training education program directors. The socialization process administrators experience has been investigated in many different fields. It is important to understand that role socialization is made up of two areas of socialization and four main phases. The framework used by Heck (1995) will be used for understanding the experience of program directors in the current investigation.

Heck (1995) suggested that role socialization contained two main areas to indicate administrative transition into a new position. The first area is organizational socialization. Organizational socialization referred to the relationships that were developed by the new
administrator (Heck, 1995). Professional socialization, the second part of role socialization, is the experience of the administrator learning how to become a leader as well as learning the responsibilities of the position. Socialization or transition into an administrative role was studied prior to the development of Heck’s (1995) framework, but this was one of the first investigations to evaluate the effects of both professional and organizational socialization in a single theory.

Four Phases of Socialization. Smith and Stewart (1999) discussed a series of phases that individuals experience when transitioning into a new role. The four stages mentioned are anticipation, encounter, adaptation, and withdrawal. Hart (1991) also reported four stages, but the terminology was slightly different. The four stages reported were anticipation, encounter, adjustment, and stabilization (Hart, 1991).

Anticipation phase. The anticipation phase begins before the individual enters the organization or is appointed to the new position. The socialization process actually begins when an individual first considers making the transition into an administrative role (Hart, 1991; Heck, 1995). Armstrong (2010) reported that the socialization process is initiated by others as soon as the individual expressed interest in making a transition. Socialization happens from hierarchal roles above and below the role of the individual making the transition (Armstrong, 2010). At this point the individual starts adopting attitudes, beliefs, and skills necessary to succeed in the new role.

Encounter phase. The encounter phase starts when the new position is started. Other actors begin to assess the administrator’s competence based on existing expectations, which helps to socialize them into the norms of the culture (Armstrong, 2010).

Adaptation phase. In the adaptation or adjustment phase the individual takes the information from the socialization processes and begins to transition to fit these norms.
**Stabilization or withdrawal phase.** The last stage of the process is stabilization or withdrawal. Stabilization occurs once the individual has made changes responding to the new environment. Withdrawal occurs if these changes cannot be met (Hart, 1991; Smith and Stewart, 1999). The changes can be completed through informal or formal methods. Both methods can assist the socialization process but informal socialization is used more often in transition (Smith & Stewart, 1999). Armstrong (2010) also provided a four-step process but the main contention Armstrong (2010) made was that the stages were a “nonlinear” (pg. 697) progression through the system. This system of role socialization was described by the individual making the transition through progression and regression in four stages transitioning from the level of a novice to that of a professional (Armstrong, 2010). Even though the labels of anticipation, encounter, adaptation, and stabilization phases are different, the meaning or knowledge gained and used in each stage is very similar to the other theories provided.

**Professional & organizational socialization.** Adult learning is the process that results from an interaction of the individual and the environment (Schwandt, 2005) or of gaining experience or understanding of knowledge, skills, and values (Heck, 1995). How the individual responds to the interaction will determine the amount of learning that takes place. There are two main types of role socialization when an individual makes the transition into a leadership position. These are organizational and professional socialization (Crow, 2004; Hart, 1991; Heck, 1995; Orr, 2006; Southworth, 2002). While both types of socialization can happen at the same time, they do not always transmit the same message (Hart, 1991).

Professional socialization is referred to as the process in which individuals learn how to become members of a profession (Heck, 1995). This can be affected by the expectations of society as a whole and by the individual making the transition (Crow, 2004). In most instances
this would be displayed as a method of learning how to become a member of a profession and is related to formal learning in graduate coursework that helps provide a base of knowledge (Heck, 1995). Professional socialization only has indirect effects on the socialization of administrators (Heck, 1995). The more professional socialization mirrors real world experiences the more the administrators develop from the training (Heck, 1991).

Organizational socialization is defined as learning the specific knowledge, skills, and values of the position at a specific institution (Crow, 2004; Hart, 1991; Heck, 1995). Organizational socialization has been shown to have a greater impact on the individual than professional socialization (Heck, 1995). One of the reasons organizational socialization has more influence is that the individual’s superior controls evaluation and rewards (Hart, 1991). This was suggested as a reason for increasing motivation to socialize (Hart, 1991). Organizational socialization also takes into account the other people and environment in which the transition is taking place (Hart, 1991). Because of the importance of the environment and culture of the institution there can be a great variance in organizational socialization between institutions (Heck, 1995).

There can be conflicts between the two socialization processes, which can affect the individual’s learning or adapting to the position (Crow, 2004). This dual socialization makes a leadership transition more difficult because of the complex nature of learning a new culture and expectations of others within that culture (Orr, 2006). The process of role socialization is not a one-way experience. It is a changing process that is based on the reciprocal interaction of the individual, environment, and institutional culture (Crow, 2004).

**Positionality Statement**

This next section of the introduction discusses the implications of bias during research and how the author decreased the effect of bias during the research study. Briscoe (2005)
describes positionality as an author’s or researcher’s bias in relation to subjects from a different social or demographic origin. This bias can negatively affect the objectivity of the researcher. Machi and McEvoy (2009) agree that bias can have negative effects, but stated there are also positive aspects in research. While bias can be a driving force propelling a researcher into a topic area, minimizing bias is an essential part of the research process. Researchers have to evaluate their own biases before beginning the research project, as well as continually bracket areas of bias throughout the research process. The researcher uses evaluation and bracketing to facilitate maintaining an objective view. This helps ensure correct representation and interpretation of the data.

The researcher’s bias in this project relates to his experience as an athletic training practitioner and educator although not as an athletic training program administrator. The researcher’s values, opinions, and beliefs have been developed at several different institutions working for and with different program directors. Each program director will have different opinions, attitudes, and beliefs based on their family and work settings. Each of these settings has had a different impact on the researcher. None of the program directors in the investigation have had the same experiences as the researcher. It was important for the purity of data to maintain objectivity during the interview and evaluation process. For this reason bracketing bias was completed both during the data collection and evaluation phases.

Summary

Gmelch (2000) suggested that academic leaders are the least studied and understood administrative positions. Many individuals who enter administrative positions in education are unprepared, and the number of development programs is insufficient (Gmelch, 2000). However, Southworth (2002) suggested that leadership is constructed through socialization and can differ
depending on the environment of the institution. As such, transition into the role and responsibilities of the ATEPD will be different from other administrative positions in higher education. Leard et al. (1991) found that program directors enter their current positions from clinical roles practicing sports medicine, that over one-third of program directors were appointed to their current position, and that approximately 45% did not have a terminal degree. Adaptability and clinical experience were found to be important for the position (Leone et al., 2008). While administrative and educational proficiencies were also considered important (Leone et al., 2008), the program director needs multiple areas of knowledge. It is important to investigate how first-time ATEPDs adapt to their new role.

Role socialization theory provides a lens for investigating the transition made by athletic training program directors. Role socialization uses both professional and organizational socialization to discuss how the individual transitions into the norms of the profession and the culture of the institution (Heck, 1995). Because of accreditation standards, the professional role and responsibilities of the athletic training education program director are well defined. However, the professional and organization socialization, as in other areas of leadership, varies from institution to institution. Findings from this research study may be useful to future program directors beginning the transition into this new role.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review provides information on the history of athletic training education programs and how the role of program director developed. The program director’s responsibilities within the program are discussed. These include clinical education, recruitment and retention, curriculum and pedagogy, and administration. The career paths of program directors and research on leadership in athletic training are also addressed. The literature review concludes by integrating the information and explaining the necessity of investigating the experience of first time athletic training program directors during their transition into this vital leadership and administrative position.

History of Athletic Training Education

Athletic training is an allied health profession that focuses on prevention, evaluation, treatment, and rehabilitation of athletic injuries (Prentice, 2011). Athletic training developed in response to athletes’ needs for medical care (Prentice, 2011). The National Athletic Training Association (NATA) was founded to support the needs of athletic trainers in 1950 (Delforge & Behnke, 1999). During that time most athletic trainers were working within athletic departments in colleges, universities, and secondary educational institutions (Prentice, 2011). While athletic training grew out of athletics, it has since expanded into mainstream medical facilities (Prentice, 2011). Athletic trainers can now be found outside of the athletics department and in hospitals and clinics across the United States (Prentice, 2011).

The original athletic training curricula were designed and housed within physical education programs (Delforge & Behnke, 1999). NATA helped the programs grow and develop through educational initiatives to assist athletic training’s recognition as an allied health profession (Delforge & Behnke, 1999). This transformation of the profession required a
formalization of the education of athletic trainers. By 1990 there were 73 accredited athletic training education programs (Delforge & Behnke, 1999). At that time students had two options to qualify for the certification exam. Athletic training students could enter one of the accredited education programs or go through an internship program (Delforge & Behnke, 1999).

In 1997 the Board of Certification (BOC) for athletic training mandated that students graduate from accredited programs to qualify for the national certification exam (Starkey & Ingersoll, 2001). The policy was put into effect to ensure that students were graduating with a standardized level of education and to help add legitimacy to athletic training education relative to other allied health professions. The policy took effect in the fall of 2004 and required internship athletic training education programs to become accredited in order to continue offering an athletic training degree. Students in programs that did not make this transition would no longer be eligible to become certified athletic trainers. As a consequence, by 2009 there were 358 accredited educational programs (Hoch, White, Starkey, & Krause, 2009). This rapid increase in the number of athletic training education programs required a significant increase in the number of athletic training educators and, more specifically, an increase in the number of program directors (Rich, 2009; Starkey & Ingersoll, 2001).

Athletic Training Education Program Directors

The program director position developed during the 1970s and has gone through several transformations (Leard, Booth, & Johnson, 1991). The original program directors held split positions in the classroom and the clinic (Dewald & Walsh, 2009). Leard et al. (1991) reported that some program directors had a hard time balancing the administrative, teaching, and clinical responsibilities of these positions. The formalization of the education programs helped to form a divide between the program directors’ clinical and educational responsibilities (Leard et al.,
1991). After that time the program director position became more academically focused, but this shift caused other issues. Institutions began to require that the program director position fit into the traditional tenure track responsibilities (Dewald & Walsh, 2009). Institutional faculty requirements stressed the job pool because of a lack of individuals with faculty experience. To contest the deficit in the number of athletic training educators with faculty experience, many institutions began to hire individuals without the administrative or clinical experience necessary to be successful program directors (Dewald & Walsh, 2009). Most institutions would not allow those individuals to become department chairs but they were hiring them to lead athletic training education programs (Ray, 2005). There were not enough athletic trainers who had the credentials to be a tenured faculty member and to lead athletic training programs. A tenured faculty member has already shown competence in research, service, and teaching while also navigating the political landscape of education (Dewald & Walsh, 2009). There was a need for athletic trainers with the experience of tenured faculty but not enough of these individuals to fill the number of program director positions.

**Program Director Responsibilities.** Athletic training is unique because it combines the didactic education and clinical knowledge and skills into an undergraduate curriculum. Similar professions such physical therapy require both a general undergraduate degree and specific graduate education program focused on physical therapy (Shiyko & Papas, 2009). Cultivating all of the knowledge and skills necessary for an athletic training student’s education requires the integration of many different parts. The program director is responsible for the assimilation of all of these different sects. CAATE provides the following list of responsibilities.
The Program Director must have input into and assurance of the following program features:

- organization and administration of all aspects of the educational program,
- curricula planning and development,
- fiscal and budgetary input and management as determined by the institution,
- equitable distribution of educational opportunities at all clinical and classroom sites. This responsibility may be shared with a faculty member designated as a clinical coordinator; however, the Program Director has ultimate responsibility, and
- recognizable institutional responsibility or oversight for the day-to-day operation, coordination, supervision, and evaluation of all components (academic and clinical education) of the ATEP [athletic training education program]. (CAATE, 2008 p. 3)

While a traditional faculty member can focus on teaching, research, and service, the athletic training program director has to go above and beyond to provide administrative support and fulfill the responsibilities in the CAATE’s standards. Along with the CAATE’s requirements, the athletic training program director may also have responsibility for recruitment and retention (Mensch, 2008; Ray, 2005; Turocy, 2002), administration (Judd & Perkins, 2004; Leard et al., 1991; Perrin, 2005; Ray, 2005; Rich, 2009; Turocy, 2020); leadership (Herzog & Zimmerman, 2009; Nellis, 1994; Peer & Schlabach, 2009; Sciera, 1981) clinical education (Lauber, Toth, Leary, Martin, & Killian, 2003; Perkins & Judd, 2001; Perrin, 1988), and curriculum and pedagogy (Harrelson, Leaver-Dunn, & Martin, 2003; Peer & Schlabach, 2009).
The earliest research on program directors was completed in the 1980s. Sciera (1981) investigated the roles and responsibilities of the program director in the academic and healthcare arenas. This research was important because at that time most program directors had dual responsibilities providing sports medicine coverage and leading the academic program. The program director, at this time, made decisions about education and sports medicine coverage (Sciera, 1981). However, it would be difficult to suggest that this information could be used as an inclusive picture of the role of the program director because of the number of changes that have occurred to the role and responsibilities of the program director (Sciera, 1981).

The second research study was completed by Perrin and Lephard (1988) and also looked at the role and responsibilities of the program director. The biggest difference between these two research studies was the type of information reported. The second study included more demographic information and reported statistics with more accuracy (Perrin & Lephard, 1988). A majority of the program directors surveyed maintained a split position between education and clinical coverage of athletics. A minority of the directors held tenured or tenured track positions. They provide a historic starting point for future research but this study should not be used as a complete picture of program directors in the 1980s.

Two more recent authors have also focused on the role and responsibilities of the athletic training program director. Perkins and Judd (2001) developed a mixed methods survey and compared the current results to the Perrin and Lephard (1988) survey discussed above. There were several similarities that were found in both areas of research. However, Perkins and Judd (2001) show increased responsibilities in the academic administration of the program and decreased clinical responsibilities. They piloted their survey, which had been developed from previous literature, to increase clarity. Both Perkins and Judd (2001) and Brumels and Beach
Brumels and Beach (2008) researched the role of the program director through the role orientation hierarchy framework. This provided information to help show what areas were most important for athletic trainers. One limitation of that data set was that the subject sample included all athletic trainers at the collegiate level. The sample of program directors was a subset of the overall sample. Because of the size of the sample and unknown demographics in relation to the full population of program directors, it would be difficult to assume that these data could be used to make inferences about program directors. However, it is important to note that service to the institution was valued by supervisors and athletic trainers. Research, while valued by the supervisors, was not considered important by athletic trainers (Brumels & Beach, 2008). This could provide insight on why transitioning into an academic position, in which research is an expectation, would be difficult for some athletic trainers.

**Recruitment and retention.** Highly-qualified students are an essential component of the athletic training education program. One of the responsibilities of the program director is to recruit and retain quality students (Mensch, 2008; Ray, 2005; Turocy, 2002). While many other educational programs in higher education can entrust this to the marketing and admissions staffs, many athletic training programs have to be active participants in this process (Mensch, 2008). Students are more likely to enter and graduate from an athletic training program if they have previous knowledge or exposure to athletic training (Mensch, 2008). Because retention is as important as recruitment for maintaining a student population, the program director has to evaluate the likelihood of a student succeeding in the educational program (Turocy, 2002). However, just getting prepared students with an understanding of the profession into the program
is not enough. It is as important for the program director to monitor all aspects of the students’ education (Hertel, West, Bucklye, & Denegar, 2001). The director should work with the students and ensure their needs are balanced with the educational components essential for professional success. Mensch and Mitchell (2008) suggested that one of these components is exposure to all clinical education sites that fall within the athletic trainers’ scope of practice. These types of exposures will show student the different possibilities for future careers and appeal to students with various interests.

**Curriculum and pedagogy.** Athletic training students want and need a quality education (Carr, Swann, & Frey, 2009). The curriculum and pedagogy used within an athletic training program are important components of the student’s educational experience. The program director should have knowledge of athletic training practices and current pedagogy to help the faculty and staff in the program (Berry, 2010). This is important because of a reported difference between instructors’ and students’ learning styles (Harrelson et al., 2003). The instructor has to understand multiple learning styles to provide a quality educational experience (Harrelson et al., 2003). The program director could help facilitate this process if they had training or experience with different learning styles. Berry (2010) suggested that focusing on pedagogy during continuing professional education would facilitate quality education. Carr et al. (2009) found that quality was more important to students than any other evaluative measure.

Rich (2009) used a descriptive survey to look at overall demographics and more specific pedagogical training of athletic training educators in higher education. Pedagogical training of the educators was specifically investigated as an important aspect of curricular development (Rich, 2009). This suggests a line of research focused on program directors and the pedagogical training they use to fulfill their responsibilities.
Peer (2007) investigated program directors through the theoretical framework of engagement theory. Engagement theory looks at the interactions between students, faculty, and administration as a dynamic environment (Peer, 2007). Peer’s (2007) quantitative survey utilized engagement theory to investigate the importance that program directors placed on student learning techniques. Results suggested that program directors had similar feelings on the importance of the different types of educational techniques (Peer, 2007). This research provides a base for investigation into the educational practices of program directors and shows the importance of program directors having pedagogical training that includes improving the interactions of students, faculty, and staff.

**Clinical education.** Not all education in an athletic training program happens in the classroom. Athletic training students also learn interaction with patients and application of the didactic knowledge. Clinical instructors are chosen because of their clinical skills (Weidner & Henning, 2004). The program director prepares clinicians for the instructor role (Brumels & Beach, 2008). Developing an understanding of ethics, communication, and pedagogy ensures that clinical educators effectively interact with students (Weidner & Henning, 2004).

Learning in the clinical setting requires integrating both cognitive and psychomotor skills (Peer & McClendon, 2002). Educational techniques such as social learning theory, active learning, and problem based learning all help students improve in the clinic (Peer & McClendon, 2002). The program director should have the knowledge of these approaches and be able to pass this knowledge on to other faculty and staff.

Students view accessibility of the program director in the clinic as an important aspect of their education (Perkins & Judd, 2001; Perrin, 1988). However, the program director cannot be at every clinical site all of the time. As such, it is important that there are multiple ways to
evaluate the clinical experience. While program directors understand the importance of these evaluations, many clinical instructors do not put the same emphasis on evaluation use (Lauber et al., 2003). The program director will have to explain how the evaluation process can enhance the clinical education. It is important that the program director be able to implement changes from evaluations; however, research has shown a need for program directors to increase knowledge and understanding of pedagogy in the clinic (Rich, 2009).

**Administration of the academic program.** Even though many athletic trainers get into education to spend more time with students, the tasks of accreditation and requirements for tenure take time away from student interaction (Perkins & Judd, 2001). The program director has to dedicate time to the administrative tasks of the education program (Palmieri, 2005). Maintaining accreditation of the educational program is an essential responsibility which requires significant time and effort (Judd & Perkins, 2004). Ability to manage an athletic training education program is a highly regarded skill (Judd & Perkins, 2004; Nellis, 1994; Sciera, 1981).

Leadership is an essential component of the program director’s responsibilities (Delforge & Behnke, 1999; Dewald & Walsh, 2009; Herzog & Zimmerman, 2009; Hoch et al., 2009; Kutz & Scialli, 2008; Laurent & Bradney, 2007; Leone & Gray, 2007; Leone, Judd, & Colandreo 2008; Meyer, 2002; Nellis, 1994; Peer & Schlabach, 2009). The program director is the leader of the educational program, but most graduate athletic training programs lack leadership training (Meyer, 2002). Even though Pitney, Ilsley, and Rintala (2002) viewed graduate assistantships in athletic training as an informal route to enhance leadership skills, that experience was not considered enough. Formalized leadership mentoring and orientations programs would help enhance the informal leadership training (Pitney et al., 2002).
Putting junior faculty members without proven leadership and administrative experience into program director positions adds to the already extensive pressures from the responsibilities of this position. Junior faculty can be additionally confounded by the fact that leadership and management are considered to be different traits (Nellis, 1994). Management is defined as an authoritarian relationship with others and leadership as an influential relationship (Nellis, 1994). This discrepancy can make it difficult for program directors because even though the program is well organized this does not mean that the program director is an effective leader. The program director has to lead through a variety of relationships with faculty, staff, and students. This increases the importance of a program director’s leadership ability (Herzog & Zimmerman, 2009). The ability to motivate faculty and staff members is a crucial part of leadership (Hoch et al., 2009).

Hoch et al. (2009) suggested that delegating responsibilities to staff and faculty members increases motivation. Delegating can also be used as an informal method for mentoring or facilitating leadership training in faculty and staff. This is an important responsibility of the program director (Judd & Perkins, 2004). However, many program directors do not trust or have enough confidence in their faculty and staff to delegate responsibilities (Hoch et al., 2009).

Kutz and Scialli (2008) and Laurent and Bradney (2007) both used quantitative methods to understand leadership qualities from two different perspectives. Laurent and Bradney (2007) compared the leadership qualities of a head athletic trainer and the qualities of a program director. Program directors used leadership behaviors such as modeling, enabling, and encouraging more often than head athletic trainers (Laurent & Bradney, 2007). Because of changes in athletic training accreditation, program directors have evolved leadership behaviors that are considered transformational to increase quality of work (Laurent & Bradney, 2007).
Kutz and Scialli (2008) also used a quantitative analysis but their subject population was a cross-section of all athletic trainers and was not specifically focused on program directors. Risk management, leading a team, and using research for clinical decisions were all considered important traits for athletic trainers (Kutz & Scialli, 2008). It was also suggested that leadership should be a part of the formal preparation of athletic training education programs (Kutz & Scialli, 2008). That investigation provides a base for what is important for future students to learn and alludes to the importance of the program director having these skills in order to instruct athletic training students.

Hoch et al. (2009) examined the difference in perception of delegation of tasks between the program directors and clinical coordinators. The study narrowly focused on delegation or lack of delegation as an important quality of the program director and enhanced the understanding of delegation by asking why program directors did or did not delegate (Hoch et al., 2009). Program directors did not delegate responsibilities due to a breakdown of trust with subordinates (Hoch et al., 2009).

Leone et al. (2008) researched the characteristics that make an effective program director. The program director needs to stay involved with the students, be prepared administratively, have committed individuals surrounding them, and has to keep pace with the changes of the profession to be effective (Leone et al., 2008). Leone et al. (2008) also suggested that administrative issues, professional preparation, balancing the multiple needs of the constituents of the program, and administering the program as the main challenges for being effective. That investigation provided important information on what it takes to be an effective program director and suggested that program directors seek out preparation programs to focus on higher education administration, and curriculum and instruction.
**Career paths.** Program directors have taken a variety of career paths into athletic training education (Hertel et al., 2001; Leard et al., 1991). Leard et al. (1991) suggested that program directors viewed experience working as a staff athletic trainer with administrative responsibilities as an essential step in preparation for the program director position. When athletic training educators hold terminal degrees, these are often in areas other than athletic training (Hertel et al., 2001). Hertel et al. (2001) went on to suggest that the development of more athletic training doctoral programs was needed in order to advance the profession. While many program directors stated that a terminal degree is not necessary for the position, they did suggest that the terminal degree helped (Leone et al., 2008). Increasing the socialization and training of future program directors in higher education could better prepare them for these positions (Berry, 2010; Brumels & Beach, 2008; Dewald & Walsh, 2009; Harrelson et al., 2003; Herzog & Zimmerman, 2009; Judd & Perkins, 2004; Kutz & Scialli, 2008; Laurent & Bradney, 2007; Leone et al., 2008; Manners & Scifers, 2005; Meyer, 2002; Perrin, 2005; Rich, 2009; Walter, VanLunen, Walker, Ismaeli, & Onate, 2009; Weidner & Henning, 2004).

Three main research studies developed information on the career paths and employment history of program directors. All of these were developed around a descriptive framework to show how program directors reached their current positions. The first study was completed in 1991 and provided an overview of athletic training in the early 1990s showing that program directors came from a variety of backgrounds with and without a terminal degree (Leard et al., 1991). Hertel et al. (2001) researched information on all athletic trainers with doctorate level of education. Program directors were a subset of this overall subject group (Hertel et al., 2001). The study found that administrative skills were of significant importance for the program director and that their terminal degrees were in multiple fields (Hertel et al., 2001). That study
could be used to develop themes for further investigation into the program directors’ educational and employment history.

Judd and Perkins (2004) studied athletic program directors’ perceptions of why an individual would become a program director in relation to the benefits and the detriments associated with this role and found that program directors entered into their positions for personal advancement and student interaction. However, program directors reported workload and student discipline as reasons for leaving the profession (Judd & Perkins, 2004).

Summary

This review of the research on athletic training leadership identified the inequity between the qualifications required and the responsibilities of the program director position. The transition of first-time program directors was found to be under-investigated. Program directors have been promoted and hired without the benefit of having gone through the tenure process at an institution or having experience in the field of athletic training.

Understanding the experience and knowledge areas needed for seamless transition into the program director role is only the first step. Suggestions for the training and development of future program directors are also needed. However, the main goal of this research investigation was to learn from program directors who have experienced this transition. The research study reported in this thesis was designed to capture the experiences of individuals who actually made the transition into the program director position between 1998 and 2012. Their perspectives provide a base for future research, as well as information that will be useful for future athletic training program directors who are transitioning into their new roles, and for athletic training programs who are educating professionals in the field.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This investigation was designed to examine the first-hand experiences of first-time program directors transitioning into this role. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used as the methodology for this research study. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was chosen because of its focus on researching and analyzing individuals’ experience related to a phenomenon being examined. (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

The lens of role socialization was selected to provide a framework for understanding how program directors experienced their transition into their role (Heck, 1995).

Research Questions

The following primary question guided the study: How do athletic trainers experience their transitions into the position of Athletic Training Education Program Director?

The researcher also looked to answer more specific sub-questions:

- What experiences did the participant have during the transition to the responsibilities of the program director position at the institutional level?
- What experiences did the participant have during the transition to the responsibilities of the program director position associated with the 2004 accreditation standards of CAATE?

The interview protocol (Appendix A) describes the open-ended questions, follow-up questions, and probes that were used during the program director interviews. It also details the information provided to the participants and the procedure followed with each participant.
Research Tradition

The research was completed through a qualitative analysis utilizing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a base for understanding the first-hand experience of athletic trainers who transitioned to the role of program director between 1998 and 2012. IPA is a qualitative research methodology based on phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenology is the process of understanding a phenomenon through a participant’s lived experience (Hays & Wood, 2011; McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2011). Hermeneutics is described as the study of human experience through systematic inquiry (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011). Idiography is focused on depth of knowledge acquired from evaluation of “the particular” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 29). Two main areas are investigated when idiography is used. The first is depth of analysis focusing on a detailed, and thorough and systematic investigation. The second is that the investigation of a phenomenon has a focus on the individual’s experience within a particular context.

IPA as a methodology provides a focus within the individual cases of a population (Smith et al., 2009). The three philosophical positions are used to help facilitate the understanding of the participants’ experiences through systematic inquiry. While phenomenology is focused on the experience, hermeneutics suggested meaning is derived from the investigator’s interpretation of the participant’s account or recollection of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Adding to these analyses, idiography allows for the researcher to provide additional meaning by focusing on the individual accounts (Smith et al., 2009). The differences between the three philosophical premises and their combination are seen as resulting in a multifaceted understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009). In phenomenological research it is suggested that the investigator bracket all thoughts and feelings that could affect interpretation of
research (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Hermeneutics suggests that these thoughts and feelings are always around us and cannot be set aside for research (Walker, 2011). To truly understand the essence of the experience, the researcher needs to investigate the meaning without preconceived notions but from an insider perspective (Walker, 2011). IPA allows the researcher to develop a deeper understanding and analysis of the phenomenon by investigating the experiences of program directors at several levels.

**Site and Participants**

Nine institutions with an undergraduate athletic training education program were the main sites for the research. The athletic training education program director at each location was interviewed to understand their experience as they transitioned into the role of program directors. The participant list was developed from the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education’s (CAATE) public list of ATEPDs. The participant list consisted of ATEPDs from the Midwest region that meet the purposeful sampling criteria. Recruitment emails were sent to ATEPDs who met the criteria. Informed consent (Appendix B) and study information were sent to prospective participants and an interview time, place, and date was set.

Because of the uniqueness of each person’s experience, multiple participants were needed in order to gather rich, complex, and detailed information through their recollections of the phenomenon being studied (Nicholls, 2009). While Smith et al. (2009) suggest four to ten subjects should be used for IPA in doctoral level research, Creswell (2007) suggests that a larger population is necessary and that interviewing five to twenty-five individuals is an appropriate range for a phenomenological study. IPA has an increased depth and breadth of investigation and analysis of each participant’s experience which would account for utilizing a smaller sample.
size. The researcher included nine individuals to complete the investigation and satisfying the recommendations of both Smith et al. (2009) and Creswell (2007).

Purposeful sampling was necessary to focus the population and provide meaning from the experience (Creswell, 2007). The investigation was focused on individuals who transitioned into their roles as first-time program directors at institutions with an undergraduate athletic training education program between 1998 and 2012. It was important that the participants were individuals currently in their first program director role to avoid the possibility that the participants could confuse or misrepresent their experience transitioning into the program director role if they completed this transition more than once. The participants were drawn from the Midwest region of the United States to also increase the internal validity of the sample.

**Recruitment**

A list of possible participants was extracted from a list maintained by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). Permission to use this list was not needed because it is publically available. First-time program directors who met the demographics of the study were contacted by email (Appendix C). Respondents were either placed on the participant list or removed from the list of possible participants depending on their self-reported demographics and willingness to participate. The recruitment emails were sent out again, two weeks after the initial email, to possible participants who did not yet responded. At one week after the follow-up email more participants were still needed. The researcher individually called possible participants who had not responded. The recruitment email asked participants to communicate possible meeting options for the interview. Interviews were organized based on participant’s responses to the recruitment email.
At the beginning of each interview the informed consent was provided to the participants. The informed consent discussed the purpose of the research study, reason for participant recruitment, reason for research, what participation requires, discomforts during research, benefits of the research, protection of confidentiality, withdrawal from participation, contacts for questions about the research, and contacts about the rights of the participant. Before the participant verbally agreed to the informed consent, the researcher ensured the participant did not have any additional questions about participation.

The assurance of the principal investigator (Appendix D) was obtained before application was sent to the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The application for IRB (Appendix E) was completed before starting the investigation.

**Data Collection**

One approximately 90 minute interview was completed using open-ended questions, prompts, paraphrasing answers, quiet listening and clarifying questions (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011). The single interview was important for maintaining the value of the data (Nicholls, 2009). It has been suggested that the meaning may change when the participant has additional experiences or more time to reflect on the answers provided (McConnell-Henry et al., 2011). This could also cause the participant to provide answers they believe the researcher is looking for and corrupt the data (McConnell-Henry et al., 2011; Nicholls, 2009).

The researcher played an active and passive role during each qualitative interview. Vandermause and Fleming (2011) specifically discussed the importance of the researcher’s involvement without changing the meaning of the participants’ responses. While the researcher needed to question and prompt the participant, it was also necessary for them to remain open to unfamiliar or unexpected answers. Some researchers call this technique bracketing (Giorgi,
Bracketing was used to allow the essence of the phenomenon to develop through the experience of the research participants (Giorgi, 2008; Hays & Wood, 2011; Moustakas, 1994). This was one difference found in the literature between individuals focusing on phenomenology and hermeneutics. Some researchers indicate that the philosophy of hermeneutics suggested the experience is always in the present and that it is impossible to completely remove past experiences without removing the researcher from the investigation (Walker, 2011). It has been proposed that allowing the researcher to participate in the interview as co-creator increases the depth of knowledge that is developed (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011). Smith et al. (2009) suggested a semi-structured interview should be employed in IPA in order to allow the participant to tell their own story. The richness of the data is then built because of the depiction provided by each participant and because they should feel comfortable through discussing what they think is important about the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009).

**Data Storage**

The data were maintained by the researcher in a method to ensure confidentiality. All of the identifying characteristics of the participants were masked in the report and pseudonyms were used during the data collection to identify each participant’s data. The demographic information and pseudonym key were placed in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher’s office. The informed consent was also placed in the locked filing cabinet, and both will be destroyed three years after completion of the research. Only the researcher has a key to open the filing cabinet. Electronic data were stored on the researcher’s computer in a password protected file, and a backup copy was stored in a password protected external hard drive. All electronic data will be destroyed after completion of the research project. The audio recordings were deleted after the transcripts were completed.
Data Analysis

Audio was recorded by the researcher during each interview and transcribed following the interviews (Creswell 2007; Smith et al., 2009). The first step used in accordance with IPA to analyze the data was for the researcher to become immersed by reading and rereading the transcript several times (Smith et al., 2009). The next step required the researcher to describe his or her experiences in relation to the phenomena (Creswell, 2007). Maintaining a journal during the interviews and analysis process helped the researcher to separate or bracket thoughts (Smith et al., 2009). This helped the researcher to remain aware of positionality through the process and to attempt to maintain an impartial point of view through the process to understand the interview material.

The next step in the analysis was to develop a detailed account of the transcript. Three types of comments were used to describe the content of the interview, explore the specific language used, and develop questions about the data while maintaining a focus on the participant (Smith et al., 2009). Each set of comments were developed during a separate reading and analysis of the transcripts as suggested by Smith et al. (2009). The first set of comments described the content of the transcript without interpreting the information. The second set of comments examined the participants’ use of language during the interview. The last set of comments used questions developed by the researcher to delve deeper into the transcript and understand the meaning of the participant’s explanations. The use of these annotations provided the researcher with a method for understanding the participants experience through interpretation grounded in the participant reflections consistent with IPA’s methodology (Smith et al., 2009). At this point in the analysis the transcript and comments were used to identify themes, which represent both the original information developed during the interview and the concepts that
emerged during the initial analysis (Smith et al., 2009). These themes were organized or grouped into common topics. Groupings or patterns of related topics were developed as higher order themes. It was also important to maintain statements from the transcript that support the themes (Smith et al., 2009).

The researcher then started the next data set. The researcher bracketed the information developed during the first analysis and moved to the next participant. It was important to analyze the interview data from each participant and allow the individuality of their experience to develop through new themes (Smith et al., 2009). Each successive case was evaluated using the same methods. Once all of the data were evaluated the researcher moved on to identifying patterns across the interview data. These new themes included global data shared between cases and themes that were specific to the individuals (Smith et al., 2009). Analysis in IPA does not stop with descriptions or commonalities between and among participants but includes interpreting these themes to develop a higher-order understanding. The outlier data and global data were both important during the evaluation process (Smith et al., 2009).

**Trustworthiness**

IPA uses the interview process to help develop an understanding of a life experience (Smith et al., 2009). To ensure trustworthiness of the data it was important that the researcher bracket experiences and preconceived feelings on the topic so that the data were not influenced (Giorgi, 2008). Purposeful sampling was used to focus the research and increase the depth of information (Smith et al., 2009). However, it was important that the results of the research were only discussed in relation to the population that was studied. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants and increased willingness to participate as well as improved the trust between the interviewer and interviewee. Increasing trust during the interview allowed for
the collection of rich data (Smith et al., 2009). The data were also secured by a single researcher. Decreasing access to the data helped to limit any tampering that could otherwise happen during the evaluation process.

**Limitations**

The information gained from the interviews cannot be directly applied to other populations, to program directors outside of the geographic area of the population, to program directors who work at an entry-level master’s program or to individuals who have been a program director more than once. It was the assumption of the researcher that the participants provided truthful and candid information about their experiences. It was important for the researcher to build trust and a rapport with the participants to facilitate the discussion of their experience.

**Conclusion**

The preceding chapters demonstrate how investigating the transition of athletic trainers into the first-time program director position fills an important gap in the literature. The theoretical framework of role socialization (Beck, 1995) provided a lens for understanding this transition. The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis methodology was used to facilitate the understanding of life experiences in multiple fields (Smith et al., 2009). This investigation contributes to an improved understanding of first-time program directors becoming socialized into the role and responsibilities of their positions.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research interviews of nine first-time athletic training program directors and the analysis of those interviews. This chapter provides an overview of the demographic information from the participating program directors and is followed by a detailed report of the profiles of the participants. The themes and super-ordinate themes for each of the participants are presented in the profiles in table form. The last part of the chapter identifies recurrent themes across the participants and depicts the commonality and individuality the participants show in relationship to these recurrent themes. Representative statements are provided with each section to enhance the understanding for the reader.

Demographic Participant Data

Table 1 shows an overview of the demographic data of the nine participants. Participants were first-time athletic training program directors selected from institutions with an undergraduate athletic training education program in the Midwest United States. Table 1 shows the variation of gender, age, experience, and type of institution collected from the participant during the interviews.

Table 1

Demographic Data on Participants (n=9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years as Program Director</th>
<th>Institution Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hank</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilene</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Program Director Profiles**

The following profiles were developed to provide an understanding of perceptions of each participant. The profiles were written utilizing the transcripts from each participant’s interview. A table at the end of each participant’s profile (Tables 2-10) shows the super-ordinate themes, themes, and examples from the transcript that were developed during the data analysis.

**Amy.** Amy has been a program director for 10 years. She finished her undergraduate and master’s degrees concurrently by finishing the requirements for both degrees at the same time. She worked in a clinic directly after graduation for two years performing outreach to five high schools and the institution where she is currently the program director. She explained how she was hired by the institution: “There really wasn't a huge official search for that. The AD just said that I need you to fill this job and hired me. That is what happens, I guess, in small schools.” While she had experience working at the institution and teaching in the academic program, she was not directly involved in the athletic training education program. She regrets her lack of knowledge on the education side and stated, “Unfortunately, I had a lot of stuff going on as the head athletic trainer with 17 sports, and then teaching some of the curriculum.”

Amy was not pursuing the program director position but she did have a personal reason for taking the position. She noted:

I had just recently gotten married and so obviously I didn't want to do as much coverage every night or football every weekend. I had a personal agenda, I kind of wanted to not work the night stuff anymore and family had started to become more important.

The transition to the educational side of athletic training was difficult for Amy. One of the things that she struggled with was the many part-time positions she had when she started to transition. Although she was hired as the program director of the education program, she was
also functioning in her previous role as head athletic trainer in the athletics department. She has since given up the role of head athletic trainer but continues to provide medical coverage for sports. She stated that balancing all of her additional responsibilities was difficult but also maintains that she enjoyed this aspect of her position and sees the value it provides to the education side. Amy said that her involvement in the clinical aspect was valuable, “So they [students] don’t think I am just up there lying about this test and that test but they can actually see me do it and that modeling, I think, is important too when you are teaching.” Because of the value she sees in clinical practice and identity she has as a clinical athletic trainer, giving up these responsibilities has been difficult. She indicated:

Yea, that was hard actually to let go of that [head athletic trainer role]. Not that I am a control freak but I am a little type A. So when things were not done as I had been doing them it was hard…and I talk about people often, that was the hardest, not being around the people.

Identifying herself as a former athlete and being familiar with the athletic setting also played a role in wanting to stay involved. Throughout the interview she aligned herself with the athletic side more than the academic. Her identity continued to be directly tied into the clinical aspect of her position even though she had been the program director for some time. One of the major transitions she faced was an internal struggle to hold on to her previous identity which complicated her transition.

Another area that Amy found to be difficult during her transition was moving into the faculty role and responsibilities. She did not have much experience in this area before taking the position and at many points of the interview referred to faculty as they and not we. This continued throughout the interview as she described her struggle to fit into the traditional faculty
role. She provided the following description of why this was difficult for her, “Because I was a young faculty member and I didn't know those inner workings either and voting, what mattered to them and they’re older and had their PhDs.” Amy shows that she was not only intimidated by the new faculty role but she also found transitioning into the teaching aspect of her job was difficult:

I was so worried about the material. Experience can get you so far but I was worried about what Wilson's test is and what it tested for and why you know....That was more stress to me than the being the program director.

Amy discussed areas of stress around multiple responsibilities, transitioning into the faculty role, and moving out of clinical coverage. However, she also noted the support that she obtained throughout the transition. She explained:

Some of the ones [coaches] that were here for a little while, even when I step out of my office and go with a team they go, “Oh they are bringing the big dog.” Since I have been [the program director] I must have gained that respect that they still see me as knowing what I am talking about.

She explained that individuals at the institution and at other institutions helped to mentor her through the changes she experienced on-campus as well as to help her navigate her new role working with accreditation responsibilities off-campus.

Amy’s transition required a significant amount of learning on the job. This process of trial and error weaved through her descriptions of entering into the program director position. She indicated that she overcame the difficulties by reading material, learning on her own, and seeking advice from others inside and outside of her institution. Even though she was not initially prepared for the program director role and responsibilities, she has embraced her
position and has started to tailor the program to represent who she is as well as make the program better. Reflecting on her transition she offered the following advice:

You can be a great clinician but not know how to teach it. So learning about assessment, no matter how dry it might be, and curriculum design, even though you may not create a program from scratch at first you might someday, and you need to know the interworking of how that all looks.

This sums up many of the areas that she discussed as difficult for her during the transition and areas where she could have used more knowledge and experience. The themes, super-ordinate, and representative statements from Amy’s interview are listed in Table 2. Table 2 provides more information on the common areas that were important for her transition.

Table 2

*Themes and Super-Ordinate Themes from Amy’s Interview*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for Position</td>
<td>Previous focus on clinical athletic training.</td>
<td>I had no other than minimal input with that. And then right before the site visit in 2003, that summer she [program director] left and over course we were scrambling and they said would you take the job and I said, ah, sure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Overwhelmed</td>
<td>Struggling with transition.</td>
<td>But at first I was in survival mode and I was actually more worried about my teaching than I was the structure of the program and I felt like the classes were good-practicums were good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning by Doing</td>
<td>Using experience to frame current position.</td>
<td>Kind of like the internship route that I was use to so that prepared me because we were just kind of sent out there and you used your common sense to be successful and I guess that was kind of the background that I had.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-campus Support</td>
<td>Support from other departments.</td>
<td>I went to the education department on campus. I went to nursing, they were still young yet but some of those people to say “Okay, I am going through a site visit and I know you guys do that stuff too so how do you go about reporting this stuff” and, yeah, kind of learning from that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Communication important for consistency of program.</td>
<td>Because, I mean, sometimes there will be down time and we will all be there so we will just chit chat but that time will become less and less, where it just happens, so I would have to make it happen and I would like to see at least once a month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing Workload</td>
<td>Pressure from workload of multiple positions.</td>
<td>So I was trying to be the curriculum coordinator, head athletic trainer, and program director all at once and at least they helped me say, you know this is not doable, but that is all I really remember, and them helping me with it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Identity</td>
<td>No experience in faculty culture.</td>
<td>We call it across the street because we are divided by a county road but I had to interact with faculty a lot more, which was, because I was a voting member now and that was scary in itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Role</td>
<td>Struggled with meeting expectations of CAATE.</td>
<td>I'd like to say for me that I understand being liquid and trying to keep up the curriculum but I kind of feel like you are trying to hit a moving target...you don't know what is coming next, which is hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-campus Support</td>
<td>Support during conferences.</td>
<td>Conferences were huge. I remember going to my first educators’ conferences trying to get as much as I could out of it. I guess that is where I spent a lot of my time, conferences and people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>Importance of an advanced degree.</td>
<td>I think if teaching and the program director is what they want to get, which is a little hard when you are an undergraduate; but I am actually telling students to get your Master’s in athletic training.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bill. Bill was the most experienced participant, and he had primarily been at one institution throughout his career. He was the head athletic trainer at his institution before transitioning into the program director role. The super-ordinate themes, themes, and representative statements from his interview are outlined in Table 3. The athletic training education program was also going through initial accreditation while he was transitioning into the program director position. This added another layer of learning to his transition. He discussed the informal process of his transition by stating:

When I came on board, I think it was just one of those transitions that if you were a head athletic trainer and you had a desire to be a program director you just kind of morphed into that.

His desire to transition into the educational role included both personal and professional reasons. Bill was interested in the “faculty life” which allowed for a more regular schedule and was no longer satisfied with the clinical side of athletic training. He reflected, “My days of standing on the field in the rain watching soccer, that has long passed being fun for me.” He was finding more enjoyment working with students and seeing their successes after graduation. He showed satisfaction when discussing former students. “There are lots of alumni from the early days that are doing really neat things and having that strong desire to keep that going and the only way to do that was to be accredited.” Both of these together propelled him into the program director role.

Even before he officially started as the program director he was advocating for the program’s formal evolution into an accredited program. This was an area that Bill felt was essential for the transition. Before the transition he did not realize how important it was going to
be to continually “sell” the program “across campus.” He describes his first memory of having

to be a salesman:

I very vividly remember a meeting in the President’s dining room with…most of the big

players sitting around the table and people from our department….That was basically a

meeting for me to explain why that was important, what it was going to mean to the

institution, how does it benefit our students, and what resources is it going to take to get it
to that point.

His advocating for the program did not end with this meeting but continued through his

transition. He stated that this was an essential part of getting support from other faculty and

through changes in educational administration personnel. It has become an important part of his

role as the program’s director and he suggested that this was now one of his strengths and

something he really enjoys.

Bill had also received faculty status before becoming the program director. He explained

that he had significant experience teaching and that he was prepared for this responsibility.

However, Bill did notice that the processes involved became more formalized. It was not just the

formalization of the teaching that surprised Bill but also the formalization that was required for

the program accreditation and making changes to the curriculum.

He was surprised by the amount of work required for documentation and formalization,

which accreditation required. He stated, “We had done the undergraduate kind of program and

had kids pass the test but this was taking us to a whole ‘nother level. That was probably the light

switch coming on kind of moment for me.” Learning the professional responsibilities of the

program director role was new for Bill. He indicated surprise at what is involved by stating:
I went to an [Athletic Trainers] Educators’ Conference before we became accredited, which was the first one I ever went to. I was just blown away by what was happening out in the world of education.

He spent a significant amount of time learning the professional role and responsibilities required for accreditation. Bill openly discussed his strengths and his weaknesses in relation to his role and responsibilities. While he was proud of his transition and the transition of the program, this was tempered with modesty throughout his responses. He discussed relying on several individuals throughout the transition. He attributed the successful transition to new staff, veteran faculty, the Registrar, and the institutional President. All of these individuals played a role in his transition and when discussing his role he stated:

Well, first of all being, as you describe it, the leader of the academic program, I don’t view it quite like that. This isn’t about, well your project might be about one person, but I think being an accredited program and being a program director is about more than just one person. So get that on the record.

He describes himself as a manager or facilitator putting the right people in the right places to succeed. This is the backbone of his leadership style. He noted responsibilities that were outside of his comfort zone where he has been able to help place other faculty and staff to improve the program. He acknowledges that putting people in areas to rely on their strengths has been beneficial.

Reflecting on his transition, Bill wanted to impart advice for the next generation of program directors. He said:

The administrative side of things, the paperwork side of things, you are going to have to be prepared to do a lot of things that you don’t really enjoy, but that is the nature of the
beast….You have to be passionate about it, you have to believe in it. You don’t have to be an expert in every different aspect of it but you have to believe in the product that is coming out the other end. If you don’t then you are wasting your time, in my opinion.

Throughout the interview Bill eluded to his passion for athletic training education, his students, his staff, and his program. This is reflected in his advice for future program directors and the dedication of time he has given to the profession. He was not disillusioned by his passion. His last statement may sum up his experience in transition. He said, “It is like having a kid, you are never going to be prepared for everything that happens. You just have to jump in with both feet and be willing to do the work that you need to do to get it done.”

Table 3

Themes and Super-Ordinate Themes from Bill’s Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for Position</td>
<td>Transitioning from athletics to academics.</td>
<td>I think that I am part of the old school that started as a pure athletic trainer in the clinic and now I am doing the academic side. Was I prepared to do the academic side? Probably not fully. Could I have been better prepared? Yea probably.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Self</td>
<td>Overwhelmed by new responsibilities.</td>
<td>I was blown away. I was just like, “oh my gosh.” I came back from that meeting [Athletic Trainers Educators’ Conference] as overwhelmed as any conference I have ever been to cause it was all, I mean I knew it [requirement for accreditation of ATEPs] was coming and I knew what was out there, but it blew up in my face that this is what this is all about. And then things got a little intense after that, in terms of trying to get up to speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super-Ordinate Themes</td>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Representative Statements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Benefits of faculty role.</td>
<td>You know you get three months off in the summer and you can come and go kind of as you want. You are not at the whim of coaches telling you what to do. So that part of it [program director position] was attractive as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Role</td>
<td>Transitioning into a faculty position.</td>
<td>I think once the faculty status thing came about, then I had to play by a whole different set of rules with evaluations and all of that kind of stuff. So I think everything became a little more formalized. Whether it was your course information or your syllabus or how long you met you classes and the structure of it. I, it got much more defined when all of that stuff happened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Interaction</td>
<td>Struggles with transition to new role.</td>
<td>But I miss the involvement [with the students] of, “Hey, I’m going to graduate school at such and such.” And at this point in time it feels like I am the last one to find out and that’s okay, but still I miss that part of it. I miss being on the front end of, you know, “I am going to apply to Northern Iowa. Could you write me a letter of reference.” I am getting further and further removed from that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing People</td>
<td>Program director as a manager.</td>
<td>The program director is a figure head, in my opinion, it is a manager of the people in the program. You need everybody on board to get where you need to go…I am going to use other people’s expertise to do the things that they can do and it is going to be better that way, I think.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super-Ordinate Themes</td>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Representative Statements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocating for Program</td>
<td>Advocating to build support.</td>
<td>We’ve had, since this has all been going on, we probably had seven academic deans in this process and like I said selling it to them, they are all coming from different perspectives. Some have been in schools where there have been accredited programs, others of them have no idea. So selling it to different deans that come through and trying to justify its value and worth and should we keep going.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-campus Support</td>
<td>Administrative support.</td>
<td>Things were a lot more accommodating then, and I think part of it was the leadership of [the President]. I think he, this was a passion of his, he wanted the program to get accredited. He may have opened some doors to make that happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Role</td>
<td>Learning through experience.</td>
<td>That [site visit] was hair raising cause up until that point you really had no feedback. You had this huge pile of documents but you really had no idea what they [site visitors] were going to look at. I mean there are things in there that they nit picked about but there were other things that we didn’t even talk about…In hind sight it was kind of fun but it was also kind of a hair raising experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>Importance to connect athletic and education.</td>
<td>But I think it is important that the academic side of things comes from the clinical side. I think it is really important that athletic trainers are in the clinic before they do the academic side of things.</td>
</tr>
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**Cathy.** Cathy entered the program director position with experience and knowledge of the multiple responsibilities and the role of the program director. She experienced clinical athletic training and had taught course work in a high school, community college, and at a NCAA Division One (D1) institution. This experience included advising students, participating on committees, and sitting in on faculty meetings. At the D1 institution she had also completed
preliminary work investigating what was involved with developing an accredited athletic training education program.

It was not just experience that continued to drive her into the program director position but she also mentioned, “I would say a passion for athletic training, the change in the educational process, having an education background, and having educated students in various ways and levels.” Her passion for education stretched back into her undergraduate degree in which she double majored in athletic training and physical education. This passion for educating students and being a part of the educational process had multiple effects throughout her transition and career. She has continued to evolve at the institution and has now found herself mentoring new faculty members. Even with the preparation she had begun before entering the position, Cathy still found that she was learning on the job. Preparing for her first accreditation site visit she stated:

We kind of did a mock site visit ourselves the spring before the fall visit and there was a question about the learning over time and how many semesters after they [students] finish a core class with psychomotor in it, there has to be time to demonstrate that. So at that time it was very open to interpretation.”

Her drive to be prepared and learn all aspects of her responsibilities helped her to develop contacts and faculty support. She used this drive and support to help her through her transition into the program director position. However, the transition was not without difficulty.

She had multiple responsibilities and was not given any release time for developing the program. She had also started her doctorate degree, which required additional time outside of her normal day. While discussing her first year as the program director she indicated the difficulty of the transition:
A combination of a steep learning curve of the institution, cause I was new here and figuring out…the accreditation standards and how they fit autonomy while they followed the standards and how that was going to work….Even once we knew curricularly what we wanted to do, how do you get that through faculty and board of trustees and all of the processes?

Cathy also noted that she felt that she was under pressure from this institution because she was hired specifically to create the athletic training education program.

She was also challenged to assimilate the institutional culture. Being new to the institution she indicated that she did not know, “how things work, who people are, what resources there might be, [and] what the culture is like.” The cultural transformation was difficult because she was entering a small liberal arts institution in a small town. During her transition she developed a better understanding of the culture and found her own identity within that structure. Part of this process was developing leadership skills. She indicated that looking at leadership is a means of trying to be or get others to a point where they are “effective and efficient.” This system served her well during her transition and management of the responsibilities of the program director position. One experience that helped her with this process was becoming an accreditation site visitor.

Cathy reflected on her transition positively. While she indicated that there were challenges that she experienced during the transition, she also noted that her experiences helped her to become the professional she is today. She feels very comfortable with her experiences and when looking back on them she suggested, “I don’t think that I would have done things differently because I wouldn’t have learned what I learned.” Her success in leadership positions
at her institution would reflect positively on this transition. The super-ordinate themes, themes, and representative statements that summarize her transition are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

*Themes and Super-Ordinate Themes from Cathy’s Interview*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for Position</td>
<td>Transition started at previous institution.</td>
<td>I had done work at the D1 [NCAA Division One] institution when they were considering going to a curriculum the first or second or third time before they actually did. So part of that was. I was doing some teaching. I enjoyed the teaching. My boss at [previous institution] wanted to move to a curriculum. I did a lot of the how do you do that work and then my friend here [current institution] kept calling me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Through Experience</td>
<td>Self-directed learning new role.</td>
<td>I just dug for resources like existing four year plans. I asked the registrar a lot of things… I asked the [department] chair about the process and I just asked a lot of questions and looked at examples and read the policy manual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Resources</td>
<td>Support of campus constituents.</td>
<td>I used a lot of different resources. I asked a lot of questions too of the woman that was chair at the time…the registrar’s office and chair and coordinators in other departments, and our advising, Core Academic Personal Center, which is next to the registrar’s office. So I just used a lot of various resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Identity</td>
<td>Becoming a mentor for others.</td>
<td>Whereas now, it is interesting because I’ve been through that, as program director and now I am actually chair of the area and I have new faculty and so like how do you know what to do, who do you go to, all of those questions. Now I know because I had to go through it all before I was the chair. It is helpful getting there and as I mentor the next program director and the gal that was just in is the coordinator for PE, getting those started.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Multiple levels of stress during transition.</td>
<td>So when you look at those life stress inventories and look at getting married, getting divorced, taking a new job, having a child, [and] entering school. Well I wasn’t recently married or divorced but just about everything else you could do, I did in those three months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Adaptation</td>
<td>Transitioning into the culture of the environment.</td>
<td>So we were definitely, we had a little joke on campus we were the no, no, no group. No, I didn't go to school here, no I am not a member of the church, and no I am not from this area. And people would go, why are you here? So it was learning. We were learning the town. We were learning the institution. We were learning the denomination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Role</td>
<td>Formalized socialization through site visitor training.</td>
<td>At that time it [site visitor training] was review the standards, take an online quiz, be selected, and then you go through the site visitor training, which we have all trained again in the past year. So kind of going through the standards and the interpretations. It is pretty interesting. They used to have an interpretation manual that went with the standards.</td>
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**Dave.** Dave did not work in higher education before he transitioned into the program director position but he did have a long-term interest in getting involved in the education side of athletic training. Dave’s interest started during his undergraduate career and developed because of an experience in his kinesiology course. He reflected:

And I just remember sitting in kinesiology and seeing him teach, it wasn't helping me. It wasn't teaching me. He was reading. He was just informing me of things. So he wasn't really helping me so I had to start. That’s when I noticed I had to start to teach myself things and I started to come up with little techniques of how to do it, which I think that everybody does. So it started to click and I just remember thinking that I wanted to be an educator someday.
Once this interest developed, he found himself helping other students learn through courses in the major. After finishing his master’s degree he took a job in a clinical outreach setting and provided sports medicine coverage at some local high schools. Dave developed a relationship with another local athletic trainer who worked at his current institution and through this relationship he achieved his goal to become an educator.

After taking the position his lack of preparation became evident. He noted the following experience while sitting in an athletic training convention session on education, “I just remember how sitting in that room and listening to them speak and thinking about what have I done? I have no idea what to do.” His lack of experience required him to learn on the job. Learning the role and responsibilities of the program director through experience took a significant amount of work and time. Dave indicated that he spend most of his first couple of summers in the position working on the development of the program. This became even more intense preparing for accreditation. He said, “The summer before our self-study, before I turned the self-study in, it was probably 12 to 14 hours per day trying to prepare for it.” He also indicated the difficulty of learning the responsibilities on his own because there was not any other faculty or staff that could help him.

Developing support for the program was also challenging. He reflected on one meeting he was involved in when other faculty on campus began to understand the program and he started making “allies on campus.” He said:

I just remember one meeting in particular. One Professor that had been here for years and years and years, he taught government and political science. And one day he saw what we were doing and the clinical aspect that was involved in athletic training and he said
openly in the room, "My God you guys have a hard major. This is not a walk through major.”

He reflected positively about this experience and this was a turning point that helped him to get to know other faculty and use them for support during his transition. He also found that there were faculty members on campus who were having the same frustrations evaluating student learning. Dave had difficulty explaining the difference between didactic education in the classroom and hands-on experience for students in the athletic training clinic to the administration. This became an issue developing the financial support he needed for both areas. Working with different administrators was noted as one of the most frustrating aspects of his transition. He developed a negative view of administrators as a result of his experience and indicated distrust because of these experiences.

The challenges he experienced were not just with the institutional administration. He also suggested that he found it difficult learning his role within the accreditation process. One of the ways he worked to learn this role was by bringing in a consultant to help him with the accreditation process. While this was a good experience, he found it difficult getting correct or helpful information from other colleagues at other institutions. He experienced differences in opinions that led to misinformation. He also indicated that he found it difficult getting information from the accreditation commission. He remembered an exchange at a convention with a member of the accreditation commission, “[I] asked him a question and he looked at me like where are you from. Like I had no idea what I was doing, which I didn’t but I thought it was a good question.” However, he found that going through the accreditation site visit was a very positive experience. The site visitors were patient and helped him to gain a better understanding of the processes and how to make the education program better.
Dave indicated conflicting feelings about the transition into the program director’s role and responsibilities. He recounted experiences with students that made him very proud to be in education and other experiences that made it challenging. Reflecting on his transition he gave the following sentiment:

I guess if somebody asked me if I would do it all over again. Knowing what I know. That there are times that I would say sure. Yea, it was a good fight. It was nice to get to know the athletes and bringing them back from injury and so forth but there are other times I would say, I don't want to fight. I just don't want to go through all of those fights again.

This reflects the struggles he endured because he did not have experience in education before starting the program director position. He also thought that it would have helped him to have a doctorate before making the transition and suggested that this would be a good way for individuals to get more training and experience to prepare them to become program directors.

The super-ordinate themes, themes, and representative statements from Dave’s interview can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest in Education</td>
<td>Interest in becoming an educator.</td>
<td>Which I knew, I always knew I wanted to be an educator. When the job here opened up I knew that’s what I wanted to do and I am glad that I have taken it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Overwhelmed by the transition.</td>
<td>But I just remember thinking how lost I was and how specific everything has to be and I just remember thinking what did I, why did I take this job. What am I doing, I have no idea what I am doing. What are we going to do? So it was very frustrating, because I didn't even have a template.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super-Ordinate Themes</td>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Representative Statements</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning by Doing</td>
<td>Preparing for self-study.</td>
<td>I don't really know how I, a lot of summers, a lot of summers and almost a, probably at least the first six summers it was here just constant work. The summer before our self-study, before I turned the self-study in, it was probably 12-14 hours per day trying to prepare for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Support</td>
<td>Support from institutional faculty.</td>
<td>Then having people that have been here on the faculty that have been here for years and years and years, they helped put it into perspective. Actually there were times, what was kind of nice, I just remember one meeting in particular. One Professor that had been here for years and years and years, he taught government and political science. And one day he saw what we were doing and the clinical aspect that was involved in athletic training and he said openly in the room, &quot;My God you guys have a hard major. This is not a walk through major.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Working with administration.</td>
<td>And of course as an administrator you have to pick and choose yes and no but a lot of times we were not ever told why. And that’s why I say I like our old academic dean is because he would sit there and he would talk about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Deciding what external information is valid.</td>
<td>So it was frustrating sometimes when you hear another person doing it this way and then sometimes what would happen is that somebody would tell you, no it needs to be this way and then they turned out to be wrong. So you have to go, then you have to go back and figure out what you did and then you'd have to contact others who you trust to corroborate what they are saying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super-Ordinate Themes</td>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Representative Statements</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Role</td>
<td>Socialization during site visit.</td>
<td>They [accreditation site visitors] were very, very patient. They were, they realized that we were division three. They customized it. They understand that we were doing the things that needed to be done and they told us how to do these better and the thing that ah, of course the things that we weren’t doing well, they told us how to do better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense Making</td>
<td>Uncertainty when reflecting on transition.</td>
<td>They were very, very patient. They were, they realized that we were division three. They customized it. They understand that we were doing the things that needed to be done and they told us how to do these better and the thing that ah, of course the things that we weren’t doing well, they told us how to do better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>Advice for future program directors.</td>
<td>So I would probably tell the person, if somebody wanted to be a program director, to try to figure out or try to learn as much as you can about education. Not just education in general but education in athletic training.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Emily.** Emily finished her master’s degree, moved into an assistant athletic trainer position, and then into the program director role quickly at her current institution. She indicated during the interview that she did not have an initial interest in becoming a program director when she was an undergraduate. Reflecting on her transition and time in the position she stated, “I never thought I would take this route but it has actually worked out pretty well.” Her interest in the position came from the appeal of having more time for her family, an interest in working with students, and being in charge as an administrator. While she did have challenges during her transition, she was also very proud of the athletic training education program and her institution.

One of the challenges that she faced stemmed from being the first program director at the institution. This required her to spend time developing the curriculum and promoting the new
program to the intuitional administration and other faculty in her department. Emily described the process of curricular development as “muddling through” and learning on the job. During this time she was also working on navigating the faculty culture and developing her role in this area. The faculty members were initially apprehensive of the program but she was able to overcome this through involvement in committees and being visible at faculty functions. This visibility and the development of the academic portion of the students’ education helped her to integrate into the faculty. She also reflected that working with students and seeing their success was a positive motivator for her during her transition.

The administrative portion of her responsibilities also came with difficulties. She found that a supportive department chair played an integral role during her transition. Administration was a natural area in which she could succeed because she enjoyed being in charge and making decisions, but part of her transition was finding the ability to give up control. She stated:

I never used to ask for help. [I] used to do things on my own and now if somebody has an expertise in a certain area and I have a question on it, I am going to have them help me.

Relying on others with institutional knowledge helped facilitate her transitioning and learning of academic governance. One area of governance that she did not understand was the speed at which changes move through a university. Timing of proposals was also important for her to support the program. She noted that getting advice on when to propose the new major was very helpful for eventually getting it to pass. Part of the process was building support in the faculty, and the other was the timing of when to “pick your battles.”

During Emily’s time as the program director she also held a split position in athletics. This has proven to be positive to help teach students in both the classroom and the clinic but has also posed some challenges. She discussed the difficulty of working for two departments and
trying to meet requirements for both positions, but also discussed the benefits of being involved in athletics. Her clinical position has allowed her to build relationships that have helped her manage the program and provide opportunities for students. It also works to support what she is teaching in class because she can show the students the same procedures in the clinic.

Emily found three main areas that have helped her learn her role within her profession. These were attending conferences, building supportive relationships, and learning through becoming a site visitor. She said that conferences have played an important part “keeping up to date on what is going on” and developing supportive relationships outside the institution. She mentioned several people who have influenced her throughout her time as a program director and many of these have developed into friendships. These relationships have been important for her to “bounce ideas off of” and she expressed how challenging the program director position would be without having this support network. Emily’s super-ordinate themes, themes, and representative statements are recorded in Table 6.

Table 6

Themes and Super-Ordinate Themes from Emily’s Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for Position</td>
<td>Lack of formal preparation.</td>
<td>I was just an assistant athletic trainer who said you are the program director, bam. Oh by the way you are going to be their advisor too, bam. And I never had formal training in either one of those areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in Education</td>
<td>Benefits of program director position.</td>
<td>So I found that appealing and I found it appealing that it was a 10 month contract. I had two little kids at the time and I figured I could have my summers off to spend with them and eventually the hope of not having to work any sports was kind of appealing as well.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Role</td>
<td>Becoming a visible.</td>
<td>That helped me and just continually making sure I was at faculty meetings. Making sure I was on committees in the department. You know I served on curriculum committee. Served on teacher education committee. Just staying visible. I was on the executive committee and just making sure that they saw me present at all of the functions and meetings and just having a visible presence helped a lot too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Role</td>
<td>Building support for the program.</td>
<td>And explaining why we were doing things. Because a lot of the faculty here understand that it is externally driven. It’s not just because I want to do this. It is because we are accredited we are told to have these certain things and that we have to do it not because I want to do it that way. So they understand that a little bit more which helps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Navigating academic governance system.</td>
<td>If you want to change something you can’t just say I want to change it. It has to go through a committee and maybe a departmental committee and a college committee, and it goes to the university. So it can take, you know, a very long time for even what you think is a pretty small change. So that was frustrating to me because I would always be like, what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role in Athletics</td>
<td>Importance of clinical experience.</td>
<td>I think that it is good for our program that the academic people are still working clinically. That it makes the students respect us more when we are teaching a class….It just makes it hard to juggle a split appointment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td>Learning through conference attendance.</td>
<td>I have never missed a professional educators meeting. They started in 1997 and I have been to everyone, you know, ever since and just staying up to date on what is happening has helped me.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Visit</td>
<td>Experience of first site visit.</td>
<td>The first one was just very intimidating because nobody knew what they were doing. It was just we have never gone through this type of thing and the first time I did a site or a self-study was when you had to go through and measure lighting using, you know, foot candles. It was so much.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Mentors</td>
<td>Developing relationships outside the institution.</td>
<td>I think we just started talking at a meeting one time and it might have been at a professional educators meeting. It might have been at a state meeting but we just started talking and um, email correspondence and phone calls and I just think that was how it developed and I think it transitioned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Faith.** Faith had been an education major throughout most of her undergraduate degree but then switched to focus on athletic training. She worked at one institution in athletics before taking an assistant athletic trainer position at her current institution. She was also working on her master’s degree, through a distance education program, during that time. Faith had an unfortunate event that had a profound effect on her transition into the program director position. The program director, at that time, was killed in a car accident two weeks before school started. After a year-long search she was appointed to the program director position. Reflecting on the incident she stated surprise at the reaction of the accreditation committee to information about the accident. “When we notified JRC [Joint Review Committee on education programs in Athletic Training] at that time that our program director had been killed they immediately said, ‘Who is your program director?’ We said, ‘Well we are working that out.’ and they said ‘You are on probation.’” She indicated that this was a unique experience but was “hurt” by the response from colleagues. However, she did not let this affect her views as she transitioned into her professional role working with the accreditors.
Faith had little time to prepare for the program director position but her interest developed while teaching in her first athletic training position. It was her enjoyment of teaching that influenced her transition into the program director role. Specifically the ability to focus on teaching in the classroom without the external pressure of balancing clinical responsibilities was a positive of the new role. Working with students and seeing their success in the program was also a noted highlight during her transition. However, she found that the program director role slowly changed her interactions with the students. She was unsure of how or why the change occurred but she suggested that the change could have been linked with changing office location, from the athletic complex to a new academic building, which decreased incidental student interaction. She was also spending more time completing administrative and faculty responsibilities which left less time available for building student relationships. While she indicated that this change was not necessarily a negative to the new position, she did miss some of the informal student interactions associated with her previous role.

Faith indicated that it took time to understand and feel comfortable with faculty governance. The big change for her was involvement in her first university committee. She stated, “It was an incredible experience for me. I think that made me a better faculty member and instructor probably more than anything because I got to understand how everything works and why things are important.” She also developed informal mentors that helped her develop a more complete understanding of governance. Supportive administrators and previous experience in administration were important and assisted her during the transition.

Her view of the profession also changed during her transition. Faith’s responsibilities of being involved in the profession and staying up to date on current topics became more important than in her previous role. This “change in philosophy” reflected her time working with off-
campus colleagues and attending professional conferences. She noted that she was unprepared for the position when she applied but because of the situation the program was in, this was the only path available for her. Faith had multifaceted support from on- and off-campus colleagues that facilitated her transition. She also mentioned that the site visit for accreditation played an important role helping her to make changes in her position and program that were essential for success. The super-ordinate themes, themes, and representative statements are found in Table 7.

Table 7

*Themes and Super-Ordinate Themes from Faith’s Interview*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for Position</td>
<td>Experience as an undergraduate education major.</td>
<td>I sometimes think that it provided me enough information to know what things I am doing wrong but not necessarily to make them better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in Position</td>
<td>Interest in athletic training education.</td>
<td>So I never really spent a whole lot of time thinking, this is where I ultimately wanted to be as far as program director. I wanted to be an athletic trainer that got to work with students in a program and the opportunity just kind of happened, for me. So there wasn't a whole lot of thought or planning, this is how it is going to go type of thing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Interaction</td>
<td>Changes in student interaction and perception.</td>
<td>I would have students come and hang out in my office and to kind of start to draw that line and now if you told students now, sometimes students are scared of me, which I am not sure why. But students don't come and hang out in my office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Governance</td>
<td>Learning new role in faculty governance.</td>
<td>I think the biggest change was, was understanding faculty governance. How that works, why it is important, what our role as faculty is and really I didn't get that until my fourth year.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Role</td>
<td>Multiple responsibilities in new role.</td>
<td>I coordinated all of the [department] courses, did all of the scheduling, worked with the coaches on what their class assignments were going to be…. We said we need a fulltime faculty in [the department]. I can't continue to do all of this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Responsibilities</td>
<td>Transition into professional role.</td>
<td>And so that’s [relationship with colleagues] been hard because, my thinking and view of the profession has evolved quite a bit in the last 7, 8 years so things that we agreed on, when I first got here as a colleague, we don't necessarily agree on any more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Support Network</td>
<td>Support from external constituents.</td>
<td>I had no idea about the whole educator’s conference at that point…. and they said you really need to go to this and I haven't missed once since and they are very beneficial and I have gotten more engaged and so I am much better prepared as a program director for the site visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Visit</td>
<td>Support developed because of accreditation.</td>
<td>We just, if we got noncompliance we could get the problem fixed. You know we went to administration, I mean, doing sport coverage for me. That was easy. It showed noncompliance. Three weeks later the problem was solved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections on Transition</td>
<td>Reflections on what would have helped transition.</td>
<td>I think if I did it over again, I wish I would have done my master's in athletic training. I think that would make me a better instructor and then I wish I had better or more experience with higher ed. in general.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Greg.** Greg has only worked at one institution since he graduated with his master’s degree. However, this allowed him to have substantial institutional experience before transitioning into the program director role. Because of this experience, he had also developed relationships, on- and off-campus, that provide support throughout his transition. He indicated
that his involvement teaching and advising students made the transition easier because he was already considered a part of the faculty.

One area that was difficult for him, because of being integrated into the institution, was transitioning out of sports medicine coverage for athletics. Part of this transition was developing an understanding of where he needed to spend his time. He stated, “After a little while if you want to get the justice to the educational side of things you have to get yourself that direction a little bit more.” This was difficult for him because he enjoyed the clinical role and saw benefits of interacting with students during their clinical rotations. He developed a new sense of self and found that, “You have to change your expectation in yourself because you can’t continue to do all of this [clinical athletic training] and do that [program director responsibilities].” Greg showed that his identity was no longer tied to athletics but he saw himself as a member of the faculty.

Incorporating learning over time into his curricular design was one of the biggest challenges. Relationships he developed helped him meet this challenge by being able to get information from other institutions. However, it also became challenging trying to use that information and implement it into his program. Meeting the administrative responsibilities became easier with the support from the institution’s administration. He indicated that he received help from admissions, the Registrar, the Dean, and the President of the institution. Having the administration invested in the program allowed him to make changes throughout his transition.

Relationships continued to be essential as he learned the new professional responsibilities of his position. He said, “I can look, like I said, I can look everywhere from nationally to district to state and so forth, all of those people and how important they have been in just building your
program.” He indicated that building relationships early on in his career was a vital part of his success during his transition. Greg established that professional conferences were important for learning about current issues and events in the profession. He also found the site visitors, during program accreditation, to be supportive of the program and helpful learning his new role. Greg ended the interview with this last piece of advice to help future program directors manage the transition. “You just got to pay attention and be willing to ebb and flow with what is going on.”

His super-ordinate themes, themes, and representative statements are found in Table 8.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing relationships</td>
<td>Benefits of relationship development.</td>
<td>I think people are willing to look at you and say this is a good thing and he is very committed to what is going on here. He wants what is best. They are willing to listen to your conversation and willing to have conversations with you about something, as opposed to just turning it off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Advising</td>
<td>Previous experience facilitated transition.</td>
<td>Even prior to being a faculty hire, I was doing a lot of teaching…. So that was an easy transition for me actually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving Out of Clinical Coverage</td>
<td>Difficulty managing making time for program director responsibilities.</td>
<td>That’s been the hard transition from taking over in 2005, is having the time to do the other things you need to do to transition the program. When do you ever get the time to focus on those other things? That has been extremely difficult while taking care of tennis and swimming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Responsibilities</td>
<td>Challenges with administrative workload.</td>
<td>Probably the toughest thing was just the vision and process of getting everything in order…. You know like that first summer I was nonexistent. There were a number of things that I had to do. I just basically came up and worked straight through the summer.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Expectations</td>
<td>Understanding new responsibilities</td>
<td>I had research stuff I needed to do. We have departmental goals as far as achieving tenure line. We have some benchmarks and things that we need to meet, need to be doing. Well now that became really important. Otherwise it doesn't make any difference because you are not going to get tenure and if you are gone the whole thing is over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Support</td>
<td>Support for adding staff</td>
<td>The college is not expanding here and we are asking for another staff member, it was not an easy thing to do. The President and the Dean recognized that this, this is something that we needed to do. That this does need some attention. It can really help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Support Network</td>
<td>Developing supportive relationships</td>
<td>Pulling people and pulling people in to the way we think and how we are going to do things in the conference and so that makes that relationship where you can call somebody up or send them an email…. You get use to building those relationships and pretty soon you got a pretty good thing working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Visit</td>
<td>Informal discussions during the site visit</td>
<td>Some of our best conversations were in between the airport the vehicle and here and from here back. Just because there is no agenda. So let’s just talk about this process a little bit and those conversations were great.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>Advice for future program directors</td>
<td>So that is the thing it think you know getting in to it, keep yourself current as well, you know what is happening. Keep reading your journal, keep in touch with what is on the web, what is going on, and current and what changes are coming down the pipes.</td>
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</table>

**Hank.** Hank was the newest interviewee in the program director role. He had only been in the position for two years. Initially his interest in athletic training was in both education and clinical athletic training. It was during his dual position that he started to develop a passion for
education. This passion emerged through teaching. Reflecting on his experiences in the classroom he noted, “The other thing was the feedback and the response I got from students in the classroom. Seeing their faces, their excitement, their energy when they learned something. When they got it, I really, really enjoyed [that].” He had also had a very positive past experience with the program director of his undergraduate degree. He appreciated the effort and interest this individual had challenging and teaching him while he was a student.

His preparation for the program director position included functioning as a clinical coordinator. As a part of this role he took on some of the responsibilities of the program director and got experience being in an administrative position during an accreditation site visit. Transitioning into the program director position he noted surprise at the amount of administrative responsibilities. He said:

I didn't realize, until I got into the first week and on, was the policies the administrative role. How much more time that was going to take. I knew it existed but how much really time it takes was surprising.

Part of this experience was the number of changes that were needed to meet new accreditation competencies. Hank indicated that he was redoing his curriculum to meet the new guidelines and was surprised when he found out that he only had six weeks to get the changes submitted to the curriculum committee. He was also astonished by his new role interacting with students. Reflecting on a policy change he stated:

Then in that fall you have to set that firm standard and that tone and everything. I mean, I realized very quickly in that fall. I made one rule change. I tried to give them [students] a little more freedom and they took that freedom and went a mile in the wrong
way. So then a couple weeks later I had to come in and say, okay this is the way that it is.

Hank noticed changes with relationships with coworkers as well. He struggled having to make decisions that could affect the workload of the faculty and staff. He felt guilty when discussing his inability to help with clinical athletic training and take some of the stress off of the clinical staff because of the new responsibilities of the program director role.

He was also experiencing changes working to adapt to the faculty culture. Hank indicated that he had difficulties in two areas. He stated that socializing and developing relationships with other faculty members took work. He suggested that he had to “flip the switch” to think in a different way during these faculty interactions. He also found that navigating the hierarchal structure of faculty governance to be difficult. Hank had to make a conscious effort to change how he socialized with faculty and expressed that he had to transition his identity to meet cultural norms. He did have great support from the institution through the process of transition. Part of this support came from an institutional new faculty training and mentor program, but it was the informal mentoring of the chair and other members of the division that helped him the most.

The support on campus was not enough to help him transition into the professional responsibilities of the position. He suggested that he felt isolated because other division members did not understand the processes and procedures needed in an athletic training curriculum. He wished there was an experienced athletic training educator on campus to help with his transition. Even with experience in the accreditation process, he indicated that he did not know enough about the accreditation commission and he was challenged to navigate this space. However, Hank said:
Even if I knew it was going to be tough like this, knew they were going to make all of these changes. The time I have gotten with my wife and my kid, I would not give up for anything.

There have been some challenges during his transition but the personal benefits of his new role and experiences working with and educating students have made it worthwhile. The superordinate themes, themes, and representative statements for Hanks interview are found in Table 9.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest in the Position</td>
<td>Developing interest in education.</td>
<td>I started to really like and enjoy the education side. Seeing the students grow.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The whole education process, I fell in love with it. And I could see myself, I thought</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I was doing a very good job, the feedback I got I was doing a very good job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative responsibilities</td>
<td>Previous administrative experience.</td>
<td>The first thing that hit me was the decision making. Cause always before then I was the</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>clinical coordinator, was assistant athletic trainer. I had my suggestions but if something</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>went wrong or something had to be decided…they had to decide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Learning to teach through experience.</td>
<td>Most of my learning of teaching was nonexistent coming in and it was just from my first</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>year to second year. I would go back and look at my tests from my first year and just</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>laugh. And they were not bad but just knowing where I am at now. Yea you didn't know</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>everything coming in and I didn't and that is part of the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super-Ordinate Themes</td>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Representative Statements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships with Students</td>
<td>Transitioning to new role working with students.</td>
<td>I never had to make the tough decision. Now all of a sudden who has to make the rules, who has to enforce them? It was me, and there was definitely that feeling of like I am the parent now. I am the older person now and it is like when I come in the room conversations stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with Staff</td>
<td>Making sense of changing relationships.</td>
<td>Because now instead of I'm an assistant athletic trainer, he is an assistant athletic trainer and we are working on the same thing. Now it is more my decisions that I make negatively or positively affect him. And it might be, and sometimes I think it is just in my head but I know it affects him...So it’s definitely change that relationship in that role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Culture</td>
<td>Interacting with faculty.</td>
<td>The different amount of ways that faculty socialize here on campus is different than what I expected…. The personal side in terms of really socializing to make the connections to develop the relationships took a lot more work than I thought it was going to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Support</td>
<td>Informal mentoring during transition.</td>
<td>Our division chair did a very good job of kind of guiding and mentoring me….Our division representative on curriculum committee…did a very good job of kind of letting me know and guiding me through [making changes to the curriculum].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Professional Role</td>
<td>Preparation for the professional role.</td>
<td>As much as I said I was ready and as much as the self-study and the process got me into CAATE, if I could have even understood that process better that would have been nice. Just because it would have lessened some stress. Because I would have understood where decisions were coming from and what decisions were coming.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ilene. Ilene “jumped” into the program director position with no educational experience. She had aspired to become a program director after completing her undergraduate degree but after finishing her master’s degree she said, “I am done with this school. I am not going back.” While working at her current institution as an assistant athletic trainer, the opportunity to become the program director opened up. She recounted this experience by stating, “It was definitely a challenge and scary. It wasn't an easy decision but it is kind of one of those opportunities that you take not knowing when the opportunity, if ever, would become available again.” Attending the institution as an undergraduate and her experiences working as a clinical athletic trainer have helped her throughout her transition. Ilene took the position and spent the first year as the co-program director. Her counterpart had experience and knowledge that she drew from to help her succeed but she also said, “It was crazy. I think I would put that whole year in kind of the same category. It was the best on the job training ever. Very much a learning as you go.” She has also gone through a formal mentorship process and experienced substantial support from other faculty in the department.

Ilene started her doctorate after taking the program director position. While this added stress and responsibilities, it was also helpful for her to become a more versatile instructor and a better leader. An important part of this leadership was instilling her passion for the profession in the students. Interacting and working with students was an important benefit for Ilene and she was proud of this part of the job. Working with students was also challenging. She stated, “When you are trying to get students to success and help them to be successful, there are a lot of things besides just showing up to class and going to clinical experiences that come up.” This was a surprise for her in her new role but she noted that interacting with students was “very fulfilling.” She showed her struggle with her new identity as an educator by saying, “You know
there is that stigma that those who don't provide athletic training services on a daily basis aren't real athletic trainers anymore, and that took a while for me to get over.” She missed working in the clinical environment but was finding new gratification educating students.

Another challenge she faced was developing her knowledge of the professional responsibilities of accreditation. During the transition she developed a good relationship with the accreditation commission. Her participation in conferences was also important to learn these responsibilities. One of the main benefits of the conferences was the knowledge that “you are not alone.” She stated the importance of, “Networking and being able to converse in sessions to other program directors and see how other programs are, you know, meeting certain standards or just the simple things like evaluation forms and documentation.” Building a supportive network has been important for Ilene because of the relationships she developed and the willingness of others to provide support and information. She has also developed a better understanding of the profession and what is happening at multiple levels, which has been a positive part of the transition into her new identity as an educator. The super-ordinate themes, themes, and representative statements for Ilene’s interview are found in Table 10.

Table 10

*Themes and Super-Ordinate Themes from Ilene’s Interview*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-Ordinate Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Representative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for Transition</td>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>I think it’s important in my job now that I was a preceptor in the clinical setting because I have those experiences that I can relate to the students and other preceptors and things like that. And I think having been in those various roles within the same program has been helpful. Because like I said, you know I did my undergrad here. I was a preceptor here and now as a faculty and program director kind of brings it all full circle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience.</td>
<td>(continued)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super-Ordinate Themes</td>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Representative Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Support</td>
<td>Formalized transition into position.</td>
<td>My first year as the program director I was actually Co-director. So another faculty member and I were co-directors for a year and then I took full directorship the second year…. I think he did a great job of putting me out there as the leader of the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Advanced degree helped with learning how to teach.</td>
<td>It was probably one of the most valuable courses that I have taken. I mean it was reassuring to know that I was already doing a lot of the things in my classes. Not that she taught us but it was also very eye opening on how to implement more versatility in my teaching style and to engage students more and she really, you know as everyone is in all levels of education, at this point how to get away from just traditional lecture style teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative role</td>
<td>Role of leadership in administration.</td>
<td>Of course there is all of the administration stuff that goes along with it but I think the program director definitely also serves the purpose of promoting the profession. Getting students excited about it. Sharing my passion for the profession on a daily basis and just being a leader that way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Strain</td>
<td>Adjusting to research responsibilities.</td>
<td>Yea that strain on life and on your job and managing daily schedules to make sure you are on top of all of that [research responsibility] is certainly much different but again if you are in a line of research that you enjoy it certainly makes that a heck of a lot easier to manage but it is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Self</td>
<td>Balancing multiple roles and responsibilities.</td>
<td>So there has been discussion that perhaps it is in my best interest to back away from some of those roles until a period of time where tenure is achieved…. I don't want to do that… I want to believe that I can do it all and be successful at it all.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Super-Ordinate Themes | Themes | Representative Statements
--- | --- | ---
Professional Socialization | Learning professional role. | There were a few specific standards that I was unsure of upon taking the position. So it [contacting accreditation commission] was more of or for clarity and that type of thing and that was the year where it seemed like every other week there was an update that came out. There was just a lot of change that was taking place. So it was just making sure I was keeping up on all of that.

Recurrent Themes

The recurrent themes were developed by evaluating and developing specific themes for each individual and then comparing these themes across the population. This technique was suggested by Smith et al. (2009) when developing an analysis for a larger sample size. It is important that these recurrent themes are also grounded within the individual experiences of the participants to maintain the important aspects of interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2009). Recurrent themes are defined as appearing in a majority of the participants experiences. The nine participants produced 78 individual super-ordinate themes. The participants’ super-ordinate themes were compiled into 14 recurrent themes. The interview transcripts were reviewed to investigate the relevance of the 14 recurrent themes at an individual level. This technique was chosen to maintain a connection to examples from the participants’ experiences an essential component of IPA. Table 11 provides an illustrated view of the established occurrence of each recurrent theme. The recurrent themes were experienced by the program directors in different ways. Smith et al. (2009) suggested the process of developing recurrent themes within a group allows for variation between members.
Identifying Recurrent Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recurrent Themes</th>
<th>Amy</th>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Cathy</th>
<th>Dave</th>
<th>Emily</th>
<th>Faith</th>
<th>Greg</th>
<th>Hank</th>
<th>Ilene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Faculty Responsibilities</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Faculty Governance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to Teach</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with Students</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Administrative Role</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with Administration and staff</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Support</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Multiple Responsibilities</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Campus Mentors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Professional Role</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning at Conferences</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Network</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Through Accreditation and Site Visit</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themes were identified as recurrent if they were supported in the transcripts of most of the participants (Smith et al., 2009). The important statements found in the transcripts were consolidated into key phrases that defined the recurrent themes.
Super-Ordinate Themes

The recurrent themes were grouped to form super-ordinate themes for the participant group. Abstraction was used to place similar recurrent themes into super-ordinate groups. Abstraction is a means of identifying similar themes into a single group to form a super-ordinate theme (Smith et al., 2009). Table 12 depicts how the recurrent themes were organized into super-ordinate themes. It also contains the key phrases from the participants to present an understanding of how these are supported at the individual level.

Table 12

Super-Ordinate Themes for Athletic Training Program Directors

A. Understanding Perceived Interest and Actual Position

1. Interest
Amy: I had a personal agenda, I kind of wanted to not work the night stuff anymore.
Bill: You are not at the whim of coaches telling you what to do.
Cathy: I would say a passion for athletic training.
Dave: I always knew I wanted to be an educator.
Emily: I figured I could have my summers off to spend with them.
Faith: There wasn't a whole lot of thought or planning.
Greg: There had always been a desire to teach.
Hank: The whole education process, I fell in love with it.
Ilene: I had aspired to one day be a program director.

2. Interacting with Students
Amy: So they don't think I am just up there lying about this test and this test but they can actually see me do it.
Bill: I miss the involvement.
Cathy: I wouldn't say so much in that phase.
Dave: Listen to them, figure out solutions, listen to the problems.
Emily: It did become, start to become overwhelming.
Faith: Sometimes students are scared of me, which I am not sure why. But students don't come and hang out in my office.
Greg: I like to keep in touch with what the students are doing… if I am just doing something in the classroom all of the time I would lose that touch.
Hank: I am the parent now. I am the older person now and it is like when I come in the room conversations stop.
Ilene: Program director definitely also serves the purpose of promoting the profession. Getting students excited about it.

(continued)
A. Understanding Perceived Interest and Actual Position

3. Communication with Administration and Staff
Amy: I would have to make it happen.
Bill: Like I said selling it to them.
Cathy: Without communication and being on the same page we wouldn't have been able to do it.
Dave: But a lot of times we were not ever told why.
Emily: When I go talk to him about stuff. He has been very supportive.
Faith: So that’s [relationship with colleagues] been hard.
Greg: They are willing to listen to your conversation and willing to have conversations.
Hank: So it’s definitely change that relationship.
Ilene: All of a sudden I am telling them how to teach our students. That was strange but we got over it.

4. Managing Multiple Responsibilities
Amy: I was trying to be the curriculum coordinator, head athletic trainer, and program director…this is not doable.
Bill: I think it's a managing process of putting people where they want to be and then relying on their strengths to get those kind of things done.
Cathy: So when you look at those life stress inventories and look at getting married, getting divorced, taking a new job, having a child, [and] entering school… just about everything else you could do, I did in those three months.
Dave: Horrible…. I mean my load was probably 250%.
Emily: I mean it is too much for one person
Faith: I can't continue to do all of this.
Greg: That’s been the hard transition… having the time to do the other things you need to do to transition.
Hank: I feel guilty. I try to help them out as much as I can… but now I am on the other side… I've got other things now to do.
Ilene: And I think being having had been in those various roles within the same program has been helpful.

B. Experience of Learning New Role and Responsibilities at the Institution

5. Learning Faculty Responsibilities
Amy: I connected and within that group of first year faculty to if we had things to talk about we could meet with another person.
Cathy: I just asked a lot of questions and looked at examples and read the policy manual.
Emily: Making sure I was on committees in the department.
Greg: We have some benchmarks and things that we need to meet… that became really important.
Hank: What my program director did for me.
Ilene: Managing daily schedules to make sure you are on top of all of that [research responsibility] is certainly much different.

(continued)
B. Experience of Learning New Role and Responsibilities at the Institution

6. Learning Faculty Governance
Amy: We call it across the street because we are divided by a county road but I had to interact with faculty a lot more, which was… scary in itself.
Bill: Obviously working with…as department chairs but basically I think that it was trial and error.
Cathy: I know because I had to go through it all.
Emily: That was frustrating to me because I would always be like, what?
Faith: The biggest change was, um, was understanding faculty governance… I didn't get that until my forth year.
Greg: I am the chair of probably the second most busiest committee on campus… so you're really inundated into all of that.
Hank: The personal side in terms of really socializing to make the connections to develop the relationships took a lot more work than I thought it was going to.
Ilene: We have great support here for untenured but tenure track faculty.

7. Learning to Teach
Amy: I was in survival mode.
Bill: I think it has just evolved over the course of all of those years.
Cathy: I worked in a community college… teaching in athletic training.
Dave: Get as much information as you can about educational evaluation.
Emily: I never had formal training.
Faith: It provided me enough information to know what things I am doing wrong but not necessarily to make them better.
Greg: Even prior to being a faculty hire, I was doing a lot of teaching…. So that was an easy transition for me.
Ilene: It was probably one of the most valuable courses that I have taken.

8. Learning Administrative Role
Amy: We were just kind of sent out there and you used your common sense to be successful.
Bill: I am going to use other people’s expertise to do the things that they can do and it is going to be better that way, I think.
Cathy: I used a lot of different resources. I asked a lot of questions
Dave: So it was learning.
Emily: It was a lot of work. It was more like learn, learn and talk to people.
Faith: So learning… how that works.
Greg: I just basically came up and worked straight through the summer.
Hank: The first thing that hit me was the decision making.
Ilene: The administration side, it didn't so much as catch you off guard as maybe in one sense the volume of it was surprising.
C. Experience of Learning New Role and Responsibilities within the Profession

9. Learning Professional Role
Amy: I kind of feel like you are trying to hit a moving target...you don't know what is coming next which is hard.
Bill: Was I prepared to do the academic side? Probably not fully.
Cathy: I had done work at the D1 [NCAA Division One] institution when they were considering going to a curriculum… I did a lot of the how do you do that work.
Dave: So you have to go, then you have to go back and figure out what you did and then you'd have to contact others who you trust to corroborate what they are saying.
Emily: I think that it was just learning, trial by error.
Faith: I had our old self-study… it helped sometimes.
Greg: Keep reading your journal, keep in touch with what is on the web, what is going on, and current and what changes are coming down the pipes.
Hank: If I could have even understood that process better that would have been nice. Just because it would have lessened some stress.
Ilene: So it [contacting accreditation commission] was more of or for clarity and that type of thing… there was just a lot of change that was taking place.

10. Learning at Conferences
Amy: Conferences were huge.
Bill: I came back from that meeting [Athletic Trainers Educators’ Conference] as overwhelmed as any conference I have ever been to.
Cathy: So kind of going through the standard and the interpretation.
Dave: By the end of the session I kind of had a good idea that.
Emily: They started in 1997 and I have been to everyone, you know, ever since and just staying up to date on what is happening has helped me.
Faith: I haven't missed once since and they are very beneficial.
Greg: The educator’s conference is a great help… I was like, wow this is really helpful. Look at all of these people sharing ideas and stuff.
Hank: Any of those that I could go to I would pick up…that helped out quite a bit.
Ilene: So that definitely is my number one in terms of administrative specific continuing education. It is wonderful. Just such a great conference.

11. Learning Through Accreditation and Site Visit
Amy: Kind of a mentoring through that site visit actually which was kind of refreshing.
Bill: In hind sight it was kind of fun but it was also kind of a hair raising experience.
Cathy: So kind of going through the standards and the interpretations. It is pretty interesting.
Dave: They understand that we were doing the things that needed to be done and they told us how to do these better.
Emily: The first one was just very intimidating.
Faith: If we got noncompliance we could get the problem fixed.
Greg: Those conversations were great.
Hank: They just confirmed to me what I thought we needed to do.
Ilene: Just ah learning exactly what my role was going to be.

(continued)
D. Support During Transition

12. Institutional Support
Amy: I went to the education department on campus. I went to nursing…kind of learning from that.
Bill: Part of it was the leadership of [the President]. I think he, this was a passion of his.
Cathy: I used a lot of different resources.
Dave: Having people that have been here on the faculty that have been here for years and years and years, they helped put it into perspective.
Emily: Explaining why we were doing things… so they understand that a little bit more which helps.
Faith: I am just giving you a heads up looking forward that this is going to be an issue.
Greg: The President and the Dean recognized that this, this is something that we needed to do.
Hank: The interaction with the division chair I knew a head of time.
Ilene: There has been discussion that perhaps it is in my best interest to back away from some of those roles.

13. On-Campus Mentors
Amy: I had to go through first, first year faculty seminar where we were connected with a mentor… She stayed with me and we have actually become very good friends.
Bill: Having some veteran colleagues … that you could call up.
Emily: I would run a lot of stuff by her like what, do you think is the best route to do this or what do you think of this?
Faith: And she has really taught me a lot about the handbook and those kind of things.
Greg: She didn't really inform me in great detail about lots of things.
Hank: Our division chair did a very good job of kind of guiding and mentoring me.
Ilene: So another faculty member and I were co-directors… I think he did a great job of putting me out there as the leader of the program.

14. Support Network
Amy: I did call on some program directors…and say, “hey I have this problem. How do you do that where you are?”
Dave: You have to go back and figure out what you did and then you'd have to contact others who you trust to corroborate what they are saying.
Emily: I think we just started talking at a meeting one time.
Faith: [She] helped me with a lot of the organizing and putting the actual document together.
Greg: You get use to building those relationships and pretty soon you got a pretty good thing working.
Hank: That was really, really helpful in that first year.
Ilene: So when you know somebody it is very helpful.
The experiences of the program directors were found to center around four super-ordinate themes. These themes are presented and described to demonstrate the “commonality and individuality” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 107) of the participants. The super-ordinate themes are: understanding perceived interest and actual position, experience of learning new role and responsibilities at the institution, experience of learning new role and responsibilities within the profession, and support during transition.

The program directors’ reasons for entering their new positions were both reinforced and contradicted by the actual roles and responsibilities of the position. This affected the transition by causing increased stress during socialization. While the program directors entered into these positions with different levels of experience and understanding of the institutional and professional responsibilities, they all experienced an adjustment phase to understand and socialize into the institutional and professional norms. The main transitional difficulty expressed by the program directors at the institutions was navigating their role within faculty governance. The program directors also experienced difficulty comprehending and adjusting to the accreditation responsibilities of their new professional roles. All of the program directors built and utilized a support network at the institution and within the profession to help with their transitions. While not all of the participants used the same types or groups of individuals, the support they received was essential during their transitions. The socialization experienced by the program directors was unique to each transition, however, many commonalities between the experiences surfaced during the research study. The four super-ordinate themes are outlined in the subsequent paragraphs.

**Understanding perceived interest and actual position.** Participant interest in the program director position centered around two basic areas. The first was a love or passion for
athletic training education. All of the participants worked in clinical athletic training before their transition. Some of the individuals knew this was the direction they wanted to take their career. Others developed an interest in education during their time working as a clinician. They also presented an interest in focusing on the student learning. The program director position was the main avenue available for them to reach these goals. The second main reason for transitioning into education centered on spending more time with family. They indicated that the shift would also allow them to have more control of their schedules. Amy indicated, “I had a personal agenda, I kind of wanted to not work the night stuff anymore.” The transition did not always help the program directors attain these goals. Many of the program directors continued to work in athletics throughout their transition. They also had new responsibilities in administration that took away from being able to focus on student education. Their interactions with students began to change. A disconnect between the interest in the position and the actual experience of the transition produced stress within the group.

Student interaction changed from a personal one-on-one level into a more authoritarian interaction. Hank indicated, “I am the parent now. I am the older person now and it is like when I come in the room conversations stop.” This new role as the disciplinarian of students led to increased stress and decreased the interactions between the program director and students. Some of the program directors accepted this as the new norm, while others continued being active in the clinical aspect to maintain these relationships. Another change noticed by the participants was a change to relationships and communication with administration and staff. The transition to a position of administration or supervision of former colleagues affected the mode and method of communication. Ilene noted, “All of a sudden I am telling them how to teach our students. That was strange but we got over it.” This change was primarily shown by program directors
making the transition within one institution. The program directors that were hired from outside the institution did not find this to be an issue.

Initial program director positions became overwhelming because of all of the expectations from the institution. The consensus from the participants was that the expectations were too much for one individual to handle. When describing his initial position Dave said, “[The position was] horrible…I mean my load was probably 250 percent.” Not everyone agreed with this description. During the interview, Bill did not indicate that multiple responsibilities affected his transition. This could have been because of his management style. When discussing the workload of the position Bill stated, “I think it’s a managing process of putting people where they want to be and then relying on their strengths to get those kind of things done.” Delegating responsibilities to others helped him through the transition. This was also a common thread for others in overcoming the workload. Many of the program directors indicated that they had to convince the administration to make the position manageable. Hank just started to say no to requests for more responsibilities. He said, “I feel guilty. I try to help them out as much as I can…but now I am on the other side …I've got other things now to do.”

The program directors began their transitions for multiple reasons. However, their expectations of why they were interested in the position did not always meet with the experiences they described. Managing these discrepancies was an important part of their transitions. They did this through working to change the experience to fit their view or changing their view to accept the experience. Either way, coping with these issues was essential for the transition.

**Experience of learning new role and responsibilities at the institution.** The program directors experienced four main areas of transition. They had to learn faculty, governance,
teaching, and administrative responsibilities. Each of the program directors came from different amounts of experience in higher education. This led to different needs meeting the new expectations during the transition. Some of the program directors had a formal socialization process for first year faculty and others did not. All but one of the program directors were either currently in or recently experienced the requirements of tenure. Some of participants had finished or were in the process of finishing their terminal degree. The requirements for tenure were different at each institution. This also affected the experience of the participants. While some indicated managing research requirements took time away from their other responsibilities, others never mentioned this as an issue. Most of the program directors relied on other faculty members to help them through their transition. Others learned through experience finding the information through policy and procedure manuals or involvement with the department through committees and meetings. Becoming involved with and learning faculty governance was also an important aspect.

Amy described her transition in this way, “We call it across the street because we are divided by a county road but I had to interact with faculty a lot more, which was…scary in itself.” This description of the physical divide between the academic community and athletic community showed how she and some of the other participants viewed their new role. Two parts of faculty governance were difficult. The first part, as alluded in Amy’s statement, is the difference in socialization between faculty and non-faculty. The other aspect was learning the policies and procedures of how governance functions. The most common means of understanding governance was through experience or as Bill put it, “trial and error.” Some of the program directors indicated that being involved with institution wide committees facilitated this process and others utilized mentors or more experienced faculty.
Teaching was a major portion of the responsibilities of all of the program directors. While some of the participants used experience to hone their skills and knowledge, others had formal training that helped them through this transition. Ilene was completing her doctorate during the transition and stated that a class focusing on teaching in higher education was the most valuable course she took. Others relied on pedagogical training that they had during their undergraduate experiences. However, this was not enough. Faith found, “It [undergraduate education] provided me enough information to know what things I am doing wrong but not necessarily to make them better.” Amy, who had minimal previous experience stated, “I was in survival mode” when reflecting on her first year in the classroom. This suggested that she barely had enough skill and knowledge to make it through the transition. Again, the transition into this area required the program directors to “learn on the job.”

Adapting to the administrative role of the program director position also required a great deal of learning through experience. Most of the participants suggested that the amount of work was a surprise. The majority of the program directors dealt with this volume by putting in more time. Dave and Greg were at the extreme end of this group and used their summer vacation to catch up on administrative tasks. Bill stood out by being the lone delegator of the participants. When talking about his reasons for delegating responsibilities out to others he said:

I am going to use other people’s expertise to do the things that they can do and it is going to be better that way, I think... it has probably backfired with me trying to do things that are not in my wheelhouse.

Some of the other program directors used individuals on campus to help with specific projects, such as website design, but Bill was the only participant who consistently relied on others for help. This ability to delegate or feel comfortable delegating important tasks to others developed
Experience of Learning New Roles and Responsibilities within the Profession. The main area of difficulty transitioning into the profession was the amount and speed of changes that occurred in athletic training education accreditation. Amy described her experience by stating, “I kind of feel like you are trying to hit a moving target…you don't know what is coming next which is hard.” This was a common sentiment of the program directors during their transition. Some of the program directors utilized on-campus colleagues and resources, while others contacted other program directors or used resources from professional publications or websites. Greg gave the following advice for future program directors, “Keep reading your journal, keep in touch with what is on the web, what is going on and current, and what changes are coming down the pipes.”

The participants all acknowledged the importance of attending professional conferences during their transition. Specifically the National Athletic Trainer Educators’ Conference was discussed by the participants. Two main areas provided help during conferences. The first was formal sessions that discussed education, administration, and education standards. The participants indicated that these sessions helped them to get up to date and maintain current on knowledge and skills. The second aspect that was beneficial for the participants was meeting other program directors and the ability to share experiences, help or get help, and making new contacts. Greg commented, “The educator’s conference is a great help… I was like, wow, this is really helpful. Look at all of these people sharing ideas and stuff.” Building relationships at
conferences was important to gain more information as well as building a support network once the participants returned. Consistently in each interview the participants discussed the experience of attending conferences utilizing enthusiastic tones.

The last influential experience of the participants relating to their professional role was experiencing a site visit. Two of the participants had not been a program director during a site visit but they both had experience while in a previous position. The program directors that had experienced the site visit in their current role suggested they had trepidation before the site visitors came to campus. A couple of the program directors indicated that they had heard stories of the difficulty of the site visit and negative interaction with the site visitors. However, this was not the experience of the participants. The program director described the site visitors as “supportive,” “helpful,” “invested,” and “understanding.” Bill reflected, “In hind sight it was kind of fun but it was also kind of a hair raising experience.” Even though the site visitors were helpful, it was also stated that they were there to judge the education program. This dichotomy between supporting and evaluating intertwined to help the program directors from two directions. While they were getting support on site, they were also finding out areas that they needed to change or improve.

Support During Transition. The program directors experienced a host of new challenges and experiences during their transitions. It became essential for their development and success to have or develop support throughout their transition. Many of the program directors remembered building support at the institution through information and advocating. By building a shared understanding in their faculty, staff, and administrative colleagues, they were able to develop support. Bill summed up the necessity of administrative support when he stated, “No matter how much you don't get along with your administration, they are ultimately the
people that are going to make you or break you financially or enrollment wise. You have to be aware of that.” Many of the program directors were lucky to have this support in place when they were hired but changes in administration caused them to have to spend time explaining or selling their programs all over again. Faculty support was also important for the program directors that were developing or making changes their major.

Emily said:

Initially there is no way the faculty are going to vote to have a major. They are not going to put it through...and then [the] President kind of sent it down that we will have an athletic training program. We will support this….I think kind of shut a lot of faculty up because they realized, well the President is on board with this, so we can't fight it.

As important as support from institutional presidents was, the program directors also found that mentors were essential to their transition.

Some of the participants were assigned mentors during first year faculty training, while others found it necessary to seek out mentors. These mentors supported the faculty in multiple ways. Some provided guidance on faculty responsibilities and governance, while others helped with administration and institutional knowledge. Hank ended up developing a mentoring relationship with his division chair after a failed attempt with an assigned mentor from across campus. However, the majority of these were successful.

Support for the program directors stretched off-campus to other program directors and educators at different institutions. This network of support was developed at the NATA Educators’ Convention and through personal networks developed during previous positions or from their undergraduate or master’s degree experiences. This informal support network helped participants transition into their professional role providing information about accreditation or
current issues and trends in education. Building relationships delivered key experiences during the transition.

**Conclusion**

The essence of the program directors’ experiences revolved around four super-ordinate themes. It was important for these individuals to traverse the differences between their perceived understanding of the position and on the job experiences. They also had to overcome the multitude of new responsibilities inside and outside the institution. The participants’ transitions were similar but they all brought different experiences into their new positions which led them to adapt in different ways. One of the key methods for this was developing support at multiple levels to help them when they were unprepared or hit “road blocks” during their transitions. The other method was developed through utilizing resources on- and off-campus to gain knowledge through their on the job experiences.
Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

Program directors are required by CAATE to provide administration, organization and coordination of the curriculum, fiscal management, and classroom and clinical education for their athletic training education program. It is also a requirement that the program director meets the institutional standards for teaching, scholarship, and service (CAATE, 2008). Past changes to these conditions and accreditation of athletic training education programs led to a shortage of experienced educators (Dewald & Walsh, 2009). Individuals transitioned into these positions without the necessary experience to lead these educational programs (Dewald & Walsh, 2009; Leone & Gray, 2007). While previous research has examined the program director role, requirements, career paths, and leadership characteristics, no current study has investigated the transition or socialization of these new program directors into this important leadership position.

The current research study was designed to help fill this gap in the literature. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to focus on the first-hand experiences of nine first-time program director during their transition. The over-arching question that guided this research was: How do athletic trainers experience their transition into the position of a first-time Athletic Training Education Program Director? The experiences of the nine participants are discussed in this chapter to understand how they have made sense of their experiences. The experiences are evaluated through the theoretical lens of role socialization and the four phases of socialization. The implications of the transitions are discussed within the current and future research on program directors. The discussion will conclude with implications for practice.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IPA is a qualitative methodology centered on three main areas. Each of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography are important parts that assist the researcher to investigate an
experience holistically (Smith et al., 2009). To understand why this methodology was chosen it is important to understand the role of each part in the analysis of the data. The experience of the program directors transitioning into their new roles was the basis for this investigation. It was important for the researcher to ground the analysis of the experience at both an individual and group level. This fostered a better understanding of convergent and divergent experiences of the participants. The emphasis of the individual during analysis helped the researcher to concentrate on the accounts of the experience during the analysis and give voice to both the shared and individual experiences. References to individual experience and representative statements were drawn from this area to provide a richer experience for the reader and produced a better understanding of the data.

Group data analysis in IPA “involves negotiating this relationship between the convergence and divergence, commonality and individuality (Smith et al., 2009, p. 107). It was important to understand both the common themes as well as individual experiences that diverged from these themes. Information is learned from both and increases the importance of the data. The three different methodologies that make up an IPA analysis provide an understanding of the first-time program directors’ experiences during transition.

Role Socialization

Socialization is the process of learning new knowledge, skills, and values (Hart, 1991). Role socialization is a specific form of social learning that focuses on socialization into a new position (Heck, 1995). This learning process is made of both personal and social skills with in the individual’s environment (Billett, 2008; Weidman & Stein, 2003). Formal and informal social learning were reported as the two key aspects of role socialization (Smith & Stewart, 1999). Informal socialization is completed in the individual’s environment and is based on
learning while interacting with it. Informal learning is considered to be more effective than formal learning (Jones, 1986). Formal socialization is the process of taking an individual out of their environment to learn skills (Jones, 1986). Role socialization uses both informal and formal learning.

Role socialization has been used to study the transition of individuals into leadership positions (Heck, 1995). However, it has not been used to investigate the process of socialization into the program director role. There are four phases an individual will go through during role socialization (Smith & Stewart, 1999). The four stages of socialization provide part of the hermeneutics understanding of the transition. Looking at the program directors within these stages gave the researcher the historical perspective of the experience. More specifically, understanding the anticipation stage of the program directors helps define the starting point of the transition.

**Four Phases of Socialization**

The four phases of socialization are anticipation, encounter, adaptation, and stabilization or withdrawal. The anticipation stage starts when someone considers transitioning into a new role. The encounter phase begins when the new position begins and is the process of learning new information. Adaptation involves the individual acquiring information and beginning the transition. The last stage is stabilization. This occurs once the individual has made changes in response to their new role. If these expectations cannot be met, withdrawal will occur (Smith & Stewart, 1999).

**Anticipation stage.** The anticipation stage began at different points for each program director. While Amy had only weeks in this phase of socialization, Bill experienced anticipation for many years before the transition. Most of the program directors had a limited experience in
the anticipation stage of socialization. Either they were not considering the new role before the search process started or were working at a different institution before starting the program directorship. One of the main parts of anticipation is the socialization that occurs based on how others treat the individual (Smith & Stewart, 1999). The other aspect of anticipation is the adoption of attitudes, beliefs, and skills necessary for success (Armstrong, 2010). Fewer than half of the program directors had begun this anticipation before taking the new role. Bill began the anticipation by slowly building the education program while working as the head athletic trainer. His anticipation phase included developing skills in leadership, administration, teaching, advising, and curricular development. Greg had a similar experience but he was an assistant athletic trainer teaching within the education program and gained the most experience in teaching and advising. Hank also went through anticipation at his current institution but worked his way into a teaching and administrative role working with student clinical rotations. Cathy’s anticipation stage was the only one which began at a separate institution. Cathy’s experience was also different because she was researching the accreditation process but not gaining the socialization aspect of anticipation. The other program directors entered their current positions without this preparation. Some of them were promoted into newly created positions while others entered because of unanticipated vacating program director positions. The differences in the anticipation phase of socialization changed the program directors’ preparation and caused an increase or a decrease in the success during other phases of socialization.

**Encounter phase.** The encounter phase of socialization starts with beginning the new position (Smith & Stewart, 1999). The main aspect of the encounter phase is when others in the culture begin to assess the competence of the program director based on both expectations and norms of the culture (Armstrong, 2010). The different institutions had different cultures and
norms for the program directors to experience. There were also different expectations for each program director. These expectations varied between the program directors entering newly created positions versus the program directors entering into established positions. However, both groups experienced substantial changes because of entering the new faculty culture. The majority of the program directors had to learn the new expectations of becoming a faculty member along with navigating the norms of this group. This phase of socialization led to feelings of being overwhelmed, unprepared, scared, and isolated. It also seemed to be the most difficult aspect of the transition. Because the adaptation phase is based on the knowledge developed during the encounter phase, some of the participants struggled to move into adaptation as they found it difficult to build the knowledge and skills necessary understand the new norms.

**Adaptation phase.** The adaptation phase of socialization is the process when the program directors’ made changes in relation to their new environments (Smith & Stewart, 1999). While some of the program directors adapted quickly after learning the norms and expectations, others had difficulty in this area and were moving back to the encounter phase as new expectations or issues developed. This is consistent with Armstrong’s (2010) supposition that the socialization phases are non-linear. One of the reasons for the non-linear cycle of the program directors is explained by changes found at some of the institutions in administrative and educational leadership. Changes in administration resulted in new expectations and norms which affected the socialization of the program directors. In Emily’s transition, the change to a new and more supportive department chair made the transition easier. However, Bill found it necessary to resell the importance of his position and the athletic training program when a new dean was hired. The transition was also made more difficult because of the need for program directors to meet new professional expectations brought about by changes to the national
accreditation standards. Hank had experienced an accreditation site visit the year before taking on the responsibilities of the program director role. Even with this recent experience, he noted that one of the primary difficulties he experienced was keeping up with the changes that were being made to the accreditation standards. All of the program directors indicated that learning the process of accreditation and meeting these responsibilities became compounded because of their perception of changes that seemed to continuously happen. Changes during the transitions of each of the program directors resulted in movement between the encounter and adaptation phases. It also caused for non-linear movement between the adaptation and stabilization phases of their socialization.

**Stabilization or withdrawal phase.** The fourth and final stage of socialization is the stabilization phase. If the individual is able to make changes that fit the environment they are said to have entered stabilization. If the conditions are not met the individual enters into withdrawal (Smith & Stewart, 1999). Some of the program directors stated that they became overwhelmed during the transition. This would indicate a time when they were going into the withdrawal phase. Table 12 section A4 discusses the management of multiple responsibilities. This was an area in which some of the program directors hit a point where they entered the withdrawal phase. Some of these individuals approached administration to help them manage the responsibilities. In a couple of cases the administration lessened the responsibilities for the participants. This change was made to the administration’s expectations and not through the program directors adapting. In one instance, after approaching the administration to get support lessening the responsibilities the program director was not provided a change in these expectations. For this individual it was necessary to adapt and then continue through the socialization process. In both examples there were changes that brought the program director out
of the withdrawal phase. This shows the fluidity of socialization through the interaction of the program director with their environment. The important aspect to understand about making a successful transition is that these individuals did not stay in the withdrawal phase. They moved back into the adaptation phase and at the time of the interviews many of them had made changes in philosophies or behaviors to fit the new norms of their positions. This suggests that they were in the stabilization phase of socialization. The four phases of socialization help to define the processes of program directors’ role socialization. This does not fully explain the nature of role socialization theory provided by Heck (1995), nor does it explain all of the nuances the program directors experienced during their transition.

It is important to move past the four stages of socialization and to develop an understanding of role socialization. Role socialization has to be broken down into its two main parts to understand the issues and experiences of transitioning into the program director role. Organizational socialization and professional socialization are the two main areas of role socialization (Heck, 1995). Organizational socialization is defined as learning the specific knowledge and skills related to the role of the individual within a particular organization. Professional socialization is the process of becoming integrated as a member and identifying oneself with a profession (Heck, 1995).

**Organization Socialization.** Organization socialization has been found to have a greater impact on the individual than professional socialization (Heck, 1995). It was suggested that this influence of organizational socialization was driven by the environment the individual is in every day. Daily repetition of cultural influence and the influence of a direct supervisor increases the impact on the individual (Heck, 1995). This was consistent with the experiences of the program directors. During the data collection, the participants spoke in greater amount and detail about
the changes and challenges they experienced in relation to the institution. This shows the investment of the program directors into the institutions and the necessity of responding to cultural influence.

Knowledge and skill development are key components of organization socialization (Heck, 1995). Referring back to Table 12 sections A and B shows the program director’s knowledge and skill transition processes. These highlight the learning that was happening focused on institutional knowledge and skills. The skills include learning communication, management, faculty responsibilities, administrative responsibilities, and teaching. All of these areas were important to the transition of the program directors. The preparation of the program directors directly affected organizational socialization. Participants with larger amounts of institutional experience seemed to transition through the four stages in a more linear fashion than the participants with less experience. This was seen specifically in the skill or knowledge areas where those individuals had previous experience. One example that highlights this difference is the transition into the teaching role. The program directors with limited knowledge and experience spent more time learning these techniques than the individuals who had been teaching for several years.

The other part of organizational socialization is integration into the cultural norms, values, and behaviors (Heck, 1995). Transitioning into the faculty culture was difficult for most of the participants. Even the program directors with institutional experience indicated the difficulty of this transition. Formalization of responsibilities, social interaction, and hierarchal governance structure were all areas the program director found to be difficult. All of these examples required the program directors to make changes to values and behaviors to fit into the
faculty culture. Some of the program directors even found that these changes to their values and behaviors affected interactions with previous coworkers and students.

Heck (1995) suggested that the support individuals experience during socialization also impacts the transition. The program directors gave a variety of examples on support they received during their transitions. Evaluating the transition of the program director into the administrative roles within the institution shows the effect of administrative support during this process. Program directors who stated the importance or availability of support from administration spent more time asking questions and learning through others than program directors who did not identify support in this area. The non-supported group indicated spending significant amounts of personal time learning the administrative roles and responsibilities. In some instances this required them to work throughout their summer vacations. The support of the institution during organizational socialization was immensely important for the program directors’ transition and socialization into the institutional role.

Lastly, organization socialization relies heavily on informal socialization (Heck, 1995). This is supported by the transitions of the program directors, but the current sample of participants did not have a terminal degree before starting their transition. Even the master’s degrees of the participants were unrelated to preparation for the program director role. Formal socialization is associated with learning that takes place during completion of an advanced degree (Heck, 1995). For this reason it is difficult to assume the importance of informal socialization in comparison with formal socialization during the organization socialization. Five of the nine participants started doctoral programs after beginning as a program director. All of these individuals found that there were parts of the degree requirements that were applicable to their transition, but the majority of the program directors did not believe that the doctoral degree
was necessary for the role and responsibilities of their current positions. The main benefit perceived from the doctoral degree was knowledge and experience in research. Because most of the institutions in the study did not have a large research requirement for the program director position this was a non-factor for these positions.

Organizational socialization was an important aspect of the program directors’ transitions. All of the participants experienced support at different levels within the institution which helped them to make the transition into their new knowledge, skills, norms, values, and behaviors. The amount of support or previous experience of each individual impacted the speed or process of their organizational socialization. While it is difficult to conclude which knowledge area or skill development was the hardest to understand and learn, all of the experiences supported the process individuals go through during organizational socialization.

**Professional Socialization.** Professional socialization is the process of becoming a member of and identifying with a profession (Heck, 1995). This socialization can be completed during either formal or informal socialization. However, it is normally associated with formal learning (Heck, 1995). The program directors learned the professional role in similar ways. They indicated that conferences provided both a formal and informal socialization environment that helped them transition into the profession. Heck (1995) suggested that professional socialization that is related to real world experiences increases the socialization that can happen. The conference experiences were not examined in depth during this research. It would be difficult to suggest that they specifically mirrored real life, but the program directors provided some details that made the impression the information they found to be the most beneficial was related to issues they were having during their transition.
The conferences also provided a means to develop a supportive network of professionals that could be used by the program directors after the conferences ended. These off-campus contacts were used throughout the transition to develop a better understanding of the requirements for the profession as well as provide specific help with individual issues. All of the program directors used their off-campus network at some point during the transition. This support included development of specific documents for the education program to help make sense of accreditation standards. The professional socialization that took place because of the support network was directly related to problems or issues the program directors were facing in their current positions. This would support the importance of professional socialization being directly related to the real world.

The next place professional socialization occurred was during accreditation site visits. The opportunity to have site visitors come to the campus and evaluate what the program director was or was not doing was very important for the socialization of program directors. The learning that took place was considered essential by the program directors because it was directly related to their responsibilities and experiences. The information or socialization gained during these experiences included learning the current terminology used within the profession and assisted the program directors in gaining a better understanding of how their current practices related to the standards within the profession. It was not just a process of learning the responsibilities of being a program director but also becoming integrated into the social expectations of the profession.

One area that is significantly different from the professional socialization that Heck (1995) described was the use of formal learning in graduate coursework to facilitate professional socialization. The program directors did not have terminal degrees in athletic training before beginning their transition. This base of knowledge was not available to them as they made their
transitions. It became even more important for the participants to find different ways to gain this base of knowledge. This supports the research provided by Leone et al. (2008) which found that terminal degrees were not necessary for becoming a program director even though it could provide some benefits for the position. The data collected from participants who started their doctorates during the transition found that there was information they learned that helped them.

Professional socialization was important during the program directors’ transition. These experiences appeared less important than the organizational socialization that took place. This is consistent with Heck’s (1995) understanding of the relationship of organizational and professional socialization which stated that organizational socialization was more important during role socialization. The big difference found was that the participants had limited experience of formal socialization during graduate study. Without the availability of experiences of formal social learning it is impossible to support or refute the importance of graduate work in the program director transition.

The transition of participants into the program director role supports both the four stages of socialization (Smith & Stewart, 1999) and role socialization theory (Heck, 1999). The experiences of the program directors showed a process of both non-linear and linear movement through the four stages of socialization. It also increases the understanding of the anticipation stage of socialization and how having knowledge or skills before taking the program director role improved the process of social learning. The two main areas where the program directors experienced social learning were at the level of their organization and in their profession. This provided support for the application of role socialization theory for providing a better understanding of the transition into the program director position outlined by Heck (1999).
Implications for Current and Future Research

Available research literature on program directors centers on the program directors role in student recruitment and retention, curriculum and pedagogy, clinical education, administration, and career paths of program directors. These are the main areas analyzed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. The main goal of the current research study was to look at the transition of these individuals, but the interviews also provide information related to other areas of research.

Recruitment and retention are important aspects of the program director role. Hertel et al. (2001) suggested the importance of the program director monitoring the students’ education and working with students to meet their needs, balanced with educational components to improve retention. The participants indicated a change in their roles, responsibilities, and relationships with students changed as a result of their transition into the program director position. It is important to understand how these interactions changed during the transition. Maintaining relationships with students in order to continue to understand their needs within the program continues to have importance, despite the change. The program directors found, however, an increased formalization in their interaction with students and a decrease in personal interaction. Program directors can no longer rely on personal interactions, given this role change. They will need to use the more formal interactions and find ways to work with the students based on the new relationships. More research on program directors and student interaction is needed to develop a better understanding of approaches that could be used to maintain access to students for purposes of student input, student involvement, and retention of students.

Berry (2010) specified knowledge of current practices and pedagogy as important for program directors. While the program directors had experience with current practices before their transition, they did not necessarily have experience or knowledge in current pedagogy.
During the transition the participants had to expand their pedagogical knowledge to meet the responsibilities of the position. This area of learning was considered a significant aspect of the transition, and they used multiple methods to meet this responsibility. While some program directors used formal learning to meet this need, others learned through trial and error. Still others consulted professional materials and other professionals in the field. The level of knowledge that the program directors had before and after the transitions was not measured. As such, the method of transition that was most useful or best for these individuals in the area of formal learning represents an area for future research. It will be important to investigate the differences between formal learning and informal learning and their effect on overall knowledge and skill in pedagogy. Because of the importance of pedagogy in practice as a program director, understanding the best methods of knowledge transmission would help program director socialization.

Clinical education in athletic training is an essential component of a student’s education (Perkins & Judd, 2001; Perrin, 1988). The current literature provided support for the program director understanding clinical education and the need for program directors to prepare clinicians in this area (Brumels & Beach, 2008). Only one of the program directors discussed the transition into training of other clinicians for clinical education. The difficulty described by the program director involved interacting with former colleagues in her new administrative role. Other than the experience of one participant, results of this study do not indicate that clinical education is a key area for future research.

Administrative responsibilities of the program director position take significant time and effort (Judd & Perkins, 2004). All of the program directors described transitioning into the administrative requirements of the position. However, they indicated different areas of
administration as difficult during their transitions. While one program director specifically acknowledged developing a budget as a difficult administrative task, none of the other program directors mentioned this during the data collection. The different levels of knowledge and skill that the program directors had before entering the position affected the areas that were difficult during their transition. This supports the premise of the four stages of learning and the role of the anticipation stage helping to prepare an administrator for the transition. More information is needed on the level of knowledge new program directors have compared with the career paths of those individuals. This would provide an understanding of the training or development needs of future program directors. This investigation’s focus did not allow for gaining insight into this issue and cannot be used as a starting point for future research.

Transitioning into the leadership requirements for the program director position was discussed by the program directors. Leadership has been shown to be an essential component of the program directors responsibilities (Delforge & Behnke, 1999; Dewald & Walsh, 2009; Herzog & Zimmerman, 2009; Hoch et al., 2009; Kutz & Scialli, 2008; Laurent & Bradney, 2007; Leone & Gray, 2007; Leone, Judd, & Colandreo 2008; Meyer, 2002; Nellis, 1994; Peer & Schlabach, 2009). Meyer (2002) took this further by stating that a majority of graduate athletic training programs do not include leadership training. This was supported by the current investigation. The program directors explained the transition process into a position of leadership. Their explanations of difficulties in this area included entering the new role as the decision maker, directing former colleagues, developing policies and procedures, and interacting with other faculty and administrators. This supports the research by Herzong and Zimmerman (2009) who found that the program director has to lead through a variety of relationships.
Hoch et al. (2009) discussed the use of delegation in the program director position. The findings of Hoch et al. (2009) showed that many program directors did not delegate because of a lack of trust or confidence in other members of the faculty or staff. While the reason for not delegating responsibilities to others was not discussed in the current investigation, the lack of delegation would be supported. Only one of the participants spoke about delegating responsibilities to others within his program. The other program directors focused on their work learning or doing multiple administrative tasks. Some of the participants who did not initially delegate tasks explained that they became overwhelmed by the workload and went to administration to get responsibilities moved to others within the program. This could indicate that these individuals did not delegate because there was no one else available to whom they could delegate the tasks. Additional research focusing on the differences of levels of delegation between established program directors and program directors making the transition would help to better inform this area of the literature.

The last area of current program director research focused on career paths. A variety of program director career paths have been found in athletic training education (Hertel et al., 2001; Leard et al., 1991). This was supported by the current investigation. The program directors all had different levels of education and experience. The differences in these areas affected the socialization process each individual experienced during their transition. A program director with more teaching experience described teaching as an easy transition, while another without previous teaching experience described her learning process as difficult. Judd and Perkins (2004) also looked at the reasons individuals become program directors. They found that student interaction and personal advancement were the two main reasons for entering the program director position (Judd & Perinks, 2004). This was supported by the current investigation. The
program directors also noted changes in student interaction and an unexpected workload, once in the position, caused them to struggle during the transition. This was supported by the research which found that workload and issues in student discipline were main reasons for leaving the profession (Judd & Perkins, 2004). Interestingly, the program directors in the current investigation have experienced these issues but are still in the profession. More research is needed in this area to understand the different circumstances surrounding program directors who leave the profession and those who are able to manage these issues.

There has been significant growth in the number of entry-level master’s programs in athletic training. As the number of entry-level master’s programs continues to grow it may become even more important to understand how individuals are making the transition researched in this study. This area of research should include program directors with and without previous experience because there is a new trend to transition undergraduate programs into graduate programs. Another area of future research should include the transition of athletic trainers into clinical coordinator positions. The clinical coordinator role includes some of the same teaching and administrative responsibilities as the program director. Therefore similar research is needed to support and understand this transition.

Another of the main differences between the current literature and this investigation was the approach used. Much of the current research on program directors involves the use of quantitative methods. Qualitative methods are important for understanding human behavior especially when investigating the human response. Understanding a transition in an individual’s life requires the understanding of the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of these individuals. Qualitative methodologies are extremely important investigating the lived experience. The current investigation on the transition of first-time program directors provided new information
in an under-studied area of the transition of first-time athletic training program directors into their positions.

**Conclusion**

The program director position is one of the most important institutional positions in athletic training education. These individuals provide the leadership and direction of athletic training education programs and future athletic trainers. It is important to understand the responsibilities and role this position plays at the institution and within the profession. The beginning of this knowledge comes from developing an understanding of the transition into this role. The current investigation is the foundation for the conversation on program director transition. It should be used as a starting point for future research in this area and as a foundation for individuals interesting in making this transition. The findings show how program directors have made their transition into the organizational and professional roles of athletic training education.

The socialization of a new program director into the profession is needed in order to develop consistency within athletic training education. Program directors have to know their role and responsibilities to perform their jobs. The NATA Educators’ Conferences have been noted by the participants of this research investigation as one way they have learned their professional responsibilities and as a starting point for socialization. It is important that program directors, future and current, continue to find avenues for development in these areas. The program director role and responsibilities will continue to evolve and the educational opportunities need to reflect this evolution. While none of the program directors had a doctoral degree before starting their transition, most indicated that this could have been beneficial. This supports the professional socialization theory (Heck, 1995) that graduate programs facilitate this
process. More information on the programs available and professional socialization happening in these programs could provide a better understanding of this preparation.

Institutional socialization was a significant part of the program directors’ transition. Institutions must become aware of the needs of supporting program directors during their transition. The program directors involved in this research had support from the institution but the majority of this support surrounded the responsibilities of a faculty member. Program directors need institutional support in order to facilitate their growth in areas of administration such as developing and maintaining budgets, creating and implementing policies and procedures, and building leadership qualities and skills. The types of support and areas of knowledge each program director needs will vary. It is important that the institution develop support that can meet the specific needs of each program director.

Transitioning individuals into program director positions will continue to be an important part of athletic training education. It is inevitable that individuals will experience transitions into the program director positions without experience. The successes and failures of these individuals will be affected by the support they receive from their new institutions. These future program directors need to be aware of the effect support or lack of support will have on their future programs and positions. Bill summarized the importance of support when giving the following advice for future program directors:

No matter how much you don't get along with your administration, they are ultimately the people that are going to make you or break you financially or enrolment wise. You have to be aware of that…You can't anticipate everything that is going to happen, but I think that you are going to have to have the assurances from the people that are making the
decisions above you that if something comes up they will help you get something through
curriculum or will help you hire new staff or whatever the case may be.

Hiring inexperienced individuals into program director positions may make sense or may be a
necessity for academy and institutions. However, it does not make sense to place people into
these positions without providing them support to successfully transition. Future program
directors need to be aware of the necessity of institutional support when searching and applying
for program director positions. Entering a program director position with a better understanding
of institutional support system and structure provides future first-time program directors with
knowledge of where to go for assistance during their transition and socialization into their new
role and responsibilities. Program directors are responsible for providing leadership and
management of student athletic trainers’ education. The program directors’ ability to succeed in
their transition to and within this new role will affect these students’ education. It is important
that current and future program directors are supported for the protection of students and
ultimately the professionalization of athletic training.
References


trainers in the national collegiate athletic association division I context. *Journal of Athletic Training, 37*(1), 63-70.


Appendices

Appendix A - Interview Protocol

Program Directors’ Transition Interview Background

Problem of Practice:
It has been suggested that some Athletic Training Education Program Directors are not prepared to make the transition into their new positions (Dewald & Walsh, 2009; Leone & Gray, 2007). The number of Athletic Training Education Programs has expanded significantly in the last 20 years. Because of an increased need for directors of these programs many athletic trainers were promoted into these positions. With a high level of need and low number of qualified candidates many program directors were promoted without being fully prepared for this transition.

Purpose:
The first step to helping current and future program directors is to understand in great detail the experiences of those who have made the transition into the program director position for the first time. The purpose of this study is to gain knowledge on how program directors have experienced this transition.

Research Question:
How do athletic trainers experience their transition into the position of a first-time Athletic Training Education Program Director?

Theoretical Framework:
Role Socialization Theory (Heck, 1995) will be used as a framework. Role socialization is made up of professional and organizational socialization. Professional socialization focuses on how the individual learns the role and responsibilities of a new profession in relation to the views of society (Heck, 1995). Organizational socialization refers to how the individual learns the role and responsibilities of the new profession in relation to the culture of the institution (Heck, 1995).
References


Pseudonym: ____________________________

**Introductory Protocol:**

You have been selected to speak with me today because you have been identified as an individual with a great deal of information and experience as a program director. This research is focused on the transition an athletic trainer experiences as they make the transition into the first-time program director role. I hope to gain information on how you as a program director made this transition.

Because I want to ensure the accuracy of our discussion, I would like to record the audio from our discussion. I will also be taking written notes during this interview. Your confidentiality will be maintained through use of a pseudonym. I will be the only person with access to the recorded information and transcripts. To meet the requirements of Northeastern University I have a form for you to read through and sign. This document states that all information will be confidential, your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time, and that we will not inflict any harm on you.

Do you have any questions before you sign the informed consent?

I have planned this interview to last approximately 60-90 minutes. During this time I will be asking several questions on your lived experiences as a first-time program director. It is important that you provide any information that you feel is important for your experience. If we start to run out of time, it may be necessary to interrupt you to make sure we cover all of the questions. Do you have any questions at this time?

**Part I: Background questions:**

**Program Director Background Questions (5-10 min.)**

- How long have you been a program director?

- What experiences led up to your current career as an ATEPD?
  - Tell me about your educational history before taking this position.
  - Tell me about your career history before taking this position.

- Why did you decide to become an ATEPD?
  - Describe an experience that you remember influencing your decision.
    - Personal reasons; Academic reasons; Administrative reasons
Transitional Questions (50-55 min.)

Introductory Statement: I would like to hear about your experience transitioning into the program director in your own words. I will be asking you to express experiences that you have encountered. Your responses can include academic, administrative, social, or personal.

• What recollections do you have of your very first days in the new position?

• How did you learn the administrative expectations or responsibilities of the ATEPD position specific to your institutional?
  o Social expectations or responsibilities.
  o Academic expectations or responsibilities.
  o Personal expectations or responsibilities.

• Describe a situation during your transition in which you had to adjust your thinking or actions to fit the administrative expectations or responsibilities of the ATEPD position at the institutional level.
  o Social expectations or responsibilities.
  o Academic expectations or responsibilities.
  o Personal expectations or responsibilities.

• How did your new role change your position or interaction with others in your department or compared to your previous position?

• How did you learn CAATE’s administrative expectations or responsibilities of the ATEPD position?
  o Social expectations or responsibilities.
  o Academic expectations or responsibilities.
  o Personal expectations or responsibilities.
• Describe a situation during your transition in which you had to adjust your thinking or actions to fit the expectations or responsibilities of CAATE.
  o Social expectations or responsibilities.
  o Academic expectations or responsibilities.
  o Personal expectations or responsibilities.

Reflection Questions (30-35 min.)

• If you could go back and do it over again, is there anything you would change?

• What advice would you give to future ATEPDs?
Appendix B - Informed Consent

Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies

Name of Investigators: Christopher Viesselman, Doctoral Student
Principle Investigator: Carolyn Richert Bair, Ph.D.
Title of Project: The Lived Experience of First-Time Athletic Training Education Program Directors.

February 12, 2013

Request to Participate in Research. We would like to invite you to take part in a research project focusing on athletic training program directors and their transition into this leadership role. This investigation is being completed to better understand how athletic trainers experience the transition into the program director position for the first time and to help current and future program directors anticipate, prepare, and understand the role and responsibilities of this leadership position.

You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

The study will take place at a time and place that is convenient for you or using Skype or other equivalent program online. The research will take approximately 90 minutes. If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to answer a series of questions about your experience transitioning into the program director position.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you for taking part in this study.

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. However, your answers may help us to learn more about the transition first-time program directors experience.

Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Only the researchers will know that you participated in this study. Any reports or publications based on this research will use only group data and will not identify you or any individual as being of this project.

The decision to participate in this research project is up to you. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to call me, Christopher Viesselman at 641-628-5166 or viesselman.c@husky.neu.edu. You can also contact Carolyn Richert Bair, Ph.D. at 617-390-4197 or c.bair@neu.edu the Principal Investigator.

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish. You may keep this form for yourself.

Thank you,
Christopher Viesselman
Appendix C - Recruitment Letter

Dear Athletic Training Education Program Director,

My name is Chris Viesselman and I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts and a clinical instructor at Central College in Pella, Iowa. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research project. The research is looking at the experience of first-time program directors. I am very interested in exploring how program directors make the transition into these positions.

My research study will consist of one approximately 90 minute interview should you decide to participate. This interview will be conducted at a time and place that is convenient for you. It will also be possible to utilize Skype, or other equivalent online program, as a mode of communication for conducting the interview. Your participation in this investigation will be kept confidential, and I would be happy to share my results with you once the project is complete.

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this research nor are there any foreseeable risks for your participation. By volunteering to participate, you will be contributing to an understanding of how athletic training educators transition into this vital role in athletic training education programs which could prove beneficial to both current and future program directors.

Please contact me (viesselman.c@husky.neu.edu) if you are interested in participation or want to know more about the investigation. Please also let me know a date, time, and place (or online) that would be convenient to meet. It would be ideal if we could agree on a time during the next two weeks. I have attached an informed consent form for you to review before our meeting time. Thank you again for your time and willingness to volunteer for this project. Please contact me by --/--/13

I can also be contacted by phone for any questions or clarifications on the project at viesselman.c@husky.neu.edu or 641-628-5166. You may also contact the Principle Investigator and my advisor for this research, Carolyn Richert Bair, Ph.D. at 617-390-4197 or c.bair@neu.edu.

Sincerely,

Christopher Viesselman
Appendix D - Assurance of Principle Investigator

Northeastern University
Institutional Review Board

ASSURANCE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Investigator(s): Carolyn Richert Bair, Ph.D. and Christopher Viesselman

Title of Proposal: The Lived Experience of First-Time Athletic Training Program Directors.

To give assurance, please read and initial each statement, then sign below.

1. I have read and understand Northeastern University’s Policies and Procedures Concerning the Protection of Human Subjects and the Federal Wide Assurance. I give my assurance that I, and all members of the research team, will adhere to the policies in this research.

2. I assure that no participants will be recruited or enrolled, and no data will be collected, without current, written approval from Northeastern University, and other sites as required.

3. I assure that the rights and welfare of all participants will be protected according to the procedures approved for this project by the NU IRB.

4. I assure that all risks or discomforts to subjects will be clearly explained, and that I will demonstrate how risks are outweighed by potential benefits to the subject or by the importance of the knowledge to be gained.

5. I assure that the informed consent of all participants will be obtained by methods that meet the requirements of Northeastern University's policy and assurance procedures.

6. I assure that no changes in research activity will be initiated without prior NU IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazard to the subjects.

7. I assure that I will report any problems involving risks to human subjects or others promptly to the Office of Human Subject Research Protection.

8. I assure that there are no financial or other relationships (e.g., stock ownership, advisory board, speaker's bureaus, honoraria) that might be viewed as creating a conflict of interest.

Signature: Date: Principal Investigator / Faculty Advisor

For student research, the faculty advisor is the principal investigator for the study and is primarily responsible for the ethical conduct of the research. Faculty must review and approve student research prior to submission for NU IRB review. Student investigators must sign this Assurance.

Signature: Date: 3-6-13 Student Investigator

DEPARTMENT CHAIR/PROGRAM DIRECTOR SIGNATURE (Required)
I am aware that this protocol is being submitted to the Northeastern University IRB. I do not make any assertions about human subject protections for this research project.

Signature: Date: Department Chair or Program Director

Please return completed form to: Human Subject Research Protection
960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University
Boston, MA 02115
Tel: 617.373.7570, Fax: 617.373.4595

NU HSRP - Rev. 4-15-2010
Appendix E - IRB Application

For NU IRB use:

Date Received: ________________    NU IRB No. ________________
Review Category: ___________________ Approval Date ________________

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL FOR USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Before completing this application, please read the Application Instructions and Policies and Procedures for Human Research Protections to understand the responsibilities for which you are accountable as an investigator in conducting research with human participants. The document, Application Instructions, provides additional assistance in preparing this submission. Incomplete applications will be returned to the investigator. You may complete this application online and save it as a Word document.

If this research is related to a grant, contract proposal or dissertation, a copy of the full grant/contract proposal/dissertation must accompany this application.

Please carefully edit and proof read before submitting the application. Applications that are not filled out completely and/or have any missing or incorrect information will be returned to the Principal Investigator.

REQUIRED TRAINING FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Under the direction of the Office of the Vice Provost for Research, Northeastern University is now requiring completion of the NIH Office of Extramural Research training for all human subject research, regardless of whether or not investigators have received funding to support their project.

The online course titled "Protecting Human Research Participants" can be accessed at the following url: http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php. This requirement will be effective as of November 15, 2008 for all new protocols.

Principal Investigators, student researchers and key personnel (participants who contribute substantively to the scientific development or execution of a project) must include a copy of their certificate of completion for this web-based tutorial with the protocol submission.

X Certificate(s) Attached
☐ Certificate(s) submitted previously – on file with the NU’s Office of Human Subject Research Protection

A. Investigator Information

Principal Investigator (PI cannot be a student) Carolyn Richert Bair, Ph.D. ________________________________

Investigator is: NU Faculty__X__    NU Staff__    Other ________________________________

College  Northeastern University

Department  College of Professional Studies

Address  BV 20 360 Huntington Avenue
Telephone 617-390-4197 Email c.bair@neu.edu

Is this student research? YES X  NO___ If yes, please provide the following information:
Student Name Christopher Viesselman Undergrad ___ MA/MS ___ PhD ___

Mailing Address 1303 Orchard Dr. Pella, IA 50219 Anticipated graduation date May, 2013
Telephone 641-628-5166 (work) Primary Email viesselman.c@husky.neu.edu
Cell phone 515-418-7409 Secondary Email viesselmanc@gmail.com

B. Protocol Information

Title The Lived Experience of First-Time Athletic Training Education Program Directors.

Projected # subjects ___10___

Approx. begin date of project 03.01.2013 Approx. end date 08.01.2013

It is the policy of Northeastern University that no activity involving human subjects be undertaken until those activities have been reviewed and approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

- Anticipated funding source for project (or none) None

Has/will this proposal been/be submitted through:
- NU's Office of Research Administration and Finance (RAF)
- Provost
- Corp & Foundations

C.

Will Participants Be: Yes No

Children (<18) X
Northeastern University Students? X
Institutionalized persons? X
Prisoners? X
Cognitively Impaired Persons? X
Non or Limited English Speaking Persons? X
People Living outside the USA? X
Pregnant Women/Fetuses? X
Other? Academic Program Directors X

Does the Project Involve: Yes No

Blood Removal? X
Investigational drug/device? X
Audiotapes/videotapes? X
Please answer each of the following questions using non-technical language. Missing or incomplete answers will delay your review while we request the information.

D. What are the goals of this research? Please state your research question(s) and related hypotheses.

This research project is designed to increase the knowledge and understanding of how athletic trainers transition into director positions for athletic training education programs. The main research question that will be answered is: How do athletic trainers experience their transition into the position of Athletic Training Education Program Director? Developing this information will help future individuals make this transition successfully, allow institutions to support future program directors, and help provide quality leadership for educational programs and students.

E. Provide a brief summary of the purpose of the research in non-technical language.

This research has been developed to understand how athletic trainers experience the transition to an athletic training education program director role.

F. Identify study personnel on this project. Include name, credentials, role, and organization affiliation.

Carolyn Richert Bair, Ph.D. is the principal investigator and faculty in the Higher Education Program of the College of Professional Studies at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts.

Christopher Viesselman, MEd, ATC, LAT, CSCS is the student investigator currently works at Central College in Pella, Iowa and is a student in the College of Professional Studies at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts.

G. Identify other organizations or institutions that are involved. Attach current Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals or letters of permission as necessary.

NA

H. Recruitment Procedures

Describe the participants you intend to recruit. Provide all inclusion and exclusion criteria. Include age range, number of subjects, gender, ethnicity/race, socio-economic level, literacy level and health (as applicable) and reasons for exempting any groups. Describe how/when/by whom inclusion/exclusion criteria will be determined.

Current program directors in their first program director position leading an undergraduate athletic training education program. These individuals will be recruited from the Midwest region of the United States. Participants will be excluded only if they do not meet the previously stated criteria or do not volunteer for participation.

Describe the procedures that you will use to recruit these participants. Be specific. How
A list of potential subjects will be generated through the Commission on Accrediting Athletic Training Education (CAATE) website. This website provides a public list of program directors, their highest degree attained, institution housing the program, and contact information including program website. An initial email will be sent out to all program directors that fit the criteria based on the information from the CAATE website. Prospective or interested program directors will be developed from this contact email. All prospective participants will be sent the informed consent form, more detailed information about the inclusion criteria and study information. A date, place, and time will be developed through email or through follow-up phone conversation if necessary.

What remuneration, if any, is offered?

None

I. Consent Process

Describe the process of obtaining informed consent*. Be specific. How will the project and the participants’ role be presented to potential participants? By whom? When? Where? Having the participant read and sign a consent statement is done only after the researcher provides a detailed oral explanation and answers all questions. Please attach a copy of informed consent statements that you intend to use, if applicable.

If your study population includes non-English speaking people, translations of consent information are necessary. Describe how information will be translated and by whom. You may wait until the consent is approved in English before having it translated.

An electronic copy of the informed consent will be emailed to the subject during the recruitment process. A paper copy of the informed consent will be given to the participant before the interview. The research project will be explained to the participant and at this time the informed consent will be explained. The participant will be given the opportunity to ask questions of the researcher. Only after all questions are answered about the research and the participant’s role within the research will the participant verbally consent to participate.

If your population includes children, prisoners, people with limited mental capacity, language barriers, problems with reading or understanding, or other issues that may make them vulnerable or limit their ability to understand and provide consent, describe special procedures that you will institute to obtain consent appropriately. If participants are potentially decisionally impaired, how will you determine competency?

Participants will not include these populations.

*If incomplete disclosure during the initial consent process is essential to carrying out the proposed research, please provide a detailed description of the debriefing process. Be
specific. When will full disclosure of the research goals be presented to subjects (e.g., immediately after the subject has completed the research task(s) or held off until the completion of the study’s data collection)? By whom? Please attach a copy of the written debriefing statement that will be given to subjects.

Complete disclosure will be given before the research begins.

**J. Study Procedures**

Provide a detailed description of all activities the participant will be asked to do and what will be done to the participants. Include the location, number of sessions, time for each session, and total time period anticipated for each participant, including long term follow up.

The participants will be asked questions to provide information on how they experienced the transition to the role and responsibilities of an athletic training education program director. A single session interview lasting approximately 90 minutes is anticipated to provide the depth and breadth of information necessary to answer the research questions.

Who will conduct the experimental procedures, questionnaires, etc? Where will this be done? *Attach copies of all questionnaires, interview questions, tests, survey instruments, links to online surveys, etc.*

The researcher (Chris Viesselman) will conduct all of the interviews following the interview protocol attached. The interviews will be conducted at a time and place designated by the interviewee. If the interviewee is unable to meet the interview will be completed online using Skype or another equivalent program. This researcher will also be conducting the transcription of the interviews.

**K. Risks**

Identify possible risks to the participant as a result of the research. Consider possible psychological harm, loss of confidentiality, financial, social, or legal damages as well as physical risks. What is the seriousness of these risks and what is the likelihood that they may occur?

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation. There is a possibility of loss of confidentiality but this is very unlikely with the precautions that are in place.

Describe in detail the safeguards that will be implemented to minimize risks. What follow-up procedures are in place if harm occurs? What special precautions will be instituted for vulnerable populations?

The participant will be allowed to stop the interview at any time. The participant will be given the contact information for the institutional IRB and the primary investigator. An informed consent will also be provided to the participants.
L. Confidentiality

Describe in detail the procedures that will be used to maintain anonymity or confidentiality during collection and entry of data. Who will have access to data? How will the data be used, now and in the future?

Pseudonyms will be developed and associated with the data collected. All original recordings that could identify the participant will be deleted as soon as the transcript is developed. All other information that could identify the participant will be masked in the report and destroyed after the project is completed. The researcher (Chris Viesselman) will complete all of the data collection, transcription, and storage of data until it is deleted or destroyed.

How and where will data be stored? When will data, including audiotapes and videotapes, be destroyed? If data is to be retained, explain why. Will identifiers or links to identification be destroyed? When? Signed consent documents must be retained for 3 years following the end of the study. Where and how will they be maintained?

Electronic data will be stored on the researcher’s (Chris Viesselman) computer in a password protected file and a backup copy will be stored in a password protected external hard drive. All electronic data will be destroyed after completion of the research project. The informed consent will be kept in a locket filing cabinet and destroyed three years after completion of the research.

M. If your research is HIPAA-protected, please complete the following;

Individual Access to PHI

Describe the procedure that will be used for allowing individuals to access their PHI or, alternatively, advising them that they must wait until the end of the study to review their PHI.

NA

N. Benefits

What benefits can the participant reasonably expect from his/her involvement in the research? If none, state that. What are potential benefits to others?

There are no personal benefits directly associated with participation in the research. The research has the potential to increase the knowledge base associated with the transition to the role and responsibilities of an athletic training education program director.

O. Attachments

Identify attachments that have been included and those that are not applicable (n/a).

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<td>Scripts of intended telephone conversations*</td>
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<td>na</td>
<td>Copies of IRB approvals or letters of permission from other sites</td>
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<td>na</td>
<td>Informed Consent or Informed Consent and Health Information Use and Disclosure Authorization*</td>
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<td>Debriefing Statement*</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>Copies of all instruments, surveys, focus group or interview questions, tests, etc.</td>
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P. Health Care Provision During Study

Please check the applicable line:

___ X ___  I have read the description of HIPAA “health care” within Section 3.0 of the Policies & Procedures for Human Research Protection. I am not a HIPAA-covered health care provider and no health care will be provided in connection with this study.

______  I am a HIPAA-covered health care provider or I will provide health care in connection with this study as described in Section 3.0 of the Policies & Procedures for Human Research Protection. This health care is described above under “Study Procedures,” and the Informed Consent and Health Information Use and Disclosure Authorization form will be used with all prospective study participants.

If you have any questions about whether you are a HIPAA-covered health care provider, please contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection at n.regina@neu.edu or (617) 373-4588.

The application and accompanying materials may be sent as email attachments or in hard copy. A signed Assurance of Principal Investigator Form may be sent via fax or in hard copy.