Crossing the Black Line: An Examination of the Process of Transitioning from Non-Swimmer to Swimmer and a Program Evaluation of an Adult Swim Lesson Program Focusing on People with Aquaphobia

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CROSSING THE BLACK LINE: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PROCESS OF TRANSITIONING FROM NON-SWIMMER TO SWIMMER AND A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF AN ADULT SWIM LESSON PROGRAM FOCUSING ON PEOPLE WITH AQUAPHOBIA

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management

by
Joseph Christopher Crosby
May 2017

Accepted by:
Dr. Elizabeth Baldwin, Committee Chair
Dr. Skye Arthur-Banning
Dr. Cynthia Pury
Dr. Brent Hawkins
ABSTRACT

The mission of any learn-to-swim program is to equip individuals with the skills and confidence to safely participate in water activities. Many of these programs primarily focus on children, but little is known about the effectiveness of these programs with respect to adults. Drowning deaths among adult populations are not as proportionately significant compared to children and adolescents but still equally staggering. Researchers conclude more emphasis should be placed on drowning prevention and evaluation of preexisting physical and psychological conditions that create barriers to swimming and water safety. Not much information currently exists for adults with a serious fear of swimming or water, called Aquaphobia. One of the key difficulties in answering the question of whether or not drowning incidents can be reduced through prevention strategies is to understanding why individuals do not participate in prevention strategies. What constraints do these adults face, external and or psychological? The uniqueness of this particular swim program addresses not just the mechanics but also seeks to identify, examine and overcome preexisting fears or phobias associated with swimming. The purpose of this project was to evaluate an Aquaphobics program by identifying common themes unique to the Aquaphobia phenomenon to assist in transitioning adult non-swimmers to swimmers.

This study adopted a pragmatic paradigm, with its focus on solving the problem of loss of life through the largely preventable act of drowning. Both a phenomenological and phenomenography explanation of the data were performed to achieve a deeper understanding of the “essence” of the phenomenon, lived experiences of the non-
swimmers and the different ways in which they transition to become confident, or at least comfortable swimmers.

The data for this study came from participants in an Aquaphobics program ran from 2013 to 2016. Over the 3 years there have been 117 participants in the program. This study focused on in-depth interviews of 11 participants. It became clear early on that all external barriers, I as the instructor/researcher was in control over, were removed. Therefore I made this class free, and instructed on a rolling basis, so people could start when they wanted, come when they wanted, for the reason they wanted. There were some people that did not seem to have a phobia of water, more a fear related to an unlearned skill they now wanted for some purpose. The research did reveal that the majority of participants were participating due to a deep fear of water and swimming. Unlike the individuals that were there to improve their swimming ability and did not have a phobia, came, got their skill and left the program, the group that stayed in the program to conquer a fear never left the program for the most and began to build their social lines around other participants. As a programmer this knowledge can help facilitate continued involvement in other recreation programs based on peer motivation. Towards the end of the program many participants expressed an interest to attempt other water related activities and encourage others within their social group to join, for example, padding boarding and scuba diving.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my Aquaphobics Group that has been with me since 2013. Without your dedication, we would never have achieved so much. I will always remember the first class I taught with my bright orange instructor swim cap. None of you really believed I was there to teach, but you trusted me with your fears, you trusted me with your life, and look where we are today. Thank you so much for continuing this journey with me. “Whatcha waiting on! Let’s make it happen! Jump in!”

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife and daughter. To my wife, for your tireless efforts to help me through two back surgeries, a baby, and shoulder surgery to get this done. And to my daughter, for being such a quiet baby.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my committee: Betty, Skye, Cindy and Brent, thanks for sticking with me through my busy schedule. Without your help I would not be in the unique position to teach, learn, and practice that which I enjoy so much.

I would also like to acknowledge my staff at the Central Clemson Recreation Center for all your help in promoting and lifting up every aspect of the Aquaphobics program.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

People engage in water activities for many reasons, fun, exercise, work or therapy. Swimming is consistently among top recreational activities, and in some countries, swimming lessons are a required part of the primary school curriculum (Da Costa & Miragaya, 2002). Some people learn to swim at an early age, some later, and others never learn to swim, working their life such that they avoid swimming as an activity. This avoidance behavior is passed down through families of non-swimmers.

The wide variety of ways people swim, learn to swim, or do not, can lead to drowning or near death situations that have a lasting impact on future experiences. Most drowning incidents are preventable with the right training (Saluja, Brenner, Trumble, Smith, Schroeder & Cox, 2006), so how can we lower the third highest cause of adult deaths in the United States with proper training?

The mission of any learn-to-swim program is to teach individuals the skills and confidence to stay safe in the water and reduce the risk of drowning. It has been agreed upon by certified swim instructors that learning to swim is a skill of great importance that should be learned during childhood. Organizations, such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and the USA Swimming Foundation, provide many swimming lessons per year with a singular purpose: teaching children how to swim. To date, more than two million children have received swimming lessons through the support of the USA Swimming Foundation, and USA swimming.org (2012); however, information on the number of swimming lessons adults receive is undocumented. A broad body of
research into drowning disparities, constraints to swimming, and swimming competency among youth and adolescents already exists, but little is known about how these issues directly affect adults today (Langendorfer & Bruya, 1995).

The opportunity to mitigate negative results from adult non-swimmers may be most profound in local community recreation centers. These centers may be managed by cities, towns, or non-profits like the YMCA, and offer programming opportunities for the health and benefit of the community. Programs are typically skill building and focus on the skill development of an individual. However, adult non-swimmers may have deeply rooted fears that are the basis of the inability to swim or may have developed these from a life of not swimming. Designing an effective program for adult non-swimmers can be challenging for practitioners if they do not understand what life experiences have prohibited non-swimmers from learning to swim, what is required to help non-swimmers overcome their barriers to swimming, or have clear measures of progress to assess change. To develop a program practitioners must also have clear measures to evaluate lasting change, and go beyond drowning prevention to help people build an enjoyable relationship with water and swimming that can persist for the rest of their lives.

This research comes out of an attempt at such a program that I conducted as a practitioner in 2011 called SWIMMING FOR COWARDS. This experience eventually led to research programming for adult non-swimmers and included an examination of the different ways in which a person becomes a non-swimmer, how it affects their life, and the different ways they learn to swim. The research was also designed to look at universals that may be present in all non-swimmers. This research is ultimately aimed at
informing programmers in recreation centers across the country in such a way as to investigate adult drowning experiences and death and provide a framework for a full, enjoyable life of participants.

**Phobias: Aquaphobics**

Water has always been a staple of the American leisure experience. Swimming is a common activity during the summer when people frequent recreational pools, natural bodies of waters like lakes and beaches, resorts, and cruise ships. Attempts to avoid the water may be difficult or prove embarrassing in a social setting where the social convention is to "jump in." A phobia is defined as a level of fear that is beyond the patient’s control, or that may interfere with daily life (Becker, Rinck, Turke, Kause, Goodwin, Neumer, & Margraf, 2007). People suffer a phobia in many ways and may experience the fear even when they rationally understand they are safe. Phobias related to water, called Aquaphobia can affect individuals with any body of water from natural environments like rivers, lakes, and oceans to pools, and even bathtubs. People with Aquaphobia may avoid various types of water activities, or they may avoid swimming in the deep end of a pool despite having mastered basic swimming skills. People with Aquaphobia have been known to alter their life enough to stay away from bodies of water altogether for fear of being pushed or falling into the water. The anxiety associated with avoidance behavior extends to getting wet or splashed with water when it is unexpected. Forty percent of the people that frequent recreational water areas have no idea how to swim. In 2001, 3,281 people drowned in the United States. The numbers, which do not include boating accidents, reflect an average of nine people per day” (Recreation
Management pp. 3). Further analyses of these statistics reveal a subset of at-risk drowning victims within minority groups, specifically African-Americans. The University of Memphis did a study on minority drowning dangers; researchers found that 31 percent of White respondents are low ability at-risk swimmers compared with 58 percent of African American respondents and 56 percent of Hispanic respondents (Theobald, 1987). Drowning is a complex public health issue in the United States that is especially life-threatening for racially underrepresented youth. African American children in the United States aged 5 to 14 years encounter fatal unintentional drowning at more than three times the rate as compared to White peers” (Irwin, Irwin, Ryan & Drayer, 2011).

There are several variables that contribute to drowning among African Americans. Studies have frequently identified two possible causes for a drowning disparity, swimming ability and fear. Langendorfer and Bruya (1995) have suggested that the term water competence is a more comprehensive term than swimming ability, and better describes the range of aquatic skills and knowledge associated with an aquatic activity. Little is known about the relationship between real and perceived water competence in the context of drowning prevention (Moron, Stallman, Kjendlie, Dahl, Blitvich, Petrass & Shimongata, 2012). Moreover, there is no standard definition among water safety experts as what constitutes swimming competency. Despite the lack of uniform measurement scales of water competence, Langendorfer and Bruya (1995) described it as a set of survival skills that may prevent drowning. Furthermore, the term fear is categorized as containing multiple variables including but not limited to
aquaphobia, and or experiencing near-death experiences in the water. Consequently, research has shown African Americans experience these constraints more likely than their White and Hispanic counterparts.

Over the last seven years, there has been a surge in programs emphasizing water safety and swimming competencies. Thus, if water safety programs are designed to reduce drowning fatalities, why does this disparity in the number of drowning fatalities remain among adults? Swimming instructors must become increasingly aware of what hesitations adults have towards learning to swim. “The relationship between swimming competency, swimming lessons, and risk of drowning among adults has been the subject of some inquiry” (Brenner, Moran, Stallman, Gilchrist, & McVan, 2006). Although a broad body of research into drowning disparities, constraints to swimming and fear of water among youth and adolescents already exist, little is known about this relationship on adult minorities that lack adequate swimming competencies with a fear of water or Aquaphobia. Irwin, Irwin, Ryan and Drayer (2011) uses a 50 question survey with a 4-point Likert-type scale to identify swimming barriers, access to water and demographics. They also used open-ended questions to identify the primary reason why the participants in the study did not know how to swim. Their findings also did include parent’s perceptions towards the water but did not provide detailed information on their swimming ability. Nonetheless, a deeper review of the literature included in the literature review illustrates the effects of these constraints on African American adult’s engagement in water competencies. This research examined race as a factor, but the goal of any public recreation facility is to serve the community where it is located. Thus, the
focus for developing a program for people with a deep fear of water, or Aquaphobia must be available to all races and genders. Programmers and directors of such community centers need to be aware of water activities and bodies of water in their surrounding areas, as well as the demographics of their community as the context for understanding participants more fully. It is then important to determine if race or age is a factor.

**Role of the Researcher**

When I became the director of a community recreation center in 2007, it was the first time in my career where I was responsible for managing two pools. Less than a year before taking the position, I had received my American Red Cross Lifeguard Certification. The course was very challenging for me because I was self-taught and had not mastered the mechanics of proper swimming technique. Reflecting on my past difficulties I committed myself to becoming a proficient swimmer. It took nearly three years for me to get to a point where I could swim 1200 yards without stopping, tread water for two minutes without using my arms, and float on my back for five minutes. It was a difficult task but a satisfying reward that left me questioning why I had never seen African-American lifeguards or interviewed a single African-American applicant.

I started to wonder if the stereotype that “Black people do not swim” was true. I spoke with friends, family members and parents of African-American children that came to the pool to find out the truth behind the stereotype. The answers I received confirmed my suspicion in a way, I did not expect. The adults were the perpetrators of the stereotype. It was then I decided it was my opportunity to do something about it through programming. As I started to do some preliminary research as a practitioner I knew this
was a subject to be studied, and thus it became the subject of my doctorate while I continued my work directing the recreation center.

I aimed to explore how participants understood their experiences, coped with various stresses and barriers and developed skills. The data considered was focused on the life experience of each factor. My understanding and my representation of their experience, however, was shaped by my views and relationships with the participants. Since there is no way to eliminate subjectivity in qualitative research, where the researcher and the researched are both part of the phenomenon under investigation, the investigator’s place in the study and the effect of this on the participant are essential elements (Cotterill & Letherby, 1994). Concerning my research, my personal assumptions before and during the study were based both on the literature review and my personal experiences as one with a history of fear of water and current experience teaching adult swimming lessons. My professional status also gave rise to different issues, specifically the relationship between me and the participants: an evolved social construct, which relied on me as the leader to keep the group together and involved. Authors (Cotterill 1992) have discussed the affected dynamics in the research setting: the way participants placed me in the research, how they view me as an insider, and the information that they chose to give and my interpretation of the data. This dynamic become true when I took a two-month break from teaching, and the attendance of Aquaphobics dropped to one or two people.

As the researcher, I was the instrument through which the data was gathered, analyzed, and interpreted. Also, multiple data collection methods including observations,
interviews and anecdotal evidence from practice, increased the trustworthiness of reports. A field journal was kept to assist the process reflection. I was able to compare, evaluate and analyze different sources of data and engagement. To “calibrate” myself as the research instrument I had two other people analyze my data for themes and quotes, one my advisor and the other a doctoral student researching fear and stress related to hospital environments (Appendix A). This verification strategy helped make sure my expertise and subjectivity were an asset to this study and not a liability in determining the lessons and findings from the data.

My role as the practitioner contributed to the inspiration that led me to create the Aquaphobics program and become a swim lesson instructor. My dual role gave many opportunities to address the question of trustworthiness and credibility. One of the strategies to increase trustworthiness and credibility described by Krefting (1991) refer to prolonged contact as a means of increasing credibility of the research, familiarity, and knowledge of the phenomenon. Through continued contact over the course of two years, a greater rapport and trust was developed between the participants and I, as first the instructor and then as the researcher.

My professional responsibilities involved the marketing, scheduling, evaluating, altering, and hiring of other instructors for the program. My professional status as the Director of the Central-Clemson Recreation Center became increasingly evident and assisted in retaining participants and dissolved any uncertainties of the program that seemed unbelievable; for example, lessons were free and unlimited. As I was the one person who made the final decision on such matters, they became more confident that
they could take as much time as needed to learn to swim. This factor was important to note regarding replication of the program. The decision-making power and confidence that my role afforded me was key to building a consistent program. However a strong relationship between the instructor and participants can lead to consistency extending beyond six-month milestone for participation.

**Building an Aquaphobics Program**

In 2011, during a monthly meeting with my aquatics staff, we had a brainstorming session on how to improve our swim lesson program. One of the problems we were trying to solve was a lack of repeat business. On average, our customers would purchase four to eight swim lessons over a three-month period before feeling confident that their children could swim. It is hard to explain to the parents how important it was not to judge their child’s ability off of the number of lessons taken. We stressed that children need to demonstrate their ability on demand in a controlled setting before exposing them to open waters. Initially, we wanted to offer free lessons and applied for a grant through USA Swimming to offset the cost but were rejected. For two years with no grant funding, we decided that an overall change in our swim lesson program was needed, and we would work on some creative options. After visiting an aquatics facility in Atlanta Georgia, I was amazed at how diverse their swimming program was and intrigued by the number of programs they had for practically every age group and swimming ability. We realized that our program could expand to mimic that of the Atlanta aquatic facility, by focusing on teaching quality lessons, decreasing the ratio of students to instructors and offering more lesson times. We continued to visit other aquatic facilities for more ideas and found
that several facilities emphasized heavy parent involvement by including them in the teaching process but lacked adult only programs.

One of the many challenges programmers face is maintaining a continual stream of participants. Children grow out of programs, and adults do not have the time for extracurricular programs if they conflict with their children’s schedule, but what better way to have a continual flow of repeat customers, then to have programs that meet the needs of the entire family. When I questioned the managers as to why they did not offer adult programs; they responded that parents never voiced any interest. After hearing that statement, I became more curious as to why parents were not interested. The staff and I began to work on a simple survey for the parents and members of the Central-Clemson Recreation Center, to assess if our adult customers know how to swim, and if they did not, why, and what would persuade them to learn if the opportunity was available. We found that many of the adults did not know how to swim, had a fear of water and or never had the opportunity to learn. With these early results, we also found that many of the respondents were African-Americans.

After the results of the first survey, a coworker and I developed a second survey in 2012, to understand the nature of the documented fear of water or Aquaphobia. Still active as the Center Director and program leader I had to determine (1) if enough individuals within the community suffered from Aquaphobia, (2) if potential participants shared similar symptoms and constraints, and (3) if past experiences were preventing them from learning how to swim. The following questions were asked of members and visitors of the Central-Clemson Recreation Center:
1. Are your children currently enrolled in swim lessons? If yes, do you feel it is important that you know how to swim?

2. What has prevented you from learning how to swim before now?

3. Would you participate in a swim lesson if it were free?

4. Would you participate in a swim lesson if it were restricted to adults with a Fear of water?

5. Would you participate in a swim lesson if an adult taught it?

We had 28 people respond to the questions over a period of two months. A majority of the respondents were African-Americans. Several of the constraints expressed in the questionnaire were attributed to discriminatory practices experienced during their childhood base on where they grew up and their economic status. Between the 1940’s to 1970’s most aquatic facilities were located within urban areas, public transportation to rural areas was limited, and cost of access exceeded the financial ability of lower socio-economic groups which is consistent with the literature (Irwin, Irwin, Ryan & Drayer, 2011). What we learned helped us to develop our first adult swim program directed toward non-swimmers with Aquaphobia regardless of race, but with the knowledge; we called the program SWIMMING FOR COWARDS.

To spread the word about the new program, we developed a marketing campaign to address constraints of Aquaphobia, noted in our early surveys, to encourage enrollment. We achieved a high level of participation by promoting the following benefits to counter constraints:

(a) Provide free lessons.
(b) People could take as many lessons as they wanted.
(c) The instructors were adults closer to their age.
(d) Lessons were for adults only.

A majority of the first participants were African-Americans and ranged in age from 45 to 68. Therefore, they grew up during the 1940’s – 1960’s. We started in early April, and we averaged 5 participants each week, by the end of June we averaged 20 participants each session. The growth and diversity of the program exceeded our expectations. In July 2011, we started to have a monthly group meeting to discuss what participants had learned, what brought them to the program and their experiences with water. As I learned more about the people in the program, it occurred to me that the group members did not lack courage, they demonstrated a high level of courage to face what clinical scientist refer to as a “specific phobia.” With this new information, I decided to change the name of the class to Aquaphobics. The new name improved our marketing efforts because we thought people were less likely to identify with being labeled a “coward,” and more liable to participate in a program that dealt with real fear in a courageous way.

Fueled by my challenging experience of nearly drowning while learning to swim and later committing two years of self-instruction to become a swimmer, and realizing that through the Aquaphobics program, I had a story to tell and examine further, I decided to use the program as the subject for my doctoral research. I designed the program in a circular fashion to allow adaptability and an open exchange of ideas.
between participant and instructor. The primary focus of Aquaphobics program developed to address one’s fear of water and teach them how to overcome it.

**Statement of Purpose**

This research was designed to explore the “essence” of the experience of adult non-swimmers, in an effort to look for language that may be universal to all adult non-swimmers. The second purpose of this research was to determine the different ways in which adult non-swimmers experience swimming and the act of learning to swim. To ascertain the effectiveness of a program, practitioners must have an understanding of evaluation methods to identify the degree to which a program has or has not met its objectives to make a decision about the worth or value of the program (Theobald, 1987). This can help other recreation programmers determine how the program may work in their location, and even provide data to support funding initiatives designed to mitigate drowning deaths and lead to water confidence. The “fear of water,” is assumed to be the universal phenomenon that has brought these individuals together. Interviewing participants who are at various points in the Aquaphobics program will provide data on individual experiences with the phenomenon in order to develop a composite description for all of the individuals.

**Research Questions**

Developing an effective adult swim lesson program requires understanding how non-swimmers experience water into adulthood, identifying what “swimming” is from the participant’s perspective, and testing the participant’s ability while collecting data on perceptions. Measuring changes in perception over time and tracking outcomes are also
necessary for determining program effectiveness. It is always a challenge with leisure and recreation programming to determine the best structure for outcome-based programs. Practitioners frame programs without considering possible deficits faced by the participant. This concept is explored in fitness, weight loss, and other programs aimed at helping aid people in addressing a deficit. Swimming is a clear avenue to address this issue because the deficit is easy to measure and the potential participants may have either fear or lack of skill that has led to becoming an adult non-swimmer.

Reaching adulthood being a non-swimmer can occur for many reasons, a lack of access to water resources, the cost of swimming lessons, focus on other activities, or stories or personal experience with a drowning event. Certainly, there are areas with limited access to water, however, in the United States, most people are close to some form of natural or artificial body of water because swimming is a popular activity.

The purpose of the study was to understand participants’ Aquaphobia, the reasons why adults have not learned how to swim prior to adulthood, what motivates participant to face their phobia and evaluate the effectiveness of the Aquaphobics program.

1. Who suffers from Aquaphobia?
2. How does one develop Aquaphobia?
3. How can one overcome Aquaphobia?
4. How does a swim lesson program effectively treat individuals with Aquaphobia?
5. What can programmers do to remove constraints and motivate participation by treatment of Aquaphobia through swimming lessons?
Definition of Terms

The following terms are based on a general consensus acquired from a review of the literature. The results of this study may require a redefining of these terms.

1. **Aquaphobia**: An abnormal fear of water.

2. **Swimming Abilities**: Standards by which individuals demonstrate various levels of competency that constitutes swimming ability, i.e. swimming consistently for 20 yards, treading water for two minutes, or floating on one’s back for 2 minutes.

3. **Barriers to Participant**: Circumstances prevent individuals from learning to swim. Circumstances may include psychological, economic, racial, and/or ability.

4. **Motivations to Participant**: Conditions or circumstances required for one to participate in an activity. Conditions or circumstances may include class size, the temperature of water, location of the facility, instructor, and/or cost.

5. **Decision-Making Processes**: Reasons and/or motivation to continue in the program until a satisfactory outcome is achieved; reasons and/or motivations to discontinue the program.

6. **Phenomenology**: Identifying commonalities among several individuals about the phenomenon and developing a narrative of the phenomenon’s universal essence.

7. **Phenomenography**: How people experience, understand or perceive a phenomenon in the world around them in different ways. The investigation is not solely focused on the phenomenon, but on how the individual or group understands it or copes with it. The basic concept of phenomenography is about the different ways of understanding.
**Phobias**: A psychiatric disorder that produces an excessive level of anxiety or fear manifested through a situation or object to which the fear may be attributed and excessive avoidance or escape behavior is invoked when confronted or when one anticipates being involved in the fear-provoking situation.

**Theoretical Framework**

Theories of change benefit researchers and practitioners by making emerging views and assumptions about the change process clear. A theory of change can specify how to duplicate a variety of conditions that help practitioners achieve desired outcomes. Outcomes can include establishing the right kinds of partnerships, forums, and tools and techniques that help people collaborate and focus on benefits. The purpose of doing so is to check that programs are appropriate, adapt them, and improve them to strengthen project design and implementation.

A major strength of using a theory of change approach is its common sense. This is important when trying converting research into practice, especially for practitioners that do not have formal background in programming. Another compelling strength of this approach is its emphasis on understanding how and why activities produce certain effects. Programmers who need guidance as they attempt to replicate programs must have detailed instructions on how to achieve desired outcomes. An informed practitioner can use the same theory of change approach to work deductively to establish preconditions for achieving outcomes.

One of the primary objectives of this research is to answer the question: How does one overcome Aquaphobia? To answer that question one has to understand what
Aquaphobia is and how it has affected the person. The first question can be explained through a process, the second and third question can be explained through a narrative, but each can be revealed by using multiple theories. Two theories of change; Evaluation and Influences, will be used to identify measureable indicators that determine whether outcomes are met or not. Theory of Evaluation examines the participants precondition needs to determine how well their needs must be met in order to get to the next outcome. For example, how often do students need to attend the adult swim lesson program in order for their anxiety level to decrease? Theory of Influences of Change examine the participants’ external factors to determine what influences them beyond their swimming ability in order to get to the next outcome. For example, how often do students feel motivated to attempt a new skill after seeing a fellow participant successfully attempt said skill. Gathering information and presenting it through the frame of theory of change models allow the researcher to identify the basic inputs, outputs and outcomes for the program, while presenting the information in a way practitioners can understand at a glance. Figure 1.1 illustrates how the different theories will be used to answer the research questions. This model assumes the participant has Aquaphobia and at the most abstract level includes: constraints and contexts of the phenomenon, the phenomenon itself, intervening conditions during the change process, and outcomes.
Figure 1.1 Theoretical Framework of Non-Swimmers with Aquaphobia Transitioning to Comfortable and Confident Swimmers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phenomenography</th>
<th>Phenomenology</th>
<th>Theory of Change Process (3-Phase Process)</th>
<th>Outcomes at the Beginning &amp; End of the Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                |              | Phase-1: Assumptions Investigated.        | Beginning *Confident  
|                |              | Phase-2: Predictors & Influences of Change Identified, | *Comfortable*  
|                |              | Phase-3: Implement Techniques or Interventions to Facilitate Change | *Jump in the deep end*  
| *Environmental* |              |                                           | *Float on your back 5 seconds*  
| *Psychological* |              |                                           | *Tread water 15 seconds*  
| *Social*       |              |                                           | *Swim underwater for 5 seconds*  
| *Economic*     |              |                                           | *Swimmer*  
| *Racial*       |              |                                           | End *Swim 50 yards nonstop*  
| *Gender*       |              |                                           | *Go on a cruise*  
| *Age*          |              |                                           | *Go paddle boarding*  
| *Swimming Ability* |          |                                           | *Compete in first Triathlon*  
|                |              |                                           | *Join an adult swim club*  
|                | Aquaphobia   |                                           | *Learn how to flip turn*  
| Level of fear beyond the person control. Avoids various types of water activities, or may avoid bodies of water altogether | Assumptions *Constraints: Access, Anxiety, Courage, Motivation, Cost, Phobia, Support*  
|                |              | *Essence of Aquaphobia: When did it start? How did it start? How would you describe it? (Life Experiences)* | *Learn to dive*  
|                | Predictor & Influences of Change *Liking: Adult African-American Instructor*  
|                |              | *Reciprocity: Trusting the Instructor*  
|                |              | *Authority: Instructor had similar experience with learning to swim. Instructor is a certified lifeguard & instructor*  
|                |              | *Commitment and Consistency: Free Lessons, No Limit, Average length of participant enrollment 24-months (participants of the study)*  
|                |              | *Social Proof: Participants become a social group outside of the program. Depended on one another for motivation. *Scarcity: Valued the ability to swimming despite phobia. Sustained achievement by doing other water related activities. |
|                | Techniques or Interventions to Facilitate Change *Provided opportunities to share feedback and experiences. (Monthly meetings)*  
|                |              | *Tracking and Evaluating: Swimming Ability, Instructor Effectiveness, Program Effectiveness. (Observations, Testing, Meetings)*  
|                |              | *Adaptable Teaching Methods: Meeting the need of the individual to improve chances of success, Teaching in warmer water, allow for more one on one time. *Program Evaluation Methods  
|                |              | *Enthusiasts*  

*Beginning: Confident  
*Comfortable  
*Jump in the deep end  
*Float on your back 5 seconds  
*Tread water 15 seconds  
*Swim underwater for 5 seconds  
*Swimmer  
*End: Swim 50 yards nonstop  
*Go on a cruise  
*Go paddle boarding  
*Compete in first Triathlon  
*Join an adult swim club  
*Learn how to flip turn  
*Learn to dive  
*Enthusiasts
Phenomenology and phenomenography was used to understand the potential for common experiences that have drawn the participants to the program and to gather data on the effectiveness of the program. Larsson and Holmstrom (2007) place great emphasis on conducting interviews with groups or individually to identify commonalities about the phenomenon Creswell (2013) agrees, through phenomenology, researchers can create a narrative of the phenomenon’s universal essence by identifying commonalities through dialogue such as interviewing. Marton (1981) argues that phenomenology only relieves half of the phenomena and phenomenography is needed to describe how people experience, understand or perceive the phenomena differently not similarly. The combination of phenomenography and phenomenology has a pragmatic philosophical foundation with various perspectives to understand both the distinctly different ways in which people experience a phenomenon while exploring the potential for universal concepts.

**Summary**

The present study was designed to meet the following objective: (1) understand what Aquaphobia is from the individual and group perspective, (2) determine how one overcomes Aquaphobia, and (3) determine if the Aquaphobics program meets the outcomes of the participants. In view of these objectives, the use of phenomenography, phenomenology and theory of change provides the theoretical framework to guide this study.
This section will provide a review of the literature relevant to topics on (1) swimming ability and drowning statistics, (2) recreation programming evaluation, (3) theory of change models in program evaluation, (4) the discovery of aquaphobia and various treatments through exposure therapy and (5) a typology of courage based on positive and general courage as an explanation of the behavioral change.

**Drowning Statistics**

**Age Factor:** Drowning is still the third most common cause of unintentional death for all ages; it ranks second for ages 5–44 years from 1980 to 1989 (Baker et al., 1992). Between 1995 and 1998, 678 U.S. residents 5–24 years of age drowned in swimming pools. The highest proportion of drowning among the data set was children 5–9 years of age. In 2002, 1,158 individuals younger than 20 years of age died as a result of unintentional, non-boat-related drowning (Saluja, Brenner, Trumble, Smith, Schroeder, & Cox, 2006). Quan and Cummings (2003) identified 709 incidents of the unintentional drowning of residents in three counties during a 16-year period; they found the highest rates were among those 0–4 years of age, closely followed by those 15–19 years of age. Peden and McGee (2003) also found that mortality rates vary substantially depending on the type of injury, but drowning is the leading cause of death due to injury worldwide for children under the age of 15 years. A similar study conducted by Saluja et al. (2006) found children 1–4 years of age are most likely to drown in swimming pools, whereas
older children and adolescents are most likely to drown in natural, freshwater sites. According to a national study of childhood drowning in the U.S., 88% of children were supposedly being supervised at the time when they drowned, with 46% having a parent as their primary supervisor (Cody, Quraishi, Dastur, & Mickalide, 2004). With so many children drowning, the question of whether or not the supervising adults possessed the swimming ability to rescue a child in danger remains unanswered.

Given the plethora of drowning statistics devoted to children and adolescents, it appears information pertaining to adults above 25 years of age is minimal. In a recent study by Gilchrist and Parker (2014), the researchers found that drowning is one of the top three causes of unintentional death among persons aged ≤ 29 years. Worldwide, epidemiological data indicate that while progress has been made in understanding toddler drownings, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the drowning risk and protective factors inherent for adolescents and young adults (Petrass & Blitvich, 2014).

**Gender Factor:** Because empirical data specific to adults and drowning rates is limited, gender studies of drowning disparities offer a broader look at adult cases. In 1990, there were 4,685 U.S. drowning deaths; 3,854 were men, and 831 were women (Howland, Hingson, Mangione, Thomas, & Bell, 1996). Although most drowning involves males, the male to female ratio was greatest for individuals 20–34 years of age (Quan & Cummings, 2003). An investigation by Howland et al. (1996) into the cause of male versus female drowning disparity revealed the following: (1) there is a direct correlation between frequency of swimming and drowning because males swim more than females, therefore allowing for more opportunities to drown; and (2) males
overestimate their swimming ability, possibly placing themselves in riskier aquatic situations more often than females. Pelletier and Gilchrist (2011) further substantiate the male versus female drowning disparity by linking higher mortality rates in males with greater exposure to aquatic environments, more alcohol use, and a greater tendency toward risk-taking.

**Race Factor:** Drowning statistics reveal a significant disparity in the relationship to ethnicity in the U.S. as well as worldwide. Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, and the U.S. have reported, but not explained, higher rates of drowning among ethnic minorities (Quan et al., 2006). In a study by Irwin et al. (2011), rates of fatal and non-fatal drowning events were three times higher among African American children when compared to their Caucasian peers. Between 1995–1998, 33% of drowning victims were Caucasian, 47% were African-American, and 12% were Hispanic (Saluja et al., 2006). Drowning incidents located at swimming pools were the highest among African American children 1-5 years of age, at a rate of 62% (Ellis & Trent, 1995). Differences have also been seen in a study of lifeguard rescues at 150 water parks servicing almost 24 million guests (Ellis & Associates, 1991). Out of 16,333 rescues, 43% of all rescues were Caucasian, while 33% of all rescues were African Americans. In the U.S. between 1974 and 1992, the rate of drowning among African Americans was 2–3 times as high as that among Caucasians (Baker et al., 1992; Dietz & Baker, 1974). In a recent study by Gilchrist and Parker (2014), the rates of drowning among non-Hispanic African Americans and American Indians/Alaska Natives were twice as likely; African Americans were 1.4 times as likely to drown as Caucasians. Consequently, through the
review and analysis of 40 years of data, drowning mortality has remained largely unchanged, belying it as a public health priority (Antonio & Consunji, 2010). One of the constraints I discovered through speaking with African-Americans was the stereotype that “Black people don’t swim.” Many African-Americans cling to this based on family influence, experience, and general inability to swim. The complexity of this issue has not deterred researchers from attempting to identify a possible cause for this drowning disparity, but a historical review of constraints to swimming as it pertains to race, access, anxiety/fear, and swimming ability could provide a better understanding as to why these variables affect adults.

**Swimming Ability**

Adults seem to perceive the risk involved with swimming and their ability to survive an incident incorrectly. Experts suggest that learning basic water competencies could prevent many drowning deaths. A study of minority drowning dangers found that 31% of Caucasian respondents, 58% of African-American respondents, and 56% of Hispanic respondents described themselves as low ability/at-risk swimmers (International Life Saving Federation, 2007). Much of the drowning prevention research has relied on self-estimates of swimming ability because of difficulties associated with in-water testing of real competencies among adults. Langendorfer and Bruya (1995) have suggested that a more comprehensive term is needed to describe the range of aquatic skills and knowledge associated with swimming ability.

The difficulty with developing such a comprehensive term is due to a lack of data available pertaining to the “actual” swimming ability of adults. Howland et al. (1996)
defines swimming ability using three variables: knowing how to swim, having had formal swimming lessons, and number of lessons taken. On the contrary, Sherman (1972) provides a more fitting definition of swimming ability in the form of 26 procedures involving gradual water exposure. Each procedure is hierarchically arranged as a series of water activities that test participants’ ability. The Aquaphobics program uses this model as a means of charting swimming ability and to define swimming ability. Details of the implementation of this model will be explained in the methods section. To make gains in injury prevention in the face of the increasing diversity of swimmers, efforts to reduce injury must identify and address disparities among ethnic groups, while identifying key drivers of data (Quan, Crispin, Bennett, & Gomez, 2006). Injury Prevention has published 564 papers on drowning prevention, and much of the literature related to swimming is saturated with studies identifying constraints and evaluating swimming ability, but information on program success and drowning risk reduction is lacking. The same is true for qualitative research evaluating adult swimming lesson programs. Researchers continue to stress the importance of prevention initiatives and conclude that prevention of drowning might require new approaches. While limited research connects increased swimming ability to decreased drowning rates, it is important to conduct further studies to confirm whether swimming ability continues to be considered a preventative strategy that may be beneficial for adults.

**Program Evaluation Methods**

The purpose of evaluation is to identify the degree to which a program has met its objectives in order to make a decision about the worth or value of the program (Theobald,
The earliest methods for evaluation were based on recreation and leisure service providers only counted the number of participants in the program as a standard of success or failure; this type of measurement tool was not sufficient in determining the actual value of a program. If programmers wished to receive financial support, they had to demonstrate accountability, effectiveness, and in certain cases, justify the costs/benefits. Prior to 1980, several attempts were made to produce a working model for evaluation. One of the longest-running assessment methods recreation and park administrators used was the principal evaluation process. The process entailed comparing some amount of some entity to some predetermined set of norms or standards, usually established by the consensus of practitioners or experts within the leisure service field (Theobald, 1985). Although this process is still being used today, six other evaluation methods have emerged as the primary methods practitioners use in the field:

1. **Discrepancy evaluation** consists of a series of questions pertaining to specific aspects of the program such as expected outcomes, employee participation, activity leadership, use of resources, and fiscal cost. Upon completion of the program, the actual results of each factor are compared to the expected outcomes. When a discrepancy is found, one of three choices will be made: replace the program, change the program during the program, or improve the program (Theobald, 1987).

2. **Professional judgment evaluation** consists of direct program observation to determine program effectiveness by one or more leisure service experts. Other
experts in the field then compare the results with similar recreation programs considered to be of high quality (Theobald, 1987).

3. **Socioeconomic evaluation** compares the type and number of leisure services within individual neighborhoods to needs based on such factors as population density, income level, and other socioeconomic data. Based on this information, priority is given to neighborhoods that ranked highest in relation to the mean. Needs-based programming is a very popular and approved type of recreational service, especially in low-income rural and urban areas (Lundegren & Farrell, 1985).

4. **Evaluation by-standards** collects information on program attendance, accessibility, crowdedness, safety, and other related factors by using time series comparisons of any changes during the program to determine its worth. Proposed by Dunn and Hatry (1971), the model is primarily used as a means to determine the fiscal value of a program. Another version of evaluation by standards developed by Van der Smissen (1972) is based on his design of six dimensions of service: philosophy and goals, administration, programming, personnel, facilities, and evaluation. A four-point scale is used to evaluate the degree of compliance with each area. From these results, a graphic profile via quantitative scoring was developed.

5. A **cost/benefit evaluation** places a monetary value on the ratio to, or the difference between, program resources and its real or perceived benefits. Wilder (1977) advanced this concept with an economic equivalency index (EEI) that
measured the time spent participating in a recreation program in economic terms. After the cost has been determined, if the ratio is greater than 0.5, the decision is made to terminate the activity or introduce fees. The EEI suggests that the social value of any program is assumed to be equivalent to what participants are willing to pay or sacrifice for the activity.

6. An importance–performance evaluation measures consumer satisfaction and opinions of recreation services through three steps. Developed by Martilla and James (1977), step one identifies a feature’s attributes. In step two, participants are surveyed in order to assign value to each attribute. Step three analyzes the construction of a two-dimensional graph that plots values on the net versus performance on the abscissa. Originally used for analytical marketing assessments, it has been successfully adapted for evaluating special event programming and leisure services.

Understanding the values of those involved in the program being evaluated requires one to choose between the advantages and disadvantages of each method. Asking questions about the quality of the program, and how improvements can be made are important in deciding future criteria and standards. Choosing the appropriate mix of evaluation methods depends on the data one wishes to find. Choosing suitable evaluation methods will also determine how data is collected and analyzed. For the purpose of this research study elements from each of the evaluations methods listed above were used to identify the primary intent of participants, decision-making processes in the program, determining what success looks like, and overall program effectiveness.
Program Design

Over the past 30 years, recreation and leisure programming has suffered from applying theory to practice. The argument today is that most programming practices that are recommended have not been logically derived from current knowledge about experiencing leisure (Rossman & Schlatter, 2008). Where does this disconnect originate? Are practitioners aware of what has been researched? Would they know where and how to search for relevant literature pertaining to recreation programming? The more pressing question is whether there are sufficient, appropriate, and replicable research studies available for non-scholars or practitioners to design and evaluate recreation programs for success.

Programming has expanded over the last thirty years to include a variety of activities: special events, social-driven programs, tournaments, leagues, athletics, and others. Although programming can mean different things to different people, the idea of a program is to provide an experience. Practitioners need to understand how human beings experience and engage in leisure to facilitate participation in this experience (Rossman, 1998). There is a process to programming to which many practitioners adhere—techniques passed down through a manual or taught from a book or a supervisor. Without the knowledge of current models or conceptual frameworks, practitioners are disadvantaged. Forty percent of the recreation field does not have formal education beyond a high school diploma, according to statistics from the National Parks and Recreation Association “2010.” Programming efforts will continue to suffer when nearly half of the recreation industry lacks a historical, theoretical, or methodological
foundations for their work and profession. Fortunately, practitioners lacking formal education can train themselves through certifications and collective resources from research journals or organizations such as the National Parks and Recreation Association.

Literature about programming before 2000 has been deficient in developing any logical, comprehensive, and replicable methods of program design or evaluation from which practitioners can develop programs. Of the 1,334 articles found between 1985–2014, 59 articles focused on program design and evaluation (see Table 1). Only 23 of the 59 articles related to program design and evaluation had at least one of the six elements of a social occasion or evaluation as described by Theobald (1987). There are some measurement models and techniques available for leisure service programming design and assessment; however, because of the uniqueness of recreation programs, no one single method is appropriate for every programming agency.

The literature lacks applicable programming design and evaluation methods. The articles focused on benefit-based approaches, but they did not specify precisely how such approaches influenced the design or how the evaluation tool was developed to assess the desired benefits. In addition, other issues surfaced during the course of this review done to support this research. Studies lacked variety among research settings and agencies. Many of the studies were designed around outdoor recreation services from public or non-profit agencies; outdoor recreation is merely one aspect of a larger field. The same goes for research settings such as recreation departments. There are a number of other agencies in the private and public sectors providing similar programs.
Theories of Change

Several of the articles reviewed supply a collection of tested theories, concepts, measurement tools, and methodologies in recreation programming. The construction of new theories and the development of conceptual frameworks is vital to developing practices. However broad the topic, the literature covers several aspects of recreation programming, including benefits of leisure, concepts of quality control, terminology, strategies for delivering services, and philosophies and theories behind recreation services. Of the many theories applied to recreation programming, “theory of change” appears applicable for evaluating the Aquaphobics program. Finding the right theory can prove difficult considering the expansive amount of literature available. Narrowing the focus to find the right approach required searching for theory of changes related to programming, mental health, and education. From those three categories, Prockaska and Velicer (1997) Transtheoretical Model of Behavioral Change, Cialdini (1993) Influences of Change, and Connell and Kubisch (1998) Theory of Change Evaluation was reviewed.

The Transtheoretical Model of Behavioral Change addresses a facet of behavior change ignored by other theories, namely, that change is a process that occurs over time. It should be noted that while progression through the stages of change can happen in a linear fashion, a nonlinear progression is more typical. Individuals can re-cycle through the stages or regress to earlier stages rather than progress in a linear sequence (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997). Programs must be flexible and adapt to the pace of the participants. Doing so allows change to occur at participants’ pace without the restrictive predetermined number of lessons of other swimming lesson programs. It is impossible to
predetermine how many lessons an individual will need to change his or her behavior.

The levels of the Transtheoretical Model Prockaska and Velicer (1997) used are
described as follows:

1. Pre-contemplation: Individuals are not thinking about or intending to change a
   problem behavior (or initiate a healthy behavior) in the near future (usually
   quantified as the next six months). Pre-contemplators are usually not armed with
   the facts about the risks associated with their behavior. Additionally, many
   individuals make unsuccessful change attempts, becoming discouraged and
   regressing back to the pre-contemplation stage.

2. Contemplation: An individual enters this stage when he or she becomes aware
   of a desire to change a particular behavior (typically defined as within the next six
   months). In this stage, individuals weigh the pros and cons of changing their
   behavior. Contemplators also represent a large proportion of individuals engaged
   in unhealthy behaviors, as ambivalence between the pros and cons of change
   keeps many people immobilized in this stage.

3. Preparation: By the time individuals enter the preparation stage, the pros in
   favor of attempting to change a problem behavior outweigh the cons, and action is
   intended in the near future, typically measured as within the next thirty days.
   Many individuals in this stage have made an attempt to change their behavior in
   the past year but have been unsuccessful in maintaining that change. They often
   have a plan of action but may not be entirely committed to their plan.
4. Action: This stage marks the beginning of actual change in the criterion of behavior, typically within the past six months. An individual is halfway through the process of behavior change, but it is also the point where relapse, and subsequently regressing to an earlier stage, is most likely. If an individual has not sufficiently prepared for change and committed to his or her chosen plan of action, relapse back to the problem behavior is likely.

5. Maintenance: Individuals are thought to be at this stage when they have successfully attained and maintained behavior change for at least six months. While the risk for relapse is still present in this stage, it is less so, and as such, individuals need to exert less effort in engaging in change processes.

Weiss (1995) defines a theory of change as a theory of why and how an initiative works. Weiss describes the potential contribution of a theory of change approach as one that can improve the planning and implementation of research. A theory of change specifies in the beginning the contextual conditions that may affect potential outcomes. For example, a theory of change asks that participants be as clear as possible about expected outcomes they hope to achieve. As we consider how the internal indicators affect the mind of the participant, the external indicators must be considered as well. There is a distinct connection between external influences and behavioral change that must be researched to understand the full impact or influence it has on the participant’s experience with the phenomenon.
In “Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion,” Cialdini (1993) puts forth six principles of influencing change: liking, reciprocity, authority, commitment, social proof, and scarcity. Below are the six principles, paraphrased, described by Cialdini:

1. **Liking:** People tend to agree with people they like. They also like people who like them and who are seen as being similar to them. We are more likely to listen to people like ourselves, from friends, and from others we know and respect. Taking time to build a rapport can let another party feel that they are genuinely liked by someone trying to persuade them; this is more important than them liking the persuader. Spending time learning about similarities can provide the means for genuine liking to occur, making it possible to build constructive relationships.

2. **Reciprocity:** People like to give and take. Helping someone means an individual is more likely to receive help in return because there is a tacit obligation to repay the favor. Helping in this way provides a good basis for building ongoing, trust-based relationships. Reciprocity also affects the negotiation process; thus, it is possible to increase the chance that another party will be collaborative by being collaborative first. Giving concessions and sharing information first will encourage the other party to do the same.

3. **Authority:** People like to follow legitimate experts. Highlighting an advanced level of expertise is a benefit. It is equally important for people
to show that they are a trusted source of information, which can be difficult, particularly in situations where they are advocating for an unpopular decision to be made. In some situations, it is possible that trustworthiness can be demonstrated by admitting weaknesses alongside evidence of strengths and expertise. Higher credibility can lower barriers.

4. **Commitment and Consistency:** People have a deep need to be seen as consistent. Being consistent offers a valuable shortcut through the complexity of modern existence. People must be willing to commit to something; this can be something small or on a trial basis. The person can lock into an initial commitment without having to feel trapped in a long-term relationship that is unfamiliar.

5. **Social Proof:** Most people are happy to be followers. In times of uncertainty or decision-making, people look to what people similar to them have done. Providing evidence of what other people have done and how they have benefited from that action can help persuade a doubtful person. In complex situations, people will look to the experiences of other similar groups and perhaps the views of unbiased experts to guide their decisions.

6. **Scarcity:** People assign more value to opportunities when they are seen as scarce. Things difficult to attain are typically more valuable; when something becomes less accessible, the freedom to have it may be lost. In
a sustainability context, stating what stands to be lost might be more important than saying what stands to be gained.

Building on Weiss’s work, Connell and Kubisch (1998), developed a theory of change approach with an emphasis on program evaluation as a systematic and cumulative study of the links between activities, outcomes, and context of the initiative. The steps to such an approach include

1. Determining intended outcomes.
2. Identifying activities to implement and explain their potential to bring about desired outcomes.
3. Identifying contextual factors that may have an effect on desired outcomes.

Connell and Kubisch continue to explain the benefits of applying such an approach provides guideline for deciding among various evaluation methods and helps avoid the risk of choosing evaluation methods to fit the results. For the approach to have maximum effectiveness, it should answer three questions:

1. Is it plausible: Does evidence and common sense suggest that the activity will lead to desired outcome?
2. Is it doable: Will the economic, technical, political, institutional, and human resources be available to carry out the initiative?
3. Is it testable: Is the theory of change specific and complete enough for an evaluator to track its progress in credible and useful ways?
To answer these questions, research must draw upon various sources of information gathered in multiple ways, while reinforcing other approaches used within the same research. The advantage to using theories of change provide programmers with information to design complex initiatives and want to have a rigorous plan for success, evaluate appropriate outcomes at the right time and the right sequence and explain why an initiative worked or did not work, and what exactly went wrong.

Discovery of Aquaphobia

Nearly 19.2 million Americans suffer from different phobias of which Aquaphobia is a type. The term “phobia” was first used during the first century by Celsus, a Roman encyclopaedist. Celsus used this term in a medical context to explain hydrophobia; an extreme or irrational fear of water, especially as a symptom of rabies in humans (Thomlison, 1984). Over the years new phobias were discovered, and new classifications were needed. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, phobias adopted a clinical description which became accepted by medical and psychological writers. The result of reclassifying phobias from a clinical context led to a new term for an abnormal fear of water; Aquaphobia. A review of the literature was conducted to understand what Aquaphobia is, causes of Aquaphobia, symptoms of Aquaphobia and techniques for overcoming Aquaphobia.

**Defined:** Very similar to hydrophobia, subtle differences do exist between terms. There are three components phobic disorders share but according to the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-5; (1) excessive level of anxiety or fear, (2) an identified situation or object tow which the fear may be attributed, and (3) excessive
avoidance or escape behavior when the person is confronted or anticipates being involved in the fear provoking situation or object. However, data suggest that phobias might be heterogeneous even within DSM-5 categories. Relatively few studies have specifically examined subtypes, and even fewer have differentiated between single specific phobias (Becker et al., 2007).

**Causes:** The DSM-5 recognizes four subtypes of specific phobias as animals, natural environments, blood-injection-injury and situational. Aquaphobia is classified as a natural environment. Those suffering from Aquaphobia tend to be non-swimmers. Aquaphobic individuals experience lots of anxiety around different bodies of water. The most extreme cases tend to induce anxiety in individual simply by looking at a photo of water. The fear of water can sometimes be passed on from parents of family members through stories of traumatic experiences and or personal fears.

**Symptoms:** Symptoms tend to vary among types of phobias and the individual (Vogt, King & King, 2004). The more severe the phobia, the more severe the symptoms. Manifestations through internal reactions require an intimate knowledge of the individual and how they handle stressful situations and may include meeting with the person privately or in group settings, giving the person individual attention during lessons, or sharing personal experiences with water to develop a strong relationship with the participant. Anticipatory anxiety is another possible symptom that may develop when people attempt to deal with their phobia (Zitrin, Woerner, & Klein 1981). In the days or weeks preceding an encounter with water, the individual might find a reason not to participate, refuse to enter the water, or begin to panic as soon as they step into the water.
**Signs:** External reactions, which are easily identified, may manifest themselves through shaking, freezing in place, tensing of the shoulders and face, vomiting or attempting to escape. It is important to understand the difference between signs and symptoms. Symptoms can describe what the person is feeling, which could include fatigue, dizziness and numbness, which is not easily identifiable (Vogt, King & King, 2004). However, signs are indicators of a problem that an instructor can identify, such as tensing of the muscles, hesitation, and clinching of the chaw. Most phobia have both signs and symptoms the help identify what is wrong. Keeping a close watch on participants and recording observations provides an account of how signs manifest themselves.

**Treatments:** There are many variants of exposure-based treatment supported by empirical data including; Cognitive-behavioral therapy, reinforced practice, participant modeling, and one-session treatments. Cognitive-behavioral therapy is especially popular as a technique for teaching patients to replace negative self-talk with more positive messages and learning behaviors for coping with their fear (Beck, 2006). Over time, with the progress the individual’s confidence grows, allowing for a gradual introduction to new water-related activities.

Reinforced practice incorporates verbal praise and physical contact to encourage and support the client. Reinforced practice relies heavily on making a connection with the patient so that the praise is received as genuine (Ost, Svensson, Hellstrom & Lindwall, 2001). This requires the instructor to deal actively with the individual's fears during the lesson and encourage the individual to realize that the fear at current is
psychosomatic, and negative consequences will not occur due to their newly acquired abilities. The primary objective of reinforced practice within the context of overcoming aquaphobia is to encourage a habituation action of learning new skills and prevent behavioral patterns that lead to avoidance.

Participant modeling breaks down a difficult task into manageable steps increases social support and proximity guidance during the task. One-Session Treatments combines exposure, reinforcement, participant modeling and cognitive challenges condensed into a short period, taking the patient through their fear hierarchy (Zlomke & Davis, 2008). The patient is exposed to different behavioral tests or steps that deal with each level of their fear hierarchy in a single session. Of the four treatments Participant modeling has been the most successful for clients with environmental phobias (2008).

**Typology of Courage**

The term courage encompasses a broad range of characteristics. Ideologies vary from researcher to researcher on what constitutes courage; such as when it is needed, how it is manifested, and whether it can be charted through empirical, and non-empirical means. The consensus among authors is that courage does take different forms, but falls within the following descriptors: physical, moral, psychological, general, and personal. Authors such as Putman (1997); Woodard (2004); Rachman (1984); and Lopez, O’Byrne, and Peterson (2003) provide an in-depth description of courage as a paradigm of sorts, by which courage is categorized by the individuals’ motivations, fears, confidence, risk, and desired outcomes. Putman (1997) suggests that physical courage requires a risk of physical harm; moral courage represents action when the threat is one of moral or ethical
integrity or when an element of social disapproval exists; and psychological courage requires one encountering one’s irrational fears, anxieties, or fear of the loss of psychological stability.

Pury, Kowalski, and Spearman (2007) suggest that personal courage requires some fear to overcome actions which are only courageous given the context of one’s personal limitations for the desired outcome. General courage requires an element of fearlessness or confidence in a situation where the risk is equal to everyone. Nonetheless, despite the differences, the authors integrate these differences into a typology of courage based on the goal of the action and on the risks and difficulties encountered trying to reach this objective. Based on this typology, one could speculate that participants involved in treatment or intervention program start with personal courage but move toward general courage in a linear progression as they become more proficient in the skills to complete the program. A quantitative survey of the role of personal and general courage in the Aquaphobics program will explain how courage is influencing factor in the theory of change model.

Summary

Programming can mean different things to different people. Unfortunately, this is an issue in recreation and leisure service due to a lack of research-based knowledge on behalf of providers. The idea of a program is to provide an experience. However, there are several approaches to accomplish this task. Practitioners need to understand how human beings experience and engage in leisure activities to facilitate participation and change (Rossman, 1998). There is a process to programming to which many
practitioners adhere (i.e., techniques passed through manuals or taught by a supervisor). Most of these techniques focus on developing programs, but rarely do they address program development directly, comprehensively, and uniquely (Rossman & Schlatter, 2008). Therefore, it is essential for the literature to have a broad appeal, a narrow focus, and to be adaptable to future programs. Thus, the importance of research influencing practice cannot be underestimated. If this is not the case, then the process of moving from research to service may be broken and may need to be altered.

The gap between research and practice is well documented. The assumption that effective programming naturally and logically follows from successful research depends largely on the experience and training of the practitioners and the needs of the agency. Parks, recreation, and tourism management is a relatively young field. Despite its youth, the field has supported multiple journals that are the outlet for scholarly work. Even with a swell of literature in the field, few of the research studies have focused on practical application of programming design and evaluation. Consequently, there are inherent differences between the characteristics of scholarly research versus the instruction of the principles guiding recreation and leisure service programming.

The theoretical framework use for this research had to contain an element of simplicity to demonstrate how research can guide programming. I chose to apply the theory of change as a theoretical framework to identify key themes influencing the Aquaphobia phenomenon and categorizes those themes using evaluation methods being considered to determine program effectiveness. By assessing a program based on the theory of change, practitioners can gauge whether they are delivering the right activities
and implementing the right techniques to achieve the desired outcomes. It can also help to sustain, bring to scale and evaluate programs for the outcomes it hopes to provide, revealing the resources needed to improve it. Applying the knowledge generated by the theory of change would help practitioners produce an environment of adaptability, increasing the probability of achieving desired outcomes.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter will describe the pragmatic approach to study and a description of qualitative methods used. The components of the pragmatic approach are problem-centered (preventing adult drowning) incorporate real-world practice (swimming lessons) and utilize multiple data collection methods (interviews, observations, and testing). To understand the lived experience of people with Aquaphobia and the different ways people overcome it, what works and what does not and why. As expressed in the introduction of this study, three different methods were used to understand the phenomena and evaluation the Aquaphobics program: phenomenography, phenomenology, and theory of change. The next section explains the rationale for using the three approaches in more detail.

Approach to Research

Phenomenography: The basic concept of phenomenography is about the different ways of understanding a phenomenon from the participants’ perspective. Understanding may translate into action when facing an anxiety producing experience; for example asking an individual with Aquaphobia to place their face in the water. One can witness the process the individuals goes through to complete or not complete the task. Afterward, the research may ask the individual to articulate the process of attempting the task. A phenomenon can theoretically be perceived in an infinite number of ways. These various ways have both “what” and “how” aspects. The “what” tells of
the subject’s focus, the “how” describes how meaning is created (Larsson & Holmstrom, 2007).

The method of data collection in a phenomenography study is open-ended related to the topic of study, navigation of participant’s issue or action and includes semi-structured interviews designed to allow people to share their different attitudes, thoughts, and opinions related to an action, experience or activity. Group members are encouraged to speak freely about their experiences and provide actual examples from their experience. Interviews are recorded and transcribed.

There are varieties of ways data analysis can be done in a phenomenography study. However, to derive the deepest meaning researchers should focus on what the individuals talk about and how they talk about it, and how it drives them (Dahlgren & Fallsberg, 1991). Reading through the text multiple times and with the assistance of other qualified individuals with experience in qualitative methods, reading passages over again, looking for a response that cues other group members to expand on their experiences, and then assigning themes to frequent references. Finding moments of the interview when multiple members express their views, laughter or emotion are strong indicators of substantive material. The last step in the analysis is to investigate the relationships between the themes and/or different types of data gathered. The analysis of possible relationships between the data makes it possible for the purpose of this study to create profiles of participants, or discover a more efficient program designed to facilitate change in this case swimming.
Phenomenology: The objective of a phenomenological approach is two-fold: identifying commonalities among several individuals about the phenomenon and developing a narrative of the phenomenon’s universal essence. (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenology relies heavily on interview data in groups or individually. Refined and expanded by others like Giorgi, 1997; Van Manen, 1997; and Benner, 1994 as an empirical method to investigate different phenomena, and more specifically the lived experience of different phenomena. It grew out of the field of philosophy and is rooted in the importance of perception as a driver of behavior; phenomenology became widely used in health care and education, due to its ability to link perception with feelings and orientation to experiences lived.

The method of data collection in a phenomenological study are interviews, focus group interviews and observations. From the data the research seeks to understand the real world of the participants in the study (Larsson & Holmstrom, 2007). Data analysis of phenomenology attempts to identify meaning clusters from data. According to Manen (1997), phenomenological analysis can be separated into four fundamental experience: (1) lived space; what is felt and how the person feels, (2) lived body; the subjective experience or what was perceived, (3) lived time; the subjective temporal experience, and (4) lived human relation; relations with others that share the phenomenon. Appendices A illustrates in detail the themes generated from participants’ experiences.

The purpose of using phenomenography and phenomenology as an approach in this study is to articulate the specific, identify the Aquaphobia phenomena through the perception of the participants in the program. These two approaches gather deep
information and perceptions from an inductive method such as focus group interviews, discussions, and observations. The two approaches are powerful for understanding subjective experiences, gaining information behind participant motivations, constraints, and actions, to provide clear explanation free of assumptions.

Theory of Change: Theory of change is used for developing solutions to complex social problems, evaluating community initiatives, identifying influencers of change, or explaining the process by which outcome are achieved. Given that one aspect of this research study is to understand how a person overcomes Aquaphobia, theory of change developed by Connell and Kubisch (1998) and Cialdini (1993) provides an understanding of the person’s transition. Making emerging views and assumptions about the change process clear by providing generalizations to guide the development of outcomes or treatments. It is not uncommon for multiple theories operating simultaneously (Connell & Kubisch 1998). Therefore, Connell and Kubisch (1998) “Theory of Change Evaluation and Cialdini (1993) Influences of Change was used to gather data on how participants transition from non-swimmers with Aquaphobia to comfortable and confident swimmers.

Data collection was conducted by using surveys and assessments to identify participant outcomes, contextual factors that may have an effect on desired outcomes, such as activities used to teaching skills or qualities needed to be an effective instructor. Smith, Smoll and Schutz (1990) Sports Anxiety Scale, Martin Vealey and Burton (1990) Anxiety Inventory Scale and Sherman (1970) Gradual Water Exposure Procedures Scale were used to assess participant anxiety and swimming ability.
The purpose of using theory of change as a guiding theory in this study is to form a conclusion as to the effectiveness of the Aquaphobics program. The focus of theory of change lies within the transition process. Using deductive reasoning to identify the multiple factors that contribute to participants achieving outcomes in the program.

**Aquaphobics Design in Detail**

The cycle is illustrated in figure 3.1., showing the interaction between instructor and participants new to the program. Participants are identified as a “beginner” in the first cycle. The term beginner does not refer to the participant’s ability, but to their time spent in the program. Figure 3.2 illustrates the interaction between instructor and participant in the program exceeding one month. Participants are identified as a “regulars” in the second cycle.
Figure 3.1 Program Design: Beginners Cycle

Step 1
Written Assessment
First-Time: Survey

Limit Constraints
before First Lesson

Teach Skills & Observations

Face-to-Face Assessment
First Lesson

Group Meeting
Share Stories
Pro's & Con's
Changes Needed

Figure 3.2 Program Design: Regulars Cycle

Step 1
Written Assessment
Skills & Anxiety

Limit Constraints
& Adjust Lesson Plan

Teach Skills
& Observations

Face-to-Face Assessment
Goal Setting
& New Challenges

Group Meeting
Acknowledge Achievements
Share Stories
Pro's & Con's
Changes Needed
**Written Assessment-Beginners:** To help us develop a general knowledge of the individuals we would be helping, each new participant was required to fill out a brief survey assessing their perceived ability and reasons for joining. Demographic information was also required, such as race, age, education, residency, and access. Open-ended questions about their experiences with water, fears, and goals, were also included in the survey.

**Limiting Constraints-Beginners:** To increase the participation rate of the program we decided to focus on all adults, not just African-Americans aged 18 and up. Classes would be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm. Classes would be offered two days a week to provide a level of consistency to avoid source loss from the previous lessons. Only adult instructors were selected to teach to address participants’ concerns regarding safety and ability to relate to the instructor. The lessons were free and unlimited to members and non-members of the Central-Clemson Recreation Center.

**Face-to-Face Assessment:** During the first lesson instructors would speak one-on-one with each participant to exchange stories and assess ability. All beginners, regardless of ability, would explain and demonstrate what they knew of swimming. Instructors would spend the majority of class time working with beginners in the shallow end of the pool. To increase their level of comfort, beginners have their first month of lessons in the 92-degree warm water therapy pool.

**Teaching Skills & Observations:** Starting with the skills that come naturally to the individual, we set small challenges to improve on those skills and increase confidence
while continually making written observations of the individual’s ability to cope with the new challenges, technique, and response to failure or success. Individuals received feedback on their abilities at the end of each lesson.

**Group Meetings:** Monthly group meetings were scheduled to allow participants the opportunity to build social bonds, acknowledge achievements and goals, share past experiences, discuss pros and cons, and exchange ideas about what does or does not work in the program. As the first cycle merges into the second cycle after the first group meeting, a refinement of the program occurs during the written assessment.

**Written Assessment-Regulars:** Participants are provided a skill sheet of their progress. At this point in the program, individuals have a working knowledge of terms and expectations of the instructors and can articulate their ability or lack thereof in greater detail.

**Limiting Constraints-Regulars:** To increase continued involvement, instructors must recognize any difficulties the participant may have a specific skill and find alternative methods to teach those skills to keep them engaged. The instructor may need to abandon the difficult skill for the interim and reinforce an old skill to build confidence and prevent the likelihood of anticipatory anxiety.

**Face-to-Face Assessment:** Instructors and participants have developed a deeper relationship, allowing a greater degree of honesty and encouragement. Instructors can set more difficult challenges and increase confidence through verbal affirmation based on their professional knowledge of the participant’s ability. Finding the courage to attempt
new challenges becomes easier for the participant due to their trust in the instructor. This process will continue as long as the instructor stays with the program.

The last two stages of the cycle remain the same in both cycles. The second cycle becomes a continual process for the duration of the participant’s involvement. It is important in recreation programming to design a circular program, continually tracking progress from both practitioner and participant. The literature review goes into greater detail about recreational programming.

**Study Site**

The Aquaphobics program took place at the Central-Clemson Recreation Center located in Central, South Carolina a collaborative partnership run by the City of Clemson and Town of Central. The facility has two basketball courts, fitness classes, weight room and two pools. Pool A is a twenty-five yard lap pool with a constant temperature of eighty-three degrees Fahrenheit, and a depth of three and one-half feet increasing to ten feet. Pool B is a fifteen-yard pool with a constant temperature of ninety-three degrees Fahrenheit, and a depth of three and one-half feet increasing to four feet. The facility has a diverse membership of about 2,400 members from local communities: Clemson, Central, Liberty, Pendleton, and Seneca. To minimize the anxiety, distractions, or disruptions caused by other patrons in the pool area Pool A was sectioned off, and three lanes were reserved for the Aquaphobics class. Pool B was closed completely and reserved for beginners in the Aquaphobics class.
Population

The study population encompassed members enrolled in the Aquaphobics Swim Lesson Program offered at the Central-Clemson Recreation Center. The participants were selected using purposeful sampling (Sandelowski, 2000). Starting in 2012 participants were recruited directly from the existing Aquaphobics program, previously know as Swimming for Cowards. Other marketing efforts included word of mouth by the staff of the Central-Clemson Recreation Center and advertising on social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. The total sample size of the interview group for the study was eleven participants that participated in the program from 2012 to 2016. The total sample size of the class for observational data collection varied between 10-30 participants. The participants had to meet the following criteria to participate in the interview part of the study, (1) they participated in the program for a minimum of three months, and (2) participants in the program must be willing to attend at least two focus group meetings. The first requirement was necessary to improve the chances of acquiring complete data. Statistically, participants that stayed in the program over a three-month period continued to participate for 12 months or longer. The second requirement was necessary for the purpose of acquiring data from the focus group interviews. During the second focus group meeting, participants had developed a strong social construct within
the class and were forthcoming about their experiences without the need for prompts from the researcher.

**Methods: Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher instructed the Aquaphobics class from February 2013 to February 2016 twice a week on a weekly basis. The number of participants taught averaged thirteen students per month through September to March, and twenty-six students per month between April and August. The researcher conducted a group meeting in March 2015 to explain the details of the research study. Eleven students of the Aquaphobics classes agreed to participate in the study; each participant signed required IRB documentation before the study began (Appendix E). Data was gathered in the following ways:

- **Observations:** The researcher and co-instructor kept a log book to make references to participants’ performance, achievements, failures, difficulties and or general points of interest. Notations were made after class and during focus group meetings. Recording observations required the researcher to include the date and first name of participants when making an entry.

- **Registration Forms:** The Central-Clemson Recreation Center on behalf of the researcher, required each participant to complete a registration form which included a brief survey, demographic questions, waiver, photo/video waiver and statement of facility policy and procedures. Refer to appendix
• **Attendance Sheet:** Participants were required to sign an attendance sheet for each class. The attendance sheet was used to cross check observations entered in log books.

• **Focus Group Meetings:** Meetings were held once per month starting in October of 2012 until February of 2016. Two meetings were audio recorded and transcribed for the purpose of the research study. Questions from Appendix C and D were asked during the recorded sessions. Other group meetings were open-ended sessions, where participants shared stories about their class experience and instructors asked questions about how to improve or adapt teaching techniques. Additional notes were taken during ten of forty-eight group meetings that were not recorded.

• **Surveys:** Participants were given surveys (Appendix C and D) during the two recorded focus group meetings. Elements from the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory, Sport Anxiety Scale and Gradual Water Exposure Performances were included in the survey as a pre and post program assessment to determine the participants overall progress.

• **Competitive State Anxiety Inventory (CSAI-2):** Used in sport psychology research, the CSAI-2 test the link between anxiety and sporting performance, asking the question does anxiety improve performance or reduce it Martens et.al. (1990). The purpose for using this instrument is the relationship between anxiety created from Aquaphobia and performance related activity; swimming. Since its creation the CSAI-2 has been sufficiently checked in a large number of science
periodicals which have used this tool at both national and international levels. In sport it has been used for different aims, those that study the link anxiety has with other psychological constructs like motivational orientation (Cecchini, González, Carmona and Contreras 2004; Jones and Swain, 1992). When the scaled was tested for validity and reliability between the original and reduced scales (16-items) Cronbach alpha coefficients of internally consistency were 0.70 or higher (Lane, Sewell, Terry, Bartram & Nesti, 1999). The internal consistency coefficients for the three subscales: Cognitive Anxiety, alpha = 0.80; Somatic Anxiety, alpha = 0.85, Self-confidence, alpha = 0.88 (1999).

- **Sport Anxiety Scale (SAS):** The SAS measures individual differences in somatic anxiety and in two aspects of cognitive anxiety/ worry and concentration disruption (Smith et.al, 1990). This scale was useful in measuring outcomes in a study involving training-intervention designed for adults, to reduce stress and thereby lower performance trait anxiety (Smith Smoll, & Barnett, 1995). The purpose of this scale was to measure attitudes about swimming, feelings about the water and a variety of swimming activities adapted from (Daugert, 1966). The internal consistency coefficients for the three subscales: Somatix Anxiety, alpha = 0.88, Worry, alpha = 0.88, Concentration Disruption = 0.79 (Dunn, Dunn, Wilson, Syrotuik, 2000). To optimize content validity, most of the items selected from the SAS on the basis of strong associations with the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory.
Gradual Water Exposure Performances (GWEP): Water-related fear measures six water-related items of a modified Water Anxiety Measure (Sherman, 1972). To measure subjective improvement self-ratings were used to represent the degree of improvement of feelings about the water. The purpose of this scale was to measure participants pre-program swimming ability and post-program swimming ability. Designed for clinical use, it includes anxiety stimuli that have been used in behavior therapy treatments. The internal consistency is high with Cronbach’s alphas ranging from 0.85 – 0.90 and has been tested in larger samples of psychiatric patients (1972)

Methods: Data Analysis

A phenomenology provides a deep understanding of a phenomenon as experienced by several individuals. Using steps developed by Moustaks (1994), data was analyzed for “significant statements.” Significant statements are defined as first-person events or lived experiences associated with the cognitive and mental event as it relates to the phenomenon (Stelter, 2010). For example, participants making first-person references to the first time they attempted to jump in the deep end of the pool. Information was organized into themes and profiles to write textual descriptions of what the participant experienced.

Steps to Data Analysis

The objective of the data collection process was to collect significant data from diverse sources enabling better correlations, cross checking, and finding actionable
insight to generate themes. To analyze the data, the researcher followed a series of steps listed below.

**Figure 3:3 Data Analysis Diagram: Focus Group Interview**

1. **Focus Group Meeting**
2. **Transcribed focus group audio.**
3. Data cleaning of survey responses, correcting spelling mistakes, handling missing data and highlighting nonsense information.
5. Organized demographic information in table format.
6. Met with co-instructor and reviewed transcript to identify significant statements and themes.
7. Researcher and co-instructor underlined relevant data, counted the number of reoccurring themes and searched for dialogue were a majority of the group share their personal experience, listed and prioritized themes.
8. Transcripts and survey responses were reviewed two additional times by the researcher using instructor observations to match instructors’ skill assessments with participants’ responses and self-assessment of their swimming ability.
9. Provided a copy of the transcript to Herminia Machry a graduate research assistant at Clemson University experienced in qualitative research, to conduct a secondary analysis of the data; searching for “significant statements”, coding and themes. A chart of Machry’s analysis is provided in Appendix A.
10. Compared researcher’s and co-instructor’s analysis to Machry’s chart, Machry identified several of the same themes. Themes that were absent from Machry’s findings were added to the chart.
11. Member checked statements with participants during a monthly Aquaphobics group meeting. Researcher asked individual participants the same questions from the previous focus group meeting and real back responses from the transcript for accuracy.

**Data Triangulation**

**Figure 3:4 Data Triangulation Model**

**Data Sources**
- Surveys
- Focus Group Discussion
- Instructor Observations

**Detailed Data Analysis**
- Analyzed the data from each source. Correlated data from pre and post program surveys; compiled in graphs and tables. Significant statements and frequent first-person accounts were extracted from transcript and compiled in chart. Appendix A. Instructor observations used to confirm participant abilities.

**Identification of Themes**
- Based on data analysis, identify significant changes in anxiety and swimming ability. Sort the significant statements and first person accounts according to frequency discussed and or mentioned by an individual and discussed by the group. Match instructor observations to first-hand account discussed by participants.

**Triangulation**
- Compared and contrasted key finding across data sources to support generation of themes. Significant changes in anxiety and swimming ability to first-hand account of those changes in anxiety and swimming to instructor observations of participant achievement or improvements.
Following Moustakas (1994) method of analyzing phenomenological data, I first listed all the statements relevant to the participant’s experience. This is known as horizonalization, with each statement having equal value. The second step, I listed non-repetitive statement. These statements were not directly related to the Aquaphobia phenomena but rather pertained to elements of the program. Third, I group both statements, into themes. Forth I used themes to construct individual textural description of the participants’ experience, including verbatim quotes. Fifth, I constructed a description of the meaning and essence of the phenomena from the themes. Finally, I constructed a description of the essence of the experience for all participant as a whole, which was the essence of the lived-experience.

**Validation Procedures**

Constant cross-checking of transcripts, observations, and assessments were completed for validation purposes. This standard was fulfilled by adhering to four validation methods: structural corroboration, consensual validation, referential adequacy, and pragmatic validity (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007).

Structural corroboration uses multiple types of data to support or contradict the interpretation. To answer the question “What are the different ways people learn to swim as an adult non-swimmer?” Instructor observations, written assessments, group discussions and skill tests were conducted. Eisner (1991) states, gathering multiple forms of evidence builds credibility, which allows the researcher to feel confident about their observations, interpretations, and conclusions. This method provides the researcher
objectivity through different data collection methods to tracking disconfirming evidence and contrary interpretations.

Consensual Validation seeks the opinion of others. To answer the research questions, “What conditions are needed for one to overcome a fear of water?,” “How does one develop a fear of water?,” and “How does one define “successfully overcoming their fear of water? ” focus group meetings were conducted. The purpose of the meetings was to obtain the participant's subjective views about their experience and to evaluate and offer feedback on program elements such as instructor effectiveness, coping strategies, and reducing constraints. Eisner (1991) refers to this as “An agreement among others that the description, interpretation, and evaluation of the phenomenon are right.” This process was built into the program design as a circular process to allow for change if the change is needed.

Referential adequacy includes criticism as a means of highlighting the phenomenon to bring to the surface more complex and sensitive experiences and understanding of the phenomenon. To answer the research question “What can service providers do to assist one in their attempt to overcome a fear of water?” Participants were forthcoming in focus meetings providing criticism to help improve the program, based on their personal feelings, how it helped them, and their desire to help others.

Pragmatic validity is verification in the literal sense. To answer the research questions “What conditions are needed for one to overcome a fear of water?,” “How does one develop a fear of water?,” and “How does one define “successfully overcoming their fear of water?,” participants expressed from their point of view “the truth of the
phenomenon.” Kvale states “truth is whatever assist us to take actions that produce the desired results.” To a pragmatist, truth is not justified merely through observation but application - the application of action to produce knowledge and the effectiveness of action to demonstrate the value of truth.

Through intensive, long-term involvement, the researcher can help rule out spurious associations and provide detailed, descriptive notes about observations. Additional questions about the instructor’s teaching methods are included to allow participants the opportunity to provide feedback about which methods do or do not work. Bryman (1998) referred to this respondent validation as “member checks,” or systematically soliciting feedback from the participants in one’s study. The researcher met with participants during a monthly Aquaphobics group meeting and asked individual participants questions from the previous survey and read back responses from the transcript for consistency. The function of the quantitative survey instrument is to measure swimming competency and outcomes. The survey has a high internal consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha = .92) despite the small number of items and the scale also appears to have adequate reliability based on its usability in a study by Smith, Smoll, and Schutz (1990). In their study, results consistently revealed that student-athletes with similar performance anxieties shared similar anxiety-inducing factors. Although the sample population is not an accurate representation of the larger population of adults participating in swimming lessons because accurate information of adult non-swimmers is unknown, the instrument being used for this study has been applied to larger quantitative studies in similar activities.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This study presents the lived experience of adults with Aquaphobia involved in an adult swim lesson program. Phenomenography and phenomenology were employed to examine participants shared life experiences related to swimming, and the different ways they worked to overcome a fear of swimming in an effort to understand that which may be misunderstood by those who know how to swim, specifically potential swimming programmers. A variety of expamples are provided to help practitioners understand these participants. Quotes from the participants are shared in order to provide a real visual of their experience, from multiple perspectives.

This chapter presents the key findings obtained from surveys conducted at the start of the program for each participant and surveys conducted two years after the start of the research study. Findings from focus group interviews provide an in-depth description of the participants live-experience before and during the learn to swim program. The results of this study inform understanding of (1) who suffers from Aquaphobia; (2) how does one develop Aquaphobia; (3) how can one overcome Aquaphobia; (4) how does a swim lesson program effectively treat individuals with Aquaphobia; and (5) what can programmers do to remove constraints and motivate participation by treatment of Aquaphobia through swimming lessons? The major findings will be discussed in this chapter and analyzed in chapter five.
Focus Group Interviews

Eight focus group interviews were held at the Central-Clemson Recreation Center, two were audio-recorded, and transcribed by the researcher and a fellow swim instructor. Each focus group interview lasted between one to two hours. Questions for the survey were developed from a pilot study previously conducted by the investigator, with additional questions incorporated from Sherman’s (1970) study. The questions for the qualitative surveys included a combination of three techniques:

1. Semi-structured group interviews with open-ended questions, along with prepared probes and unanticipated probes. To stimulate dialogue, the researcher would make comments based on observations from class.

2. Instructors’ and participant observations contributed to in-depth discussions.

3. Transcripts were read several times and analyzed for significant phrases or sentences that pertain directly to the research questions or phenomenon. The use of systematic data analysis procedures of important statements, meanings, themes, and instructor comments on the phenomenon follow the procedures recommended by Moustakas (1994). The analysis of the transcript led to 8 major themes with additional sub-themes, based on significant statements made by each of the group members (Appendix A).

Participants were also asked open-ended questions about: (1) How they heard about the program, (2) Past swimming experience; (3) What prevented them from learning to swim; (4) Why they are learning to swim now; (5) If they would be interested in teaching others how to swim; and (6) If they know someone who could benefit from this program.
Table 4.3 illustrates each members’ responses; two members did not provide responses to the questions.

**Themes**

In research, the two main types of analysis typically used are quantitative (deductive) and qualitative (inductive). Trochim (2006) defines induction as moving from the specific to the general, while deductive begins with the general and ends with the specific. Data based on experience or observations are best expressed inductively, using participants’ to build broader themes and understanding the interconnections between themes. While data based on outcomes are best expressed deductively, to generate themes based on the evidence drawn from participants’ performance to achieve outcomes.

**Deductive Process:** In deductive thematic analysis, a structure or predetermined framework is used to analyze data, in this case theory of change. This approach is particularly useful when one has specific research questions that already identify the main themes or categories used to group the data and then look for similarities and differences.

**Inductive Process:** In inductive thematic analysis, the actual data itself is used to derive the structure of analysis. In this approach the themes are strongly linked to the data since they emerge from it. This approach is comprehensive and particularly useful when little is known about the phenomenon under study. Usually, inductive thematic analysis involves 6 phases: familiarization with data; generation of initial codes; searching for themes among codes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and producing the final report.
**Coding Process:** Initially, the focus group transcripts were thoroughly read, and
general notes were made based on instructor observations. During a second, more
detailed reading, elements from each response was abstracted and classified. This was the
open coding process where all the content conveyed during the interview was explored,
examining the text for salient categories with high saturation to better understand the
process. In order to code responses, the first step was to analyze responses to each
question, grouping types of answers (i.e. types of motivations for entering the class and
types of motivations or constraints to overcome to remain in the class) and
emotional/cognitive steps that participants underwent (i.e. moving from feeling scared to
feeling excited). The follow-up was to conduct axial coding, establishing interconnections
between categories with certain criteria (i.e. emotional journey, coping strategies, in each
step of the process), and thus redefining codes. The final phase was forming theoretical
propositions through selective coding, which ultimately resulted in themes about the
different types of experiences conveyed by the focus group. Analyzing the data from
these five overarching research questions yielded three interrelated themes.

**Description of Themes**

**Transitioning from Comfortable to Confident:** The first theme revealed that
adults with Aquaphobia involved in an adult swim lesson program, define overcoming
Aquaphobia as three step transition; (1) being afraid of the water (Aquaphobia), (2)
becoming comfortable in the water, and (3) becoming confident in the water. Step one,
describes what happened to them before joining the program. The second step,
participants expressed moments when they considered themselves confident swimmers.
The third step, participants were able to demonstrate a particular skill set the group identified as “Crossing the black line” into the deep end. Speaking from an instructor’s perspective, I would describe this as a moment when the participant feels not only safe but also feels eager or willing to push themselves to try arduous tasks or activities in the water. Safety has dropped as a priority on their list of concerns. The participants coined this phrase as a euphemism for an experience they described as a moment when you approach the deep end of the pool and notice the black line at the bottom. Your mind is telling you can cross because you have learned how and you have done it before, but your body is hesitant to proceed. Finally, you make your body do what your mind knows it can do, and you cross the black line.

a. They’re legs are getting stronger, I think they might be ready to go over the deep end of the pool with flippers and a kick board. I know that Lori, Andrea and Dorothy might not want to attempt it yet but I think if I’m right beside them the whole time they will do it (observation, February, 2014)

b. I spoke with Janice about her difficulty in crossing over into the deep end. She said she is still scared, but she also knows she can do it. We broke it down into steps. I told her I would swim beside her and count her strokes from the black line to the wall. I then told her to close her eyes and count her strokes. When she could see the line or realize she was over the deep end she was fine (observation, October, 2014).
c. Lori stated; and now when I get in that water, I feel like everything else goes away. All my problems are gone, all my issues are gone, all that from mamma, and daddy, and everybody else saying, "You're going to kill yourself." That's gone, that's gone. My whole day's worry, it's gone. I can get in that water, and I can concentrate on me, and when I get out, I feel good about me.

The participants were at a point in the program where they could communicate that difference between being comfortable and confident. During the focus group interview, some of the participants were able to identify a particular moment when confidence was true. As the instructor, I was able to observe this transformation and confirm their statements. Consequently, the process among the participants were similar but the moment of clarity was different between them. The transition from comfortable to confident equates to the maintenance stage of the theory of change model. Prochaska and Velicer (1997) refer to the maintenance stage as the moment when an individual attain or maintain a behavior change for at least six months. As the individual continues with the behavior, they need to exert less effort to maintain the behavior. This was true for all participants that stayed in the program for a year or more. Therefore, as the participant’s confidence level increased the program changed for them in a way, that was no longer a treatment but become a social and healthy activity.

Measuring Up: The second theme was the participant's ability to “measure up” to the other group members. The participants continually compared their progress to
that of the classmates. At the beginning of the program, their lack of ability or progress compare to others did not hinder them from learning to swim. Despite their phobia, the desire to keep up with their classmates motivated them to learn and stay engaged in the program. All participants spoke about the importance of their progress and keeping up with others in the program. Eager to stay in the same group with classmates they started the program with; it began a motivational effort to attempt the same skills as some of the others. However, it was challenging for some of the participants to complete some of the tasks, such as jumping into the deep end or jumping off the diving board. Failure did not affect their motivation negatively, but to the contrary, participants were positively motivated by their classmates to succeed.

a. During our group meeting, we talk about some of the students don’t feel like they’re make much progress. They worry that they won’t get a basic skill and start to compare themselves to someone else who picks it up so easily. Lori said she was kind of jealous of Jamal. How is it that someone who was so afraid at first do complicated things so easily (observation, September 2014).

b. Dorothy thanked me for being so patient with her and wondered why I hadn’t given up on her. I told her not to think about it in terms of time. It took me three years to become a proficient swimmer, you have only been in the program for about eight months. Everyone learns differently and at different speeds. As long as you keep coming, I’ll keep teaching. We’ll find what works for you. I think
that made her feel much better. The rest of the group share the same sentiment and discussion led to what difficulties they’ve experienced (observation, September 2014).

As these participants provided descriptions and anecdotes of their experience, they often spoke emphatically about the classmates. It was evident through comments such as these that the participants perceived the social construct they had created to be of high value. Similarly, Cialdini (1993) theory of change, describes the process of connecting or developing a social construct as “liking and reciprocity”. When individuals realize how similar they are due to the nature of their experiences. The will tend to listen to people like themselves, respect them, build a rapport and are willing to trust and help others within their group. Furthermore, the group exhibited what Cialdini describes as “authority, commitment and consistency, and social proofing”. The instructors’ authority was absolute; participants were comfortable with the instructors and expressed their feelings of trust and opinions on their teaching style. All participants maintained a level of consistency that exceeded expectations. During focus group interviews, participants expressed how the program became a need, or a staple within their schedule. Another essential point was the social proofing aspect of the program. The participants relied on their fellow swimmer as a sense of motivation in times of doubt or new challenges. If a fellow swimmer achieve a difficult task, other swimmers would look to that person for advice and encouragement.

**Continuing The Journey:** The third theme was their appreciation of the journey towards their desired outcomes. In the beginning their perceived outcomes were basic as
it related to swimming ability; floating on their back, swimming freestyle 25-yards, and treading water, as they progressed through the program their outcomes evolved to do more than just survive, but to excel, have fun, adopt a social group.

a. It makes a difference in your life when you go places now because over the summer ... At the end of the summer when we went on vacation, I was like, "Ooh, I gotta find a hotel with a pool." I mean, it's like I look for a pool. I look for it, and I get excited when I see people in a pool. When Andrea went, and I was watching her, and I'm like, "Oh, God. I want to do that. I want to be graceful. I want to swim just like that." I still fight ducks right now in the water, but I'm gonna get there.

b. That's where I'm at. I enjoy this so much that I don't want the class to end. Like I don't ever want to get to a point where, okay, I'm done. I don't want to be done, I just want to keep going.

Once the participants recognized their success in the program, the confidence they built spilled over into other areas of their life, such as health, relationships, and recreation. Complementary to this, participants demonstrated what Putman (1997) suggest to be physical courage and psychological courage. The participants faced their fear of water, overcame the physical harm and worked through their irrational fears and anxieties. The outcome was shift from personal courage, which requires some specific fear to overcome, to general courage, which requires an element of fearlessness or confidence in a situation where the risk is equal to everyone (Pury, Kowalski, & Spearman, 2007). The
participants willingness and eagerness to participate in other water related activities, proves this conclusion.

**Answering the Research Questions**

Research questions are provoked by curiosity about why people behave the way they do. To discover the different situations, motives, and experiences that effect participant’s behavior, the research questions seek to answer these questions from events, ideas, and participant behaviors pertaining to the phenomena. A qualitative approach to this study presented an in-depth description of the essences of the phenomenon. Each participant was involved in a transition process that resulted in the desired outcome. Data was collected through focus group interviews, surveys, and observations. The transcript and surveys can be found in Appendices C, D, and F of this study. The data was coded, analyzed, and organized using phenomenology and phenomenography methods outlined by Creswell (2013) and Moustakas (1994). The study was based on the following five overarching research questions:

1. Who suffers from Aquaphobia?
2. How does one develop Aquaphobia?
3. How can one overcome Aquaphobia?
4. How does a swim lesson program effectively treat individuals with Aquaphobia?
5. What can programmers do to remove constraints and motivate participation by treatment of Aquaphobia through swimming lessons?
Who suffers from Aquaphobia?

The first research question asked what type of person suffers from Aquaphobia. Eleven participants enrolled in the Aquaphobics program participated in the study. The core theme of transitioning from comfortable to confident captured the participants’ perception of swimming ability, anxiety, and motivation. The quotes offered by the participants provide a description of what it was like to live with Aquaphobia prior to the program; feelings of fear around various types of water, near-death experiences, and closely held external constraints created by family members with a history of water avoidance, contributed to their development of Aquaphobia. Over half of the participants stated having experienced a near drowning experience or were related to someone that had a near drowning or fatal experience with water. The first themes does identify some of the participants’ stories of how they were able to transition from Aquaphobia to comfortable. The sample consisted of three males and eight females. All participants were between the ages of 18-75 years old (M=38), including two between ages 18-24, one between ages, 25-34, five between ages, 35-44, one between ages, 45-54, one between ages, 55-64, and one between 65-74 years old. Ten were African-Americans, and one was Caucasian. Two participants had a high school education but no diploma or GED, two had a high school diploma, two had some college credits but no degree, two had associate degrees, two had bachelor’s degrees, one had a master’s degree, and one had a doctorate.

Statistically, based on race, no exclusivity exists. However, adult African-American are the highest at-risk group for preventable drowning fatalities. A variety of
characteristic describe people that have Aquaphobia. These characteristics include high anxiety, low to no swimming ability, limited access, low-income, and fear. Each of the participants suffers from high anxiety. One of the questions asked during the focus group interview, asked what their anxiety level was like on their first day of class. One of the responses given was the following:

*Part of my anxiety was not just getting in the pool, but getting here. Being in a swimsuit in front of other people that I'm not comfortable with, that I don't know, and having just very self-conscious thoughts, and just getting here, and getting dressed, and getting in the pool. And I still have that a little bit, but it's not ... Now, it's like it doesn't even matter. That's not what I'm here for. I'm here to learn, and I'm gonna conquer this and move on to the next thing.*

It appeared that this participant had experienced both internal and external anxiety. However, this was not unique to one person; other participants had similar feels of anxiety due to weight and or failures of trying to learn in the past. The following table and individual descriptions below provides characteristics of participants enrolled.
Table 4.1. Demographic Data

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
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<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
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<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
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<td>75-Older</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
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</tr>
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<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>High School/No Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School Graduate/ GED</td>
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<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College Credit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
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<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
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<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
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<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Degree</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate Degree</td>
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<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jamal is a 33-year-old black male that works in the library of a local university. He has a bachelor’s degree and works 40 hours a week. He joined the program with a fear of water. However, he did have a lesson before turning 18, but it did not improve his condition. During his childhood, he had a traumatic experience where he almost drowns after being pushed into the water. Jamal resisted learning to swim primarily because of his fear but also because of transportation (he lived 11-15 miles away from water) and having suitable swim attire was an issue. He was motivated to join the Aquaphobics program due to his girlfriend/coworker, who is also in the program, plus his desire to overcome his fear. Jamal stated he was tired of living his life on the sidelines, and it was time to take control of it. Joining the program was one step closer to achieving his goal.

Lori is a 40-year-old white female that works in the library of a local university. She has an associate’s degree and works 40 hours a week. She joined the program with a fear of water. Lori never had swimming lessons before turning 18. During her childhood, she had a traumatic experience where she was playing in the water, and someone pushed her underneath the surface of the water when she swallowed too much water. She began to panic and had to be rescued by the lifeguard. Lori also had a family member that had drowned. Her only constraint was her traumatic experience (she lived 1-5 miles away from water). She was motivated to join the Aquaphobics program from a coworker, who is also in the program, and her desire to become healthier and strengthen her relationship with Jamal. Lori stated she wanted to be a confident and unafraid swimmer.

Andrea is a 42-year-old black female that works in the library of a local university. She does not have a high school diploma and works 40 hours a week. She
joined the program with a fear of water. Andrea never had swimming lessons before turning 18. During her childhood, she had a traumatic experience where a close relative drowned. Andrea did not learn how to swim before turning 18 because of the cost and the lack of proper swimming attire (she lived 1-5 miles away from water). She was motivated to join the Aquaphobics program because of her desire to conquer her fear and stay healthy. Andrea stated swimming was a goal on her bucket list and that she did not want to end up like the rest of her family that had a history of heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Dorothy is a 68-year-old black female; she is retired. She has high school diploma. She joined the program with a fear of water. Dorothy never had swimming lessons before turning 18. Dorothy never had a traumatic experience, however, during her childhood; she was prohibited from swimming because of segregation in the South Carolina. She was motivated to join the Aquaphobics program because she never knew when she might need to know how to swim. Dorothy stated that the main reason she never learned to swim was due to her parent telling her to stay away from the water or pools because that was white peoples’ property.

Darius is a 22-year-old black male that in currently enrolled at a local college. He has some college credit. He joined the program without a fear of water. Darius never had any swimming lesson before turning 18. Darius never had a traumatic experience. However, he was worried about passing the required skill test for becoming an army ranger. He was motivated to join the Aquaphobics program because of his desire to learning and the difficult he had to teach his self. Darius stated that every time he tried to
learn on his own, it seemed liked he had to work way too hard even to swim a lap. He claimed he did not know what he was doing wrong.

**Anita** is a 50-year-old black female that works at a local university. She has a high school diploma. She joined the program without a fear of water. Anita did not learn to swim before turning 18 because of cost and lack of transportation. She was motivated to join the Aquaphobics program because of her children. Anita stated that she was tired of watching the rest of her family participating in things that she could not do.

**Shaun** is 21-year-old black male enrolled at a local college. He has an associate’s degree. Shaun joined the program with a fear of water. He did not have lessons before he turned 18. However, he did want to learn but did not because he was too afraid. Shaun did not have a personally traumatic experience, therefore, could not explain why he had a fear of water. Shaun was motivated to learn by his family that had started the Aquaphobics program before him. Shaun stated that when he was trying to learn at other places, he felt like he did not teach him enough to have the confidence to cross over into the deep end of the pool.

**Tammie** is a 43-year-old black female that works at a local college. She has an associate’s degree and works 40 hours a week. Tammie did not learn to swim before turning 18. She did not have a fear of water. However, Tammie did not learn because of cost. She was motivated to join the Aquaphobics program because of her mother, who is in the program. Tammie stated her mother Dorothy has always been a motivational force in her life. She felt that if she was learning at her age, there was no excuse for her not to learn.
Cherese is a 37-year-old black female that works at a local college. She has a doctorate and works 40 hours a week. Cherese did not learn to swim before turning 18. She did not have a fear of water. However, a family member did have a traumatic experience resulting in drowning. Cherese just wanted to learn how to swim in any depth. She was motivated to join the Aquaphobics program because at one point early in the program most of her family enrolled in the class. Her family kept asking her to come, but it was a friend that finally convinced her.

Cynthia is a 57-year-old black female that works at a government office. She has a master’s degree and works 40 hours a week. She joined the program with a fear of water. Cynthia never had swimming lessons before turning 18. She never had a traumatic experience; however, during her childhood, she was prohibited from swimming because of segregation in the South Carolina. Cynthia was motivated to join the Aquaphobics program because she just wanted to learn. She stated the reason she did not learn until now was due to her parents had a negative influence on her feeling about swimming. She was told to stay away from the water because she would most certainly drown and no one would be able to save her. Tables 4.2 details participants lived experience with Aquaphobia and Aquaphobics program.
### Table 4.2. Participants’ Experience with Water

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Have you ever participated in a swimming lesson program before the age of 18?</th>
<th>To the best of your knowledge did/do your parents know how to swim?</th>
<th>If you have children below the age of 18, do they know how to swim?</th>
<th>If you have children above the age of 18, do they know how to swim?</th>
<th>Did you have a fear of water prior to participating in Aquaphobics</th>
<th>To the best of your knowledge, have any of your family members, or friends experienced a water-related trauma?</th>
<th>Before the age of 18, did you have access to a lake, beach, or public pool within the following radii of your residence?</th>
<th>Before the age of 18 were you restricted from accessing a lake, beach, or public pool for the following reasons?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jamal</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>11-15 miles</td>
<td>Transportation &amp; Swim Attire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>One Parent Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1-5 miles</td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1-5 miles</td>
<td>Cost &amp; Swim Attire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>15 miles +</td>
<td>Cost &amp; Transportation</td>
</tr>
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<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>15 miles +</td>
<td>Segregation</td>
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<td>11-15 miles</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>N</td>
<td>1-5 miles</td>
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<td>N</td>
<td>1-5 miles</td>
<td>Cost</td>
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<td>N</td>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1-5 miles</td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>15 miles +</td>
<td>Segregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabitha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>6-10 miles</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How does one develop Aquaphobia?

The second research question asked participants about how they developed Aquaphobia. Of the people involved in the study (N=11), seven came to the program having suffered some traumatic experience with water, but all participants experienced a high level of anxiety towards learning how to swim. The discussion from the focus group interview pointed to a strong association with the theme *transitioning from comfortable to confident*. It is critical to realize the inherent difficulties the participants faced before becoming comfortable in the water. Although, the theme is phrased in such a way to as to exclude how one develops Aquaphobia, to the contrary, it provides a deep narrative expressed by the participants’ individual experiences. The catalyst for the participants’ fear of water varied slightly from fear of drowning, fear of engaging in a dangerous activity; family perpetuated fear of water, and family or friend water-related death. During the focus group interview, the group articulated that their fears equate to their constraints. Collectively the group agreed with the accretion that traumatic experiences, self-experienced or family-related, was the trigger for their Aquaphobia. However, they also agreed, during a moment in their adult life, the thought of being afraid of water was an irrational fear that needed to be conquered, but they just did not know how to do so. Jamal stated that the trigger for his fear started when he almost drowns as a kid, being pushed into a pool. Cynthia commented that although she did not have a traumatic experience, her trigger resulted from her parent negative views and feedback towards the water.
The one comment that Cynthia remembers her parents making was that

"you must stay away from the water cause you will certainly drown and no one will be able to save you."

The table below provides participant responses to specific questions pertaining to perceived outcomes and anxiety levels over the course of the program.

Table 4.3 Outcomes Over Time Related to Anxiety Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>How did you hear about the program?</th>
<th>What is your past swimming experience?</th>
<th>What prevented you from learning to swim?</th>
<th>Why are you learning to swim now?</th>
<th>Would you be interested in teaching other?</th>
<th>Do you know someone who could benefit from this program?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jamal</td>
<td>Co-worker</td>
<td>I can stand up in the shallow end, but that's about it.</td>
<td>I almost drowned as a kid and have been afraid to get back in the water.</td>
<td>I'm tired of living my life on the sidelines, and it is time to take control of it. This is one step towards that goal.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori</td>
<td>Co-worker</td>
<td>I've been in and around rivers, lakes, and pools my whole life but unable to swim correctly and without constant fear of drowning.</td>
<td>I fell into a pool when I was very young.</td>
<td>I want to be a confident, unafraid swimmer.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Never swam before, only put my feet in the water.</td>
<td>Fear of drowning.</td>
<td>I want to conquer my fear of water.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy</td>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>I have none</td>
<td>Body density made it difficult for me to succeed</td>
<td>Training for the Army Special Forces.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaun</td>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>When he was trying to learn at other places, he felt like he didn't teach him enough to have the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tammie</td>
<td>My mother</td>
<td>Her mother Dorothy has always been a motivational force in her life. She felt that if she was learning at her age,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1-Lori
2-Co-worker
3-Lori continuously thanks Andrea for telling her about the program and how much it’s done for her health and her and Jamal’s relationship (observation, April 2015).
4-I’ve been in and around rivers, lakes, and pools my whole life but unable to swim correctly and without constant fear of drowning.
5-I fell into a pool when I was very young.
6-I want to be a confident, unafraid swimmer.
7-Yes
8-My mother.

1-Andrea
2-Website
3-Andrea stated swimming was a goal on her bucket list and that she didn’t want to end up like the rest of her family that had a history of heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes (observation, May 2015).
4-Never swam before, only put my feet in the water.
5-Fear of drowning.
6-I want to conquer my fear of water.
7-No
8-My family members.
Nine respondents heard of the program from a family member or friend; two had no response. Eight respondents had no swimming lesson experience, and two had no response. Five respondents had not learned to swim because of fear, two never had lessons, one had not learned because of body density, and three had no response. Five respondents chose to learn now because they want to conquer their fear and be more confident in the water, three felt it is an important skill to learn; one chose to learn because of a job-related reason, and two did not respond. Seven of the respondents would not be willing to teach swim lessons, two would be willing to teach, and two did not respond. Eleven respondents knew someone who could benefit from the Aquaphobics program, and six of the respondents identified a family member as the person who would benefit. Four of the members were co-workers, four of the members were related - mother and daughter, and brother and sister.

**How can one overcome Aquaphobia?**

The third research question asked, how does one overcome Aquaphobia? The second theme, *measuring up*, expresses the importance of certain variables essential to
participants’ progress towards overcoming Aquaphobia. Participants discussed how motivation in the form of competition, for example trying to keep up with their peers, motivated them to try different skills. Their fear of water gradually became secondary to a fear of “being left behind” by their peers. At the beginning of the program, participants took a survey that asked questions about their swimming ability. The results of the survey provided evidence that all participants had low to no swimming ability. Participants felt that to overcome their fear they needed to master basic skills and the instructors should focus on teaching; floating, jumping into the deep end and going under water. The three skills do not constitute swimming ability as defined by USA Swimming standards. However, the instructors agreed those three skills were the most important and fear-inducing moments for participants. Participants that expressed floating as the most difficult skill to learn explained, that the feeling of helplessness, not being able to feel the bottom of the pool, and the lack of visibility were the hardest feelings to overcome.

“Floating on my back was a really big concern for me because I feel like I’m out of control in the water anyway when my feet are not firmly planted on the ground. It makes me feel nervous.”

Participants exhibited both fearless and fearful behavior when attempting to float. The longer the participants stayed with the program, the more the participants’ hesitation stemmed not from a lack of ability but a lack of knowledge of the physics and mechanics of swimming. They become more eager to learn new skills and less concerned with the inherent dangers of the activity.

The constraints the participants endured when they were younger exposed a social
justice case of the past. Two participants were denied from swimming due to segregation. Dorothy had made the comment that her parent uses to tell her:

unto stay away from the water or that lakes were white people’s property”

Sadly, this was common for her time, when separate but equal did not equate to availability. The other participants did not have access primarily because transportation to pools from a rural area was unavailable and they could not afford the cost associated with swimming, for example, the price of a swim pass, swimsuit or swimming lessons.

That data suggests that participants experienced a variety of fears throughout the program. Their anxiety and social pressures contributed to their fears and ability to complete specific tasks. Participants that expressed fear of jumping into the deep end of the pool experienced an episode in their life when they were pushed into the deep end and almost drowned. Their traumatic experience provided a psychological constraint to being in the deep-end, even with the support of a floatation device and the presence of an instructor. One participant stated:

“The milestones are to get comfortable in the deep end of the pool, and I think I hit that when we went over treading, that was important to me. And how to float on your back and not panic. I’m not as good of a swimmer as I would like to be but I do feel confident that if I fell in the pool, I could save myself, I feel confident going to the deep end.”

Rachman's assertion that courage initially requires some level of fear that moves a person from courage to fearlessness despite a fearful situation to achieve a goal (1984) to categorize the quote above. Participants that feared to go under water stressed three
factors that contributed to their fear: the chance of going underwater and not being able to resurface, not being able to see in any direction once underneath the water, and anxiety that a lifeguard would not notice or locate them.

“I would like to develop some confidence that when you go in you'll comeback up. And I don’t have that. Especially in murky water my fear with the lake is that you would start swimming the wrong direction and all of a sudden you're down deeper than when you started.”

Their fear is not manifested by being in the water but by going underneath the surface. The statement above is another example of a participant experiencing a sense of fear along a continuum.

It is difficult to change a non-swimmers perception of water, whether they are rational or irrational. Non-swimmers rarely break from the norm, especially when the desire to go against said norms are met with resistance from external forces such as family members or friends. Internally, one’s personal experience with water can become a powerful paralyzing constraint. It cannot be unreasonable to expect that many want to overcome Aquaphobia, but do not receive the support, motivation, or have the courage to seek out a remedy to face their fear. Individually, the participants experienced an internal obstacle due to a lack of knowledge and ability. What originally started as teaching three basic skills, being comfortable in the water, and becoming a confident swimmer, evolved into different outcomes; swimming multiple laps and attempting other water related activities.
During the monthly meetings, the group shared more of their personal achievements in the water, which provided a means of encouragement to others in areas beyond the water. One participant expressed her desire to go back to school to receive her GED, another finally scheduled a cruise vacation, and another came to swim on non-class days because she now had the ability to start exercising. Even after the program ended, participants remain in contact with one another, exchanging stories of their latest activities. Further study of a similar population could provide additional proof of how overcoming a phobia leads to courage to attempt other challenging activities.

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that the perceptions and swimming ability changed dramatically during the program. Interviews revealed that group members spoke of the benefits of being in a class with other adults, having classmates with similar experiences, and having an instructor that faced the same issue; motivated them to do more than just know how to swim.

a. Cynthia stated; I think for me, um, it was pretty gonna be another form of exercise, and my ultimate goal was to do the triathlon, so I knew I had to learn how to swim to be able to do that. So that is my goal for 2017, and I've still got a long ways to go with swimming, but I'm here. I'm showing up so that's all that matters at this point.

b. Andrea stated; you have people that are more advanced than the other ones to encourage those of where you used to be. That means a lot. That helps a lot. It pushes you to that next level.
c. Tabitha stated; You were my favorite because I feel like you pushed us, and you ... Miss Kathy watches us and helps up improve technique. But I feel like you watch us when we don't know you're watching, and you know us each individually, and really know our personalities, and what scares us, and what we're comfortable with. And you were able to push us beyond what we feel like we're capable of.

The participants expressed how the Aquaphobics program has been life changing for them. Having something in common with other people in the class and being able to learn together was an important variable in staying engaged. As the group continued to progress so did their desire to attempt challenges that are more difficult. Having experienced personal success, the participants became strong advocates of the programs, staying in the program even after they achieved the basic swimming skills.

**How does a swim lesson program effectively treat individuals with Aquaphobia?**

The fourth research question asked, how does a swim lesson program effectively treat individuals with Aquaphobia? Themes 1 (*transitioning from comfortable to confident*) and 2 (*measuring up*) provided answers to the fourth research question. When I first began planning the Aquaphobics program, the original intent or outcome I wished to achieve, was for participant to learning basic swimming skills and become unafraid of the water. As the program progressed, the original outcomes began to evolve beyond learning to swim or conquering one’s fear of water. Outcomes began to change with the participants in the program, shifting to from a phobia to a quest. A quest to have fun in the water, stay healthy, be able to do water related activities with friends and family, and
to be safe and keep family members safe in the water. Both themes revealed how the dynamic of the program changed for the participants. The program became an environment that was an enjoyable, but challenging, an escape away from the stress of their world and outlet to connect with others that share similar experiences. Those intangible elements of the program were just as necessary to treating Aquaphobia as the skills that must be taught for one to overcome Aquaphobia. The most relevant data focuses on what the instructor must do to facilitate the participant’s transformation. The instructor and programmer must take a participant-centered approach when dealing with adults with Aquaphobia. The instructors and programmers must design the program based on the participant’s deficit. Deficit model programming allows one to address the phobia first and then the mechanics late. The participants expressed their appreciation for how the program was taught and broken down based on their ability.

_I think you put uh thought into making the skills interesting and uh, I mean, you have a lot of good qualities. Just the fact that you’re a black male that’s teaching this class, which I have never seen before, that’s a whole um area in itself. Um, but I think you do put thought into keeping it interesting._

Getting to know each of participants on a personal level proved beneficial in discovering their individual triggers of Aquaphobia, identified as self-experienced or family-related trauma. One participant expressed her feeling about the instructor’s confidence in them, as students was an important factor.
But I feel like if he thinks that I can do it, he's got enough confidence in me to say I can do this, then I guess I must do this. I'm going go do it, so I do it. I try to do it. You know.

Having observed and taught these participants for over two years, I noticed that courage could emerge despite their traumatic experiences, fears, and apprehension, motivating individuals to act, persist, and take risks in response to a challenge if the support of peers remain consistent and confidence in their ability is assured by the instructor. Over time, challenging them with new outcomes became less of an anxiety-inducing activity and evolved into a personal motivation or display of courage for other hesitant participants.

Assessment data was collected with an emphasis on swimming competency and decision-making processes during two different time periods of the program (i.e. 0-4 months, 5-8 months and 9 or more). The self-assessment consisted of 28 questions conducted twice during the participants’ time in the program (Figure 4.1). The instructor was present to assist the members with any questions pertaining to swimming competency. The same questions were given each time to determine if any change occurred. The assessment included close-ended questions adapted from Smith, Smoll, and Schutz in their Sports Anxiety Scale (1990); Martin, Vealey, and Burton’s State Anxiety Inventory (1990); and Sherman’s Gradual Water Exposure Procedures (1970). The assessment was designed by Sherman to reveal similar performance anxieties and shared anxiety-inducing factors.
Table 4.4. Outcomes Over Time Related to Anxiety Levels During Aquaphobics

![Outcomes Related to Anxiety Levels](image)

**Figure 4.1. Outcomes Assessment Related to Anxiety Levels.**

1. I feel calm.
2. I feel secure.
3. I have self-doubt.
4. I am concerned about receiving adequate instruction.
5. I feel comfortable in the shallow end of the pool.
6. I am concerned about possibly drowning during a lesson.
7. I am worried about swimming with a lifeguard present.
8. I feel comfortable with the instructors.
9. During the lesson, I find myself thinking about unrelated things.
10. I am concerned about performing poorly.
11. I am not worried about swimming alone.
12. I feel comfortable in the deep end of the pool.
14. I am worried about reaching my goal.
15. I feel anxious.
16. I am concerned the instructors are disappointed with my performance.
17. My body feels relaxed in the water.
18. I am confident that I am making progress.
19. My body feels tense in the water.
20. I feel comfortable swimming with a lifeguard present.

The remaining eight questions measure swimming ability based on gradual water exposure procedures (Figure 4.1). The results of their anxiety test are highly related to performance behavior in sporting activities. Assessments from both researcher and swim instructors are included in the evaluation of each participant’s level of swimming competencies.
Table 4.5. Outcomes Over Time Related to Swimming Ability During Aquaphobics.

Figure 4.2. Outcomes Assessment Related to Swimming Ability.

21. Float on your back for about five seconds.

22. Walk out until the water is up to your chin.

23. Swim into the deep end with the assistance of a flotation device.

24. Tread water for about 15 seconds.

25. Submerge yourself completely for a moment and open your eyes.

26. Jump in feet-first off the deep end.

27. Swim to the deep end without the assistance of a floatation device.

28. Swim underwater for about five seconds.

The intent of the program is outcome focused with a commitment to helping people overcome Aquaphobia, understand the Aquaphobia phenomenon, and reduce drowning rates. One means to address the diversity of experiences to uncover a single perspective of the phenomenon is to categorize and structure knowledge within a
hierarchal diagram of outcome spaces (Figure 4.3). To draw implications and conclusions from the program, I identified five distinct levels leading to outcomes spaces to overcome Aquaphobia.

In a pheomenographic study, data analysis sorts perceptions that emerge for the data into specific categories of description. The set of these categories is sometimes referred to as “outcome space.” They are the primary outcomes and are logically related to one another. The description of each category develops from the perceptions of the phenomenon, as experienced by the participant, and the way of observing the phenomenon and participant as experienced and described by the researcher.

Broadly speaking, there are three types of outcome spaces about the Aquaphobics program. Being comfortable and confident in the water describe the state of mind the participant has and is capable of demonstrating the skills learned during the program. Participant also shows a willingness to attempt new water activities. Improved health describes what participants have experienced as a result of being in the program and understand how important it is to their overall well-being. Participants have seen for themselves the benefits of swimming as a mean of improving the health regarding weight loss, more energy and reduce joint pain. Overcoming fear of water describes what participants can demonstrate regarding knowledge, skills, and courage to attempt playful activities such as jumping into the deep end “cannon ball” style. Findings revealed participants achieved, at a minimum, one of the outcomes illustrated in figure 4.3.
Figure 4.3 Outcomes Spaces of Participant Profiles.

OUTCOMES
1. Being comfortable and confident in the water.
2. Improved health.
3. Overcome fear of water.

MOTIVATION
1. Desire to overcome fear/ learn to swim.
2. Enjoy more water activities.
3. Health reason/ job opportunities.

CONSTRAINTS
1. Cost
2. Proper instruction.
3. Lack of confidence.

FEAR
1. Near death experience
2. Story of traumatic experience.
3. Body Image

ESSENCE
1. Aquaphobia: A fear of water resulting from a combination of negative family influence or traumatic experience such as a near drowning or relationship with a drowning victim.
Determining the effectiveness of the program relied on three components of measuring outcomes; participant behaviors, appropriate assessment methods and participant criteria for success. Considering the components of measuring outcomes, the research concludes that the appropriate evaluation method for Aquaphobics should be a combination of discrepancy evaluation, and evaluation by-standards. Attributes of deficit model programming support this conclusion. Designing a program based on a deficit, it is essentially to remediate constraints or behaviors that prevent an individual from participation. Subsequently, phobias carry unique triggers, symptoms and signs that contribute to avoidance behavior. The information provided by the participants had a strong correlation with the type of information Theobald (1985) explains can be obtained from discrepancy evaluation and evaluation by-standards.

Participants were able to articulate their transition from a person with Aquaphobia to a person who overcame Aquaphobia. The catalyst for the participants’ Aquaphobia varied slightly among participants (fear of drowning, fear of engaging in a dangerous activity, family perpetuated fear of water and family or friend water-related death or accident). Participants were also able to articulate cultural and socioeconomic differences and the significance of these differences as constraints to learning to swim at a younger age or contributing factors to Aquaphobia. Participants emphasized constraints associated with the pre-contemplation stage were non-existent due to the benefit of “free lessons” and “unlimited lessons.” All participants are towards the end of the program, verbally commitment to continue to practice and attributed their continued progress to the effectiveness of the instructor. Although participants have not mastered each skill, all
participants were able to articulate clear examples of milestones using the critique of the Aquaphobics program.

**What can programmers do to remove constraints and motivate participation by treatment of Aquaphobia through swimming lessons?**

The fifth and final research question asked what programmers could do to remove constraints and motivate participation by treatment of Aquaphobia through swimming lessons? The first theme provided insight into answering this question, which the participants describe as “Crossing the black line”; interpreted as a moment when the excuses that prevented one from learning to swim no longer apply, were the participant acknowledges they have the skills to accomplish the task and must take to first step to achieving the desire outcome. What I discovered through my observations is that the participants required some form of security from me as the instructor. Their first attempt require me to be in the water beside them, the second attempt, I took the position along the pool deck, and the third attempt I made visual contact with them. The participant viewed my decreased attention as motivational vote of confidence in their ability to cross the black. My instructor role was more of a contributing factor to removing constraints and motivating progress then I original assumed. Confirmed in this study, the findings revealed that participants preferred if the instructor was an adult, the class was reserved for adults only, the class was free, and the class includes people with similar experiences. As I began to receive feedback from the participants, it became apparent that certain requirements must be met by the programmer.
Practitioners should give increased attention to their role in the program. Not all programs require involvement or need close interaction with participants. A shift to more participatory programs could encourage more collaboration, closer relationship with the participants and unique experiences as an insider. The quality and effort put into the planning of a program should remain high, but an effort towards simplicity and clarity would help retain participants in programs that are developed to deal with a deficit. Also, periodically assessing practitioner knowledge of theoretical frameworks, basic concepts and methods would provide a new level of program evaluation.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

The Aquaphobics program was initially focused towards African-American adult non-swimmers. As a practitioner and an African-American male, I had a personal interest in understanding the stereotype of why African-Americans do not swim. After a year of running the program, its popularity began to grow, and adults from a variety of ethnic backgrounds voiced an interest in joining. Further reflection on the purpose of the program lead me to make the program all-inclusive and focus on the common denominator; fear of water. In so doing, I aimed to understand the Aquaphobia phenomena among adults. A pilot study of the Aquaphobics program was conducted before this study to determine what participants considered their largest constraints, fears, motivations, and milestones.

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of an adult with Aquaphobia involved in an adult swim lesson program and the different ways they attempted to learn to swim. The intention was to understand better how the lived experience of adults with Aquaphobia would provide insight for practitioners and programmers alike who wish to help these individuals enjoy the many activities associated with water.

Interpretation

Three theories informed the analysis of the themes from the lived experiences of the adults with Aquaphobia involved in an adult swim lesson program. Creswell (2013) and Moustaks (1994) phenomenology provided insight into the essence of the
Aquaphobia phenomenon. Creswell (2013) and Moustaks (1994) phenomenography provided different ways that participants learned to swim. Connell and Kubisch (1998) and Cialdini (1993) theory of change explained how the participants transition from adults with Aquaphobia to adults that overcame Aquaphobia.

Discussion

The uniqueness of this particular swim program addresses not just the mechanics but also seeks to identify, examine and overcome preexisting fears or phobias associated with swimming. The issue is made more complex in that little information exists detailing personal narratives pertaining to perceived ability. Researchers conclude more emphasis should be placed on prevention and evaluation of preexisting physical and psychological conditions. One of the key difficulties in answering the question of whether or not drowning incidents can be reduced through prevention strategies, is to understanding why individuals do not participate in prevention strategies. What constraints do these adults face, external and or psychological? Findings revealed participants expressed a strong motivation and personal courage to learn how to swim despite their fear of water. Psychologically, the catalyst for the participants’ fear of water varied slightly among participants (fear of drowning, fear of engaging in a dangerous activity, family perpetuated fear of water and family or friend water related death or accident). The data revealed that participants would likely enroll in the program if the program if three external constraints were removed; (1) there was no cost to take lessons, (2) other participants shared similar life experiences, and (3) the instructor were an adult closer to their age. In the case of determining the best approach to teaching individuals
with Aquaphobia how to swim, the research provided some expected, yet detailed strategies.

**Lessons Learned from Research as Program Director**

An effective program seeks to improve continually. Improvement involves consent feedback. Feedback on the progress of students, feedback from students on the effectiveness of instructors is critical to adopting beneficial changes and determine that outcomes produced desired changes. Evidence that is not directly related to the program can be the useful knowledge that improves the overall effectiveness of the program. As a seasoned programmer, I made a note of seven factors that were unexpected outcomes and supporting quotes listed below.

1. Participants gained the confidence to pursue other goals, i.e., triathlon, paddle boarding, and boating.
   a. Because think about it like this, every time somebody jumps off the deck from the deep end, everybody else stops and watches. Then after you go in, and you come back up, everybody's clapping. So everybody's there-. Everybody's there just to support and just help with that anxiety. I know you all touched on it a little bit from the last couple of questions, but how would you describe your progress at this point? Are you, "Oh I'm going to the beach. I'm jumping off the boat. I'm snorkeling."

2. Participants are encouraging each other with tips and techniques because they want everyone to succeed.
a. Her name was Andrea, encouraging me. Her life is just ... The things that she's doing in her life, it's going to make me cry. She is so encouraging, and I want to be healthy, and strong, and live a long life and be able to serve God the way that I know that I need to. And this is helping me, it's changed my life.

3. Lessons become very individualized the longer each participant attended.
   a. You were my favorite because I feel like you pushed us, and you ... Miss Kathy watches us and helps up improve technique. But I feel like you watch us when we don't know you're watching, and you know us each individually, and really know our personalities, and what scares us, and what we're comfortable with. And you were able to push us beyond what we feel like we're capable of.
   b. But I feel like if he thinks that I can do it, he's got enough confidence in me to say I can do this, then I guess I must do this. I'm going go do it, so I do it. I try to do it. You know.

4. Teaching methods were adjusted to meet the desired outcome, i.e. while trying to learn dolphin kick face down participants were unable to grasp the technique. After adjusting the skill to dolphin kick face up they reached the goal of diving down and swimming under the water.
   a. Or I just thought it was more so like the confidence, like you know me, and Shawn have like these gaps, so when we came back, we were like, "Oh, we gonna be so behind" cause, you know, we were [p-ahr-ty
00:37:28] up, and then we like, "Uh, they so advanced, look at what they're doing. They even got little snorkel things now." Then you were like, "Go over there with them," and we were like, "Why? We're not at the same level anymore." But you had that confidence like, "No, you're fine. Go back over there."

b. I think you put uh thought into making the skills interesting and uh, I mean, you have a lot of good qualities. Just the fact that you're a black male that's teaching this class, which I have never seen before, that's a whole um area in itself. Um, but I think you do put thought into keeping it interesting. However, the negative is that sometimes you'll have us do a skill, and I miss the relevance of it. As you tell me to jump off a building, I'll jump, but I don't always know where this will come again. That's the only negative.

5. Participants reached out to family, friends and co-workers encouraging them to attend because it was an amazing, life-changing experience and they wanted others to have the same experience.

a. My younger sister and I learned how to swim together. She's four years younger than me, and we still go swimming all summer. We went swimming over the summer and took my nephews, and she said, "Wow, that really does look different. You look professional." (laughs).

b. Especially in our culture, like an African-American community. A lot of us never learned how to swim, and it's like I don't think anybody in our
family can swim. Now they're all like, "Wow. I wish they offered that where I lived," or trying to encourage them now to go take swimming lessons, some of our relatives and stuff, you know, too.

6. Couple relationships enhanced because couples worked through fears, excitement, and success together creating stronger bonds.
   a. That this has just been so life changing. And then, that's what ultimately changes people' minds. That's what happened with Jamal. There was nothing I could say to convince him. If I had found out about this program and tried to get him to come, he would have never done it. But having somebody- that had something in common. To be able to learn together.

7. New friendships were created.
   a. I seen it in Andrea a long time ago, I've know Andrea pretty much all my life. Not as well as I do now, but I've known her all my life, and then to see her running all the time, and doing all these races. Then getting in that water and diving. I'm just like, "Gollee." It's like she just blossomed into a whole other person, it's like I don't even know who that is.
   b. That's where I'm at. I enjoy this so much that I don't want the class to end. Like I don't ever want to get to a point where, okay, I'm done. I don't want to be done, I just want to keep-

**Limitations**

Some mitigating circumstances hinder the data and analysis of the project. The instrument used for assessing anxiety and swimming ability posed a potentially threat to
validity and reliability. It is rare for an instrument to be 100% valid. To maximize the appropriateness of the content of the instrument used in this study, it was necessary to select specific questions (not all questions) from the Sports Anxiety Scale and Anxiety Inventory, which would accurately assess desired outcomes. In order to make the instrument operational other authors such Martens, Burton, Rivkin and Simon (1980), chose limited number of items that were most sensitive to their study to measure specific state anxiety. Smith, Smolls, Cumming (2006), presented questions to participants and choose questions for the primary survey based on which questions the sample understood. A pilot study of the Aquaphobics program was conducted prior to this research using the same instrument. Participants in the pilot study understood the questions based on limited non-responses and after group interviews discussing the relevance of the questions asked. Considering the sample size of this study is eleven, a future study using total number of participants in the Aquaphobics (215) would provide a accurate assessment of the instrument’s validity and reliability

Further limitations included overcrowding during the summer months which deterred continued and/or new participation and varying degrees of the “quality” of instructors’ teaching ability. It is clear that no two instructors can make the same impact; thus, it becomes difficult to determine what separates “good” instructors from “bad” instructors without consistent feedback from the group. Group members were at times hesitant to provide critical feedback to the instructors at the beginning of the program because they did not feel a comfortable rapport was present that welcomed constructive feedback. Additionally, it may prove difficult for participants to accurately remember
their ability level during the beginning of the program if they have been in the program for longer than a year.

However, these limitations did not impede the sample size of this study. The researcher expected that the benefits of “unlimited lessons,” “no cost,” and “learn at your pace” would facilitate continued participation. Whatever the outcome, this study can provide practitioners with insight into the effectiveness of the Aquaphobics program. It can also support other organizations attempting to increase adult participation in swimming lessons, thereby helping instructors identify individuals that have stalled in the program and provide techniques to help participants continue.

**Summary**

Overall, this research becomes a complementary tool for future programs. Practitioners with little to no experience in the field can follow this research model to acquire background knowledge on the phenomenon facing the group so they may make informed decisions. Changes will be necessary on the part of practitioners to significantly improve the likelihood of other non-swimmers enrolling in a similar program by addressing the symptoms and signs of Aquaphobia. In addition, programmers should consider planning their programs from a participant-centered approach rather than an outcome-centered approach. The participant-centered approach will allow outcomes to change during the program as well as provide a sense of control to the individual. The lack of control inherent to Aquaphobia leaves the participant feeling helpless and completely dependent upon the instructor. Focusing on the needs of the individual and building the relationship between the instructor and the participant becomes paramount to
establishing a sense of control and trust. The important role of the instructor cannot be overstated in a participant-center program and will be explained in Chapter Six.

Practitioners bare a great responsibility to remain knowledgeable, consistent and adaptive to the needs of those we serve. They must be willing to familiarize themselves with what has been done and what works now. Reaching out to participants, accepting constructive criticism and suggestions for changes, and developing personal relationship appears most effective in facilitating a transition from non-swimmer to the swimmer.
Aquaphobics Program Manual

The Aquaphobics program is an example of how various factors require special consideration when planning, implementing, training staff and evaluating the program. The program may differ in design and evaluation depending on the facility or the community served. The following sections will provide a template of how to teach adult non-swimmers with a fear of water or varying abilities how to swim. The Aquaphobics program uses a combination of different swimming techniques and phobia treatment methods, to aid practitioners with the knowledge and skills needed to produce safer and confident adult swimmers.

Program Design

Depending on the demographic makeup of the community you serve, it is prudent to assess if the program is needed in your area. The difficulty with programming for adults that suffer from Aquaphobia is that many adults hesitate to admit that they cannot swim. In the US 34% of adults reported have limited swimming ability (Gilchrist, Sacks & Branche, 2000). Drowning prevention programs can make a positive impact in reducing the highly preventable act of drowning.

The benefits of the Aquaphobics Adult Swim program include:

1. An emphasis on treating individuals with Aquaphobia.
2. Helping participants to understand the nature of their Aquaphobia.
3. Teaching skills to allow individuals to become comfortable and safe in the water.
4. Up to date biomechanics and stroke development techniques.

5. Information and training techniques for instructors to handle adults with Aquaphobia.

6. Strategies to encourage participation and maintain consistent engagement.

Assess the Need

Survey community members and target the parents of children already involved in a swim lesson program. Questions should focus on understanding the nature of a person Aquaphobia. The survey must be short and to the point; a sample of required forms are included in the appendix. The results of the survey should be kept and used in future evaluations of the participants. The following questions are a sample of the questions included in the original survey.

1. Are your children currently enrolled in swimming lessons? If yes, do you feel it is important that you know how to swim?

2. What has prevented you from learning how to swim before now? Would you participate in a swimming lesson if they were free?

3. Would you participate in a swimming lesson if it were restricted to adults with a fear of water?

4. Would you participate in a swimming lesson if an adult taught it?

If a need exists, removing constraints should be the second objective to starting a program. The survey will provide data as to which constraints potential participants face and then design the program to remove or manage those constraints within the means of the facility. It is highly likely adults will participate if (1) there is no cost to take lessons, (2) other participants share similar life experiences, (3) the instructor is an adult closer to
their age, and (4) having the peace of mind of knowing how to swim will add an extra measure of safety when their children swim. Other constraints worth noting come from African Americans at the age of 45. Several of the constraints expressed by this group made mention of discriminatory practices, lack of transportation from rural areas, and costs exceeding their economic ability.

**Instructor Qualifications**

The purpose of this section is to train instructors how to evaluation, teach, adapt, and motivate continuously throughout the course of the program.

- **Age:** Instructors should be at least 25 years old. However, the age limit is not a requirement; it does help reduce the likelihood that many adult non-swimmers feel that younger individuals may not have the ability to teach them how to swim. Adults associate younger people with teaching children and don’t want to feel as if they are learning on a child’s level. Labor laws prohibit discrimination based on age, so you may hire a younger individual if they can display a mature and encouraging disposition.

- **Diversity:** Labor laws prohibit discrimination based on race. It would be prudent to have a diverse group of instructors. Many of the African-American participants in the original program expressed a greater motivation to attend when the “instructor looked like them.” The primary concern should be safety first, but if you have a qualified African-American applicant, hiring that individual could increase African-American enrolled.
- **Lifeguard Certified:** As an extra measure of safety, all instructors should be American Red Cross lifeguard certified. Lifeguards should be on duty during the class as well.

- **Experience:** Many of the students will have suffered some form of traumatic experience. A greater connection between the instructor and student can be made if the instructor had relatable experiences. However, this is not a require qualification; it does assist the instructor during the evaluation phase of the program to recognize difficulties and offer solutions.

**Instructor Training**

Instructor training should be open to accommodate the changing conditions of the class. There are certain skills every instructor must have or develop while teaching Aquaphobics’ students. The role of the instructor, within the context of the Aquaphobics program is equally important if not more important than the skill being taught. Better instructors achieve better results!

- **Safety:** Explain safe behavior to your students. Show your students where safety devices are located in your facility and where the lifeguards are stationed. Be familiar the facility Emergency Action Plan, limit potential hazards, and be proactive to prevent injury.

- **Building Trust:** Instructors must be able to form a therapeutic bond with their students. To form this bond, an instructor must display a variety of skills, some of which include, empathy, influence/persuasive, honestly and monitoring. The student must believe the instructor can help him or her.
○ **Empathy:** In the first lessons, create conditions of interaction that require minimum effort but maximum verbal responses. For example, one that has a fear of water touching their chin, the instructor can walk that individual around the shallow end of the pool while allowing the person to hold on to the instructor’s wrists. During this time, instructor and student can gather more information about one another, exchange stories and gain insight on certain non-verbal cues of anxiety or understanding. Event instructors that do have the ability to understand the feelings of their students can take advantage of the first lessons to gain a better understand of Aquaphobia.

○ **Influence/Persuasive:** Instructors should be able to present exercises in a way that convinces the student that it is doable and beneficial. A persuasive instructor can convince a student to attempt difficult skill despite their reservations. The student believes in your opinion more than their ability and accepts the risk. As an instructor, you should only influence of persuade a student when certain of the student’s ability to accomplish the task. Failure could result in severe regression.

○ **Honesty:** An honesty instructor does not avoid difficult material in lessons and uses such difficulties as means of progress. The student may avoid difficult task as an avoidance measure. It is the instructor’s job to address the avoidance behavior and discuss the different potential outcomes that could result from attempting the activity.
- **Monitoring:** The instructor must continually monitor the progress of the students in an authentic way. This may involve keeping a journal of achievements, behaviors, and regressions. Administering skills tests, such as demonstrating difficult skills or having conversations about the effectiveness of an activity.

- **Verbal:** Communicate the reason for specific drills or skills. Explain each aspect of the drill, ask if the students understand, and get feedback from the student after attempting the skill.

- **Knowledgeable:** Maintain a continuing education of swimming mechanics and techniques. Reference multiple sources such as USA Swimming or American Red Cross. It is imperative to maintain your Lifeguard, First-Aid, and CPR certifications.

- **Motivating/Encouraging:** Know why each of the participants are there and what motivates them. Reference this motivation consistently and giving feedback or progress reports. Find different methods of encouraging your students. Instructors can use tangible rewards, group acknowledgments, or words of affirmation.

- **Creative:** People learn in different ways. Be mindful that one technique may not work for all. Ask participants what would help them learn if they are experiencing difficulty with specific tasks. Be able to break skills or activities down into simpler steps. It may require more time and effort on your part but your student will greatly benefit. Include an element of fun as a means of giving
your students a way of demonstrating what they have learned. Your creativity
will help the students stay engaged and start to view water as a recreational
activity not a phobic disorder.

- **Nurturing**: Continually let participants know that you are there to help.
  Participants most understand there is no set time to learning a new skill. Explain
to them that staying persistent will bring them closer to achieving their goal.

- **Firm/Challenging**: As the instructor, you must be able to recognize the ability of
  your students. Your students do not have a frame of reference to assess their
  ability. You do not want them to compare themselves to others, so it is
  imperative to challenge them randomly with new and old skills. Keep their mind
  focused on their ability. Be firm but no overbearing to getting your students to
  commit to the challenge.

- **Patient**: Student must see patience in your demeanor and voice. Students can
  become deterred from continuing if the feel the instructor has become frustrated.

- **Responsible/Trustworthy**: As an instructor, you are responsible for the life of
  your students. Failure to recognize a distressed student could result in death.
  Even a minor incident such as swallowing too much water could be detrimental to
  the student if the instructor does not notice or address the situation.

- **Teaching Aids**: It may be necessary to use teaching aids such as kickboards,
  flippers or floatation devices to learn skills. Explain how to use each item and
  closely watch the students use the equipment.
Pool Considerations

To ensure a safe program, make sure the pool area meets the Department of Health and Environmental Control requirements. Newcomers should start in the swallow end of the pool with adequate access in and out of the pool.

Water temperature can be a constraint for some people. The water should not be too cold or hot which can lead to discomfort. The temperature should be between 85 to 82 degrees for beginners and advanced students and 92 to 88 degrees for beginners with extreme Aquaphobia. It may be necessary to raise the temperature during the winter months to account for the difference in air temperature. Always consider the intensity of the activity when deciding the amount of time participants will spend doing an activity. Water temperature can have an adverse effect on the body when doing high-intensity task in warmer temperatures. Be aware of the comfort level of your participants and make adjustments within reason.

Implementation

Ratio: There should be at least one instructor for every five adults. Safety is a primary concern for adult non-swimmers. They need a certain amount of attention in early stages of the program. They must feel that the instructor has a close eye on them even when he or she is working with someone else. The larger the class, the more flexible you must become when organizing your drills. Utilize stations for larger classes to help us space and time more efficiently.

Time of Day: Considerations should be given to program start time. Generally, after 5 pm, when many individuals leave from work, works best. The length of the class
should also be considered; consequently, eight of the eleven participants had other obligations that required them to return home before 7 pm. Early morning between 8 A.M. and 11 A.M. were also considered as a potential class time for retired seniors and individual that worked second shift jobs.

**Day One:** Once the program has started, get to know the participants’ experience with water. Before teaching the mechanics of swimming, it is necessary to evaluate the individual anxiety level before their ability level. Allow participants the opportunity to build a relationship and trust with the instructor. From the participants’ perspective, they perceive the activity as a risk. They must believe with some level of certainty they are safe with the instructor and he or she care what happens to them. Let this process of developing a relationship and building trust proceed at a normal pace. Do not impose time limits or restrict the number of lessons an individual can take. The objective is to allow an individual to change their behavior at their pace. It ensures a lasting change when the change is actualized by the person and not forced by exterior means. However, exterior means, such as group peers, do provide a social network or support system that should be encouraged. Allow for feedback at the end of the class for all beginners. Start a pattern of behavior the will foster continual feedback.

**Addressing the Fear:** Allows student the opportunity to describe their fear at the beginning of their first class. Expect students to do little in the first month or two. Engage in simple tasks such as walking in the shallow end of the pool or dipping their head below the surface of the water. Depending on the level of anxiety of the student, instructors need to stay within reach of the student. Students with traumatic experiences
should be shown self-saving skills that directly relate to the apparent trauma. It will show your students how preventable the act of drowning can be with the right skills.

**Learning Basic Skills:** It is recommended that all instructors reference American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program when teaching motor skill development. The American Red Cross had devoted years of research and development into understanding principles applied to swimming (program manual can be purchased at www.americanredcross.org). As you begin to become more familiar with your students, you notice swimming skills change. A natural progress will begin to emerge that will allow you to predict when to introduce new challenges.

**Strength Development:** Swimming is much different from walking. Participants may struggle with the mechanics of kicking in the beginning. You must adopt a coaching perspective to developing the physical ability of your students. The instructor should write deliberate strength and conditioning plans to improve motor skills. Consider consulting a certified personal trainer or strength and conditioning coaching if writing workout plans are not your area of expertise. Remember to adjust the intensity of the workout based on the ability and age of the participants.

**Make it Fun:** Incorporate fun activities randomly into the class. Remind the students that one of their outcomes should be to have fun in the water. It is also an effect method of measuring anxiety and skills. Activities can be as simple as water volleyball or hold ones breath the longest. The point is to show students indirectly of the progress they have made in reducing their Aquaphobia.

**Meetings:** Schedule group meetings on a monthly or bimonthly basis. Giving
students the opportunity to share their stories serves multiple purposes:

1. Develops a strong social network.
2. Provides a judgement-free setting for exchanging stories related to their fears and process for overcoming those fears.
3. Obtain program and instructor feedback.
4. Gives instructors the opportunity to expand on their observations.
5. Develop the Instructor-Student relationship. Socializing outside of the learning environment.

**Evaluation**: Conduct evaluations continuously and at regular intervals. Participants must be aware, no matter how little, of the progress they are making. Instructors must keep in mind the potentially traumatic nature of this phenomenon. Failure to evaluate and provide feedback to a participant will likely be viewed as a failure and a precursor to another traumatic experience. When possible give students written feedback on their progress; an example of an evaluation survey is include in Appendix C. Share personal observations from your instructor log book to reinforce written assessments. The ultimate objective is not to merely teach people how to swim, or to be safe in the water, but to also get them to enjoy being in the water. Achieve all three and it becomes a regular part of their life. Below is an illustration of the evaluation process. It can be adjusted for each person in the program.
Outcomes: Instructors should be flexible and adaptable when developing outcomes for participants. Instructors must teach each person on an individual basis until anxiety is minimum and core abilities are achieved. Skills do not have to be learned in sequential order. Assess the individual’s strengths and weaknesses, comfort level, personal outcomes, and then teach accordingly. Instructor outcomes should exceed participant’s outcomes to serve as a challenge or motivator. It is the instructor’s responsibility to gauge the participant’s ability and know when a push is needed, or additional instruction is required. During this process, programmers should begin to notice a change in perspective. After about five to six months of consistent attendance, instructors should start to observe an increased level of confidence and ability, and a lower level of anxiety and fear. Results may vary from person to person, but if an individual has stayed with the program for five to six months, it is likely they are committed to learning despite the personal risk. Commit to providing tangible rewards for different achievements. For
example, decorative chips engraved with the achievement title would offer participants a visual reminder of their commitment to themselves as well as their progress. Allow members to see all of the different milestones available to them and use monthly group meetings as a means to honor those individual successes.

**Success:** Adults have diverse histories, constraints, motivations and outcomes as non-swimmers. Engage your students regularly in learning more about them and include them in the planning process. Make your lessons individualized as possible without sacrificing attention to others. Be adaptable, and your students will excel. As your students begin to recognize their successes, you will have helped to produce a confident swimmer. Confident swimmers will seek to demonstrate their new abilities through their interests and original motivations. You will have given your students a sense of freedom to explore new activities, effectively eliminating their Aquaphobia.
## Appendix A

### Coding & Themes Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Preliminary categories</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Tracks (perception)</th>
<th>Factors (barriers, facilitators)</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. &quot;How was your first time in Aquaphobics? &quot;</td>
<td>Initial feelings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>I was scared, afraid, terrified (of drowning / water)</td>
<td>Depth of pool</td>
<td>I was scared. I was scared my first time because I started in the three foot, and I couldn't swim at all, I couldn't put my face in the water. Never really been in the water, and it was scary the first time.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Around other people in the pool</td>
<td>I had been in the water before, all my life, but was afraid ... I didn't know how to swim properly, and was afraid to be around other people in the pool, and afraid of drowning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Always being told to stay away from the water.</td>
<td>We're always told to stay away from the water. “Stay away from the water”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Swim untaught</td>
<td>I was always scared to swim untaught because I was scared I would drown, even though I knew how to navigate under it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Did not know anything about water; never knew how to swim / never really done it</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Swim underwater (as opposed to just staying upfloat)</td>
<td>Swim underwater (as opposed to just staying upfloat)</td>
<td>Did not know anything about water; never knew how to swim / never really done it</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Appreciation for fishing on a boat (more safe when knowing how to swim)</td>
<td>My first time I was excited because I love being in the water, just didn't know how to swim.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Following feelings</td>
<td>I was excited / pretty cool</td>
<td>Depth / size of pool</td>
<td>Well, my first day was pretty cool. But the second day, when we actually got into the big pool, I was terrified (laughs).</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Love it</td>
<td>Learning how to do swim properly</td>
<td>Since I’ve been coming, I love the water, and still got more to learn. And I appreciate you for having patience with me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Overcome / a lot better / glad I came / embrace</td>
<td>Learning how to do swim properly</td>
<td>I’ve met people, friends that I see outside of this</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Terrified</td>
<td>Bigger pool</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Preliminary categories</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Tracks (perception)</td>
<td>Factors (barriers, facilitators)</td>
<td>Quotes</td>
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<td>2. &quot;Who or what motivated you to come take swimming lessons&quot;?</td>
<td>Motivation to enter the class</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Saw an opportunity</td>
<td>Free lessons</td>
<td>&quot;I just did not believe what an opportunity because I priced private swimming lessons, and I just couldn't believe the opportunity. (...)&quot;</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Conquer</td>
<td>Coaching / help</td>
<td>I was just going to conquer it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Learn</td>
<td></td>
<td>I'm here to learn, and I'm gonna conquer this and move on to the next thing.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Something different</td>
<td></td>
<td>I knew I needed something different in my life.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Measuring up to others / Encouraging examples of people doing it around them:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Three of my co-workers started talking to me on a daily basis about the adventures they have here (social adherence)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Andrea (example that related to / seeing motivation in others / people who overcame similar obstacles)</td>
<td></td>
<td>See her running all the time, and doing all these races. Then getting in that water and diving. I'm just like, &quot;Gollee.&quot; (...) She makes me want to pull out pom-poms and cheer for her on the daily.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>My body needed to change</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Exercise in preparation to something else</td>
<td>Do the triathlon / half iron man / special operations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. &quot;Who or what motivated you to come take swimming lessons &quot;? (cont.)</td>
<td>Motivation outside the class, after learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sister saying &quot;you look professional&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Ooh, I gotta find a hotel with a pool.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation to stay in the class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Joy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. &quot;What about uh, the anxiety in the beginning compared to now. Tell me about that. &quot;</td>
<td>Feelings in the continuum</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Being in the platform / ledge.</td>
<td>“I want you to go from the shallow to the deep end.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Potential belly flop</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pressure to not be anxious</td>
<td>Then we had to jump off the jump. I like froze, I was like, &quot;Uh-uh (negative), don't want to do it.” And I know you guys are right there and like, I'm not going to die. But in my mind I'm like, &quot;I'm going to die.”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Going to the deep end of the pool crossing the black line (pool depth / going underwater)</td>
<td>When you say, “Loosen up,” you tense up / being near somebody, bumping into somebody</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Black line of the pool: threshold to deep area</td>
<td>But then when I put those [dit-sings 00:14:27] on, when you took me out to the deep end. That's when my anxiety-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Self-consciousness</td>
<td>Body image</td>
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<td>Because I would get to that black line, and honestly, it was like brick wall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being in a swimsuit in front of other people that I'm not comfortable with</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Oh my God, I am way to big for this. I can't do this.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting here, and getting dressed, and getting in the pool</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Preliminary categories</td>
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<td>3. &quot;What about uh, the anxiety in the beginning compared to now. Tell me about that. &quot; (cont.)</td>
<td>Feelings in the</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Normality</td>
<td>Others are like you and that's ok</td>
<td>Because somebody keeps telling us, “Don't nobody care about what you did.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Just get up there and float on the water.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td></td>
<td>The pool has gotten smaller</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Pride / sense of accomplishment: reaching personal goals</td>
<td></td>
<td>I'm so proud of myself (…) I reached my personal goal</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conquer</td>
<td>Now, it's like it (swimsuit in front of people) doesn't even matter. That's not what I'm here for. I'm here to learn, and I'm gonna conquer this and move on to the next thing.</td>
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<td>Relief</td>
<td>And when I did it, it was like this big relief like, &quot;Okay, I did this. I finally did it after a year! I did it.&quot;</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Lack of Inclusion / self-awareness / lagging</td>
<td></td>
<td>I just ... I wanted what everybody else had. And I felt like I was lagging because I was still in group one, and they was already going on to group three, and I felt alone and by myself.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Pep talk</td>
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<td>Sometimes, I just need for somebody to look at me, and see my face, and see that you're not swollen, you're not drowning, you're okay. Just that acknowledgement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Preliminary categories</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Tracks (perception)</td>
<td>Factors (barriers, facilitators)</td>
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<td>3. &quot;What about uh, the anxiety in the beginning compared to now. Tell me about that.&quot; (cont.)</td>
<td>Coping strategy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Social Support (Encouragement / motivation from others or from watching others perform)</td>
<td>Classmates and instructor</td>
<td>And then somebody will say, &quot;You okay, it's all right.&quot; And I keep that in my brain, and I keep saying it to myself, &quot;I'm okay.&quot; And then I hear it again. Nobody's looking at you. Now, I feel like, nobody's looking, nobody cares.</td>
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<td>More advanced classmates</td>
<td>You have people that are more advanced than the other ones to encourage those of where you used to be. That means a lot.</td>
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<td>Watching others do the same</td>
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<td>That really motivates when I watch them dive, and I'm like, &quot;Oh, wow. I really want to do that.&quot;</td>
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<td>Culture / lifestyle</td>
<td>Especially in our culture, like an African-American community. A lot of us never learned how to swim, and it's like I don't think anybody in our family can swim. Now they're all like, &quot;Wow, I wish they offered that where I lived,&quot; or trying to encourage them now to go take swimming lessons, some of our relatives and stuff, you know, too.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Encourage self</td>
<td></td>
<td>I had to encourage myself because I just showed up that day, and I was like, &quot;I'm just going to do it. I'm just going to do it. If it kills me.&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Family discouragement</td>
<td>&quot;You're going to drown yourself&quot;</td>
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<td>Having to convince other people (family)</td>
<td>&quot;Convince other people that even people my size can get in the water and swim&quot;</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Concentration / focus</td>
<td>And now when I get in that water, I feel like everything else goes away. (...) My whole day's worry, it's gone. I can get in that water, and I can concentrate on me, and when I get out, I feel good about me. You can't think about anything else, you will kill yourself.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Breathing</td>
<td>Because my whole thing now is trying to get that breath. You know?</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Feeling light in the water</td>
<td>When I get in that water, I feel like I weigh all of maybe fifty pounds because I can just go in that water, and I love that.</td>
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<td>4. &quot;How would you describe your progress at this point? &quot;</td>
<td>Overall experience</td>
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<td>Going to the beach</td>
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<td>Jumping off the boat / jumping the lake</td>
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<td>Snorkeling</td>
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<td>Life-changing</td>
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<td>There's still a fear</td>
<td>Black line of the pool; threshold to deep end area</td>
<td>Yeah, because every time when I get to that black line to cross up to the deep end, I always have to stop and compose myself, and then swim over.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Realizations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Doing something you love makes you concentrate on that and forget problems, like your weight, who's looking at you</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Getting mad</td>
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<td>5. &quot;Now some of you are confident, (which is different than comfortable) some of you may not be there. For those of you that are, at what point was it ... Did it click, where you stopped worrying, and it was more, I gotta get this lap? When was it more towards the task and</td>
<td>The way to being confident</td>
<td>1</td>
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less about “Just don’t die.” When did that happen for you? “

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>“I’m either going to do this, or I’m going to die tonight.”</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eliminate comparison with others: doing tasks alone (without the pressure), to know it can be done</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

You know I don't like it when I can't get something. When you demonstrate something, and I can't get it, it just tears me up because I'm like I know I can do it. You know, I can get it, and I used to come and like jump in the ten feet, just to make myself jump when nobody's here. That helped me build confidence because if I can do it when nobody's here, then I know I got it. I know I got it for me. You know, because I mean, sometimes they're not watching there, but you know. So once I did that, you know, I was like, "I got it." Then-
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<tbody>
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<td>6. “I need you to rate the instructors.” What are some weaknesses, what are some strengths that I can improve to help you improve?</td>
<td>Instructor strengths</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pushing (on top of watching and improving technique) beyond what students feel they are capable of</td>
<td>You were my favorite because I feel like you pushed us, and you ... (...) I feel like you watch us when we don't know you're watching, and you know us each individually, and really know our personalities, and what scares us, and what we're comfortable with. And you were able to push us beyond what we feel like we're capable of.</td>
<td>“Come on, you're going to beat this.”</td>
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<td>Challenging</td>
<td>“Yes, you are. You'll get it because you know more that what you say you do. (...) I would try harder every day because he kept telling me. I'm going to take that gravy train away from you, talking about my little kick board. And I was like. &quot;Uh-uh (negative).&quot; “Yeah, you know what you're doing. I'm going to take that gravy train.”</td>
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<td>Motivation to do extra</td>
<td>You make me want to do things in water. You make me want to swim from this side to the deep end and back.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Know each student individually (their personalities, what scares them, what makes them comfortable)</td>
<td>You know us each individually, and really know our personalities, and what scares us, and what we're comfortable with.</td>
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<td>Confidence in the student</td>
<td>I feel like if he thinks that I can do it, he's got enough confidence in me to say I can do this, then I guess I must do this. I'm going do it, so I do it. I try to do it. You know.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Inspire trust for safety</td>
<td>Ability to knock out the student if needed / preventing from drowning</td>
<td>I trust that you can get me out of trouble</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>You would probably knock me out, drag me to the side, and throw me up on deck, and I'd be okay</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Same ethnicity than students</td>
<td>Just the fact that you're a black male that's teaching this class, which I have never seen before, that's a whole um area in itself.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Order in class (have things prepared)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Sense of humor</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Make skills interesting</td>
<td>“I think you put uh thought into making the skills interesting (...)”</td>
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<td>6. &quot;What are some “Sometimes you’ll have us do a skill, and I miss the relevance of it. Like you tell me to jump off a building, I’ll jump, but I don’t always know where this will come again. That’s the only negative.”</td>
<td>Instructing weaknesses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Miss the relevance of a skill</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Sometimes you’ll have us do a skill, and I miss the relevance of it. Like you tell me to jump off a building, I’ll jump, but I don’t always know where this will come again. That’s the only negative.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. &quot;What can I do, or what changes can I implement to make the program better?&quot;</td>
<td>Suggested strategies for improvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Room for individualized activities (address different needs of students)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not individual lessons, but like break up… Like, I’m not comfortable treading it, I can’t tread so much. But I know a lot of times we’re doing laps, but maybe have the opportunity during class for me like to practice treading or something. I think that would help me get to that level, and then I can feel okay, like treading for a while.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>More time in the water for free activities (freestyle)</td>
<td>I wish we had a little bit more time in the water, just a little bit to, even if it's just free time to say, okay, wait a minute, you need to go practice on this, this, and this. Because, as you know, if I can get one of them to stay with me. I usually try to stay for a little bit, and, you know, when I know what I need to practice on, just like to freestyle. I had to just keep on, and I finally kept doing it until I finally turned my head and breathe. I mean, I don't do it like I'm supposed to, but I had to stay there long enough to turn my head and breathe because I was not going to get out of that water until I did.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Videotaping of student performances (watch self-perform to look for ways to improve)</td>
<td>You can tell me how to do something, but I learn better when I see what I'm doing, so sometimes like videotaping, and let me look at where my body is, and then I correct it</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Water temperature: cold in the summer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Code Groups</td>
<td>Codes</td>
<td>Sub-codes</td>
<td>Examples/descriptions</td>
<td>Representative Quotes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Journey in the process</td>
<td>Anticipation</td>
<td>Fear / anxiety</td>
<td>&quot;I was always scared to swim untaught because I was scared I would drown, even though I knew how to navigate under it.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional barriers</td>
<td>Self-consciousness (being around others)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I had been in the water before, all my life, but was afraid ... I didn't know how to swim properly, and was afraid to be around other people in the pool, and afraid of drowning.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Going through it</td>
<td>Lagging</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I just ... I wanted what everybody else had. And I felt like I was lagging because I was still in group one, and they was already going on to group three, and I felt alone and by myself.&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(still) fear</td>
<td>Bigger pool, depth, crossing the black line, jumping</td>
<td>&quot;Yeah, because every time when I get to that black line to cross up to the deep end, I always have to stop and compose myself, and then swim over.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional facilitators</td>
<td>Anticipation</td>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>&quot;My first time I was excited because I love being in the water, just didn't know how to swim.&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Others' examples</td>
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<td>&quot;(...) see her running all the time, and doing all these races. Then getting in that water and diving. I'm just like, 'Gollee! (...) She makes me want to pull out pom-poms and cheer for her on the daily.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Journey in the process (cont.)</td>
<td>Emotional facilitators (cont.)</td>
<td>Going through it</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>From peers</td>
<td>“You have people that are more advanced than the other ones to encourage those of where you used to be. That means a lot.”</td>
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<td>I was holding on for dear life because I thought, “I'm a go under.” That’s when the worst anxiety hit me, and sometimes when I'm out there, it kind of starts coming over me a little bit, and then somebody will say, “You okay, it's all right.” And I keep that in my brain, and I keep saying it to myself, “I'm okay.” And then I hear it again.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Normality</td>
<td>Others are like you and that's ok. I feeling like everybody else, realizing that nobody cares how much you weight or perform</td>
<td>“(…) it was this welcoming because this is the first time I’ve been in a sport with other people that look like me.”</td>
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<td>“Nobody's looking at you. Now, I feel like, nobody's looking, nobody cares.”</td>
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<td>Excitement</td>
<td>Excited to show-off improvement</td>
<td>Younger sister saying “Wow that really does look different. You look professional.”</td>
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<td>Eager to go into hotels with a pool</td>
<td>“It makes a difference in your life when you go places now because over the summer… At the end of the summer when we went on vacation, I was like, “Ooh, I gotta find a hotel with a pool.” I mean, it’s like I look for a pool. I look for it, and I get excited when I see people in a pool.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Comfort zone</td>
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<td>“The pool has gotten smaller”</td>
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<td>Sense of achievement / relief</td>
<td>Proud of self</td>
<td>“(...) and when I did it, it was like this big relief like, 'Okay, I did this. I finally did it after a year! I did it.'”</td>
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<td>Emotional Journey in the process (cont.)</td>
<td>Emotional facilitators (cont.)</td>
<td>Continuum</td>
<td>Motivation to keep going / not wanting to end</td>
<td>&quot;I enjoy this so much that I don't want the class to end. Like I don't ever want to get to a point where, okay, I'm done. I don't want to be done, I just want to keep-&quot;</td>
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<td>Enjoyment (doing what loves), social group</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;So once I did that, you know, I was like, 'I got it.'&quot;</td>
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<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Ready to go snorkeling</td>
<td>&quot;I'm here to learn, and I'm gonna conquer this and move on to the next thing.&quot;</td>
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<td>Coping strategies</td>
<td>Setting personal goals</td>
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<td>Self-motivation</td>
<td>&quot;I’ve always wanted to know how to swim, and then Tammy started swimming, and that motivated me to want to come, and the fact that I wanted to do a tri and a half iron man.&quot;</td>
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<td>Ability to conquer</td>
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<td>Desire to learn</td>
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<td>Motivation from encouraging examples from peers</td>
<td>&quot;I was always scared to swim untaught because I was scared I would drown, even though I knew how to navigate under it.&quot;</td>
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<td>Andrea, Tammy, co-workers, more advanced classmates, etc.</td>
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<td>Focus</td>
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<td>The fear of water comes from swimming untaught</td>
<td>&quot;It'll pull you through, it'll make you forget how big I am in a swimsuit, or who's looking at me, or you know, it doesn't matter. You know, if you love it, you're going to do it.&quot;</td>
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<td>On doing something you love</td>
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<td>On breathing</td>
<td>&quot;Yeah, because my whole thing now is trying to get that breath. You know?&quot;</td>
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<td>Code Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Factors affecting the process</td>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>Pep talk</td>
<td>Sometimes, I just need for somebody to look at me, and see my face, and see that you're not swollen, you're not drowning, you're okay. Just that acknowledgement.</td>
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<td>Normality (relating to others)</td>
<td>Others doing the same as you</td>
<td>That really motivates when I watch them dive, and I'm like, &quot;Oh, wow. I really want to do that.&quot;</td>
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<td>Others being the same way as you (emotionally and physically)</td>
<td>&quot;(...) it was this welcoming because this is the first time i've been in a sport with other people that look like me.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Factors facilitating the process</td>
<td>Relaxed moments</td>
<td>Floating on water</td>
<td>&quot;But, once I start relaxing, it came even calmer to me, just get up there and float on the water. Now I can just fall back and, you know, I'm great.&quot;</td>
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<td>Proximity to home</td>
<td>&quot;I just did not believe what an opportunity because I priced private swimming lessons, and I just couldn't believe the opportunity, (...)&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>No cost</td>
<td>&quot;I always wanted to learn, too. I had friends in the past try, but it's been like a fail every time they're trying to teach me to swim. And then when my brother actually told me about the class, and I was like, &quot;Okay, we really don't have an excuse. It's free. It's not too far from the house.&quot; So we decided to come, and it's been great.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Factors affecting the process (cont.)</td>
<td>Tailored treatment</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Ability to know each one individuality and personality</td>
<td>&quot;You were my favorite because I feel like you pushed us, and you ... (...) I feel like you watch us when we don't know you're watching, and you know us each individually, and really know our personalities, and what scares us, and what we're comfortable with. And you were able to push us beyond what we feel like we're capable of.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Factors facilitating the process (cont.)</td>
<td>Cultural / lifestyle empathy</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Being from same race</td>
<td>&quot;I think you put uh thought into making the skills interesting and uh, I mean, you have a lot of good qualities. Just the fact that you're a black male that's teaching this class, which I have never seen before, that's a whole um area in itself. Um, but I think you do put thought into keeping it interesting.&quot;</td>
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<td>Make skills interesting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sense of humor</td>
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<td>&quot;I think you're witty, your sense of humor helps.&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Safety / trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Yeah, because you would probably knock me out, drag me to the side, and throw me up on deck, and I'd be okay.&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have class prepared / in order</td>
<td>Instructor / classmates</td>
<td>Ability to push / challenge / pep talk / make you want to do extra and impress</td>
<td>&quot;But I feel like if he thinks that I can do it, he's got enough confidence in me to say I can do this, then I guess I must do this. I'm going go do it, so I do it. I try to do it. You know.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;You were my favorite because I feel like you pushed us, and you ... (...) I feel like you watch us when we don't know you're watching, and you know us each individually, and really know our personalities, and what scares us, and what we're comfortable with. And you were able to push us beyond what we feel like we're capable of.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Factors</td>
<td>Social pressure</td>
<td>Disbelief / discouragement from others / having to convince others</td>
<td>Always being told to stay away from the water / family doubting success in water</td>
<td>&quot;We're always told to stay away from the water. 'Stay away from the water.'&quot;</td>
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<td>affecting the</td>
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<td>process (cont.)</td>
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<td>&quot;I know when I first started. Oh God, the anxiety was terrifying. You know, you would tense up, and when you say, 'Loosen up', you tense up.&quot;</td>
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<td>Not to be tense</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Miss the relevance of a</td>
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<td>“The negative is that sometimes you'll have us do a skill, and I miss the relevance of it. Like you tell me to jump off a building, I’ll jump, but I don't always know where this will come again. That's the only negative.</td>
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<td>skill</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Being in the ledge/platform</td>
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<td>“And that's not so much anxiety anymore, unless you're up on the platform.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pool depth</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Yeah, the deep end definitely was the biggest anxiety.”</td>
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<td>Self-image</td>
<td>Body</td>
<td>I wonder if it's possible to make allowances for like a different learning style. Like I, you can tell me how to do something, but I learn better when I see what I'm doing, so sometimes like videotaping, and let me look at where my body is, and then I correct it. Like I can do something all day but I don't feel confident because I don't see myself, see what it looks like. So um maybe introducing technology like video.</td>
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<td>Turning point for confidence</td>
<td>Getting mad</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;He really had to get mad, and he has not talked to me for two days because he's just not going to talk about it. He's gotta figure it out in his mind, and he watches all these YouTube videos. Then he demonstrates for me. He's like, &quot;This is what I'm going to do.&quot; Whatever it is, and he just shuts down for a couple of days until he can figure out what it is.&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thinking extremes</td>
<td>Either this or dying</td>
<td>&quot;I'm either going to do this, or I'm going to die tonight.&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Doing tasks alone</td>
<td>Eliminate comparison</td>
<td>&quot;You know I don't like it when I can't get something. When you demonstrate something, and I can't get it, it just tears me up because I'm like I know I can do it. You know, I can get it, and I used to come and like jump in the ten feet, just to make myself jump when nobody's here. That helped me build confidence because if I can do it when nobody's here, then I know I got it. I know I got it for me. You know, because I mean, sometimes they're not watching there, but you know. So once I did that, you know, I was like, 'I got it.'&quot;</td>
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Appendix B

Aquaphobics Questionnaire 1

Part 1: Demographic Questions

1. Please list your first name and last initial only: _____________________

2. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female

3. What is your age?
   a. 18–24 years old
   b. 25–34 years old
   c. 35–44 years old
   d. 45–54 years old
   e. 55–64 years old
   f. 65–74 years old
   g. 75 years or older

4. What is your ethnicity?
   a. White
   b. Black or African American
   c. Hispanic or Latino
   d. Native American or American Indian
   e. Asian or Pacific Islander
   f. Middle Eastern
   g. Other ____________________________

5. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
   a. Grade school
   b. High school, no diploma
   c. High school graduate, diploma or equivalent
   d. Some college credit
   e. Associate’s degree
   f. Bachelor’s degree
   g. Master’s degree
   h. Professional degree
   i. Doctorate degree
**Part 2: Historical Data**

1. Have you ever participated in a swimming lesson program before the age of 18?
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. To the best of your knowledge, did/do your parents know how to swim?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Uncertain

3. If you have children below the age of 18, do they know how to swim?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Uncertain

4. If you have children above the age of 18, do they know how to swim?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Uncertain

5. Did you have a fear of water prior to participating in Aquaphobics?
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. To the best of your knowledge, have any of your family members or friends experienced a water-related trauma (i.e., death as a result of drowning, near-death experience, and/or accident in need of rescue)?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Uncertain

7. Before the age of 18, did you have access to a lake, beach, or public pool within the following radii of your residence?
   a. 1–5 miles
   b. 6–10 miles
   c. 11–15 miles
   d. 15 miles or more

8. Before the age of 18, were you restricted from accessing a lake, beach, or public pool for the following reasons? Check all that apply.
   a. Segregation
   b. Cost
   c. Transportation
   d. Proper swim attire
Appendix C

Aquaphobics Questionnaire 2

A number of statements that individuals have used to describe their thoughts and feelings before or during a lesson are listed below. Read each statement; then, using the scale below, indicate how you usually feel in and around water (e.g., pools, lakes, or oceans). A number of individuals have feelings of nervousness or fear; these reactions are very common among individuals who cannot swim. To help us better understand this process, we ask that you share your reactions honestly. There are no right or wrong answers. There is no need to spend too much time on any one statement, but please choose the answer that best describes your reaction.

1 = Not at all
2 = Somewhat
3 = Moderately so
4 = Very much so

Part 1. Outcomes

___ 1. I feel calm.
___ 2. I feel secure.
___ 3. I have self-doubt.
___ 4. I am concerned about receiving adequate instruction.
___ 5. I feel comfortable in the shallow end of the pool.
___ 6. I am concerned about possibly drowning during a lesson.
___ 7. I am worried about swimming with a lifeguard present.
___ 8. I feel comfortable with the instructors.
___ 9. During the lesson, I find myself thinking about unrelated things.
___ 10. I am concerned about performing poorly.
___ 11. I am not worried about swimming alone.
___ 12. I feel comfortable in the deep end of the pool.
14. I am worried about reaching my goal.
15. I feel anxious.
16. I am concerned the instructors are disappointed with my performance.
17. My body feels relaxed in the water.
18. I am confident that I am making progress.
19. My body feels tense in the water.
20. I feel comfortable swimming with a lifeguard present.

**Part 2. Swimming Ability**

1. Float on your back for about five seconds.
2. Walk out until the water is up to your chin.
3. Swim into the deep end with the assistance of a flotation device.
4. Tread water for about 15 seconds.
5. Submerge yourself completely for a moment and open your eyes.
6. Jump in feet-first off the deep end.
7. Swim to the deep end without the assistance of a floatation device.
8. Swim underwater for about five seconds.
Appendix D

Focus Group Questions

Note: Questions were formatted and used in the pilot study the researcher conducted, with additional questions incorporated from Sherman’s study “Real-Life Exposure as Primary Therapeutic Factor in the Desensitization Treatment of Fear” (1970).

1. Tell me about your first memorable experience with swimming.

2. Describe the motivation(s) that influenced your decision to learn how to swim?

3. How did you prepare for your first swimming lesson?

4. Describe how you manage your level of anxiety during a lesson?

5. How would you describe your progress up to this point?

6. How would you evaluate the program instructors? What would you consider to be their strengths and weaknesses?

7. What would it take for you to feel safe and confident in the water?

8. In your opinion, what changes can be made to this program?

9. How would you define success in this program? Would it involve more water-related activities?
Joseph Crosby is inviting you to take part in a research study. Joseph Crosby is a Ph.D. student at Clemson University and is running this study. The purpose of this research is to collect personal narratives of individuals learning to swim as adults and what measures they have taken to overcome constraints, anxiety, and lack of swimming ability. Your part in the study will be to participate in a focus group to describe your experiences and complete questionnaires about anxiety and swimming ability. The focus group meeting will last for one hour and thirty minutes and include nine questions. The questionnaire will be administered before and after each lesson and include 24–26 questions. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled a week later to allow for participants to expand on the questions from the previous meeting.

Risks and Discomforts

We do not know of any risks or discomforts to you in this research study other than the risk associated with swimming, for which you have already completed the necessary paperwork with the Central Clemson Recreation Center to participate in the Aquaphobics program. Each participant will receive a copy of the focus group questions prior to the meeting. Individuals may then decide to participate of their own free will.

Possible Benefits

Through your participation, you could help develop an adult swim lesson program that could effectively increase people's ability to overcome anxiety and/or constraints associated with learning to swim. Through your participation, the principle investigator, who is also a certified swimming instructor, will be better equipped to understand anxieties and or constraints associated with learning to swim, which could potentially improve the service provided to each participant.

Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. We will not tell anybody outside of the research team that you were in this study or what information we collected about you in particular. You may choose to use an alternate name for the purpose of this study; however, your gender, age, and ethnicity will be recorded with the name you provide.
Choosing to Be in the Study

You do not have to be in this study. You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study or to stop taking part in the study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Joseph Crosby at Central Clemson Recreation Center at 864-639-1111.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-6460 or email irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC’s toll-free number: 866-297-3071.

Consent

I have read this form and have been allowed to ask any questions I might have. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant’s signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________

You will be provided with a copy of this form.
Appendix F

Focus Group Transcript

Facilitator: I'm trying to graduate in December, and this will make sure that I do that in December, so thank you. I appreciate all y'all sticking with me for almost two years now, most of you. So, thank you. Uh, we're just going to go around the table, answer how you feel, it can silly. It doesn't have to be serious or anything like that, just anything that you can remember like, for instance, I may say, "How was your first time?" In aqua-phobics, just tell me a little bit about that, you know. Let's try to keep it not too long, maybe two to three minutes. [inaudible 00:00:43] Yeah, I know, I know, but uh, we'll start to my right. Tell me about your first time?

Female: I was scared. I was scared my first time because I started in the three foot, and I couldn't swim at all, I couldn't put my face in the water. Never really been in the water, and it was scary the first time.

Female: My first time I was excited because I love being in the water, just didn't know how to swim.

Facilitator: Right.

Female: I never knew how little I knew about swimming.

Facilitator: I know you like to speak softly.

Male: I'll speak up, I was uh, I was scared, and I was not going to let go of the deck the entire class. But uh, told me to make sure that somebody with an instructor cap on or an instructor cap. Some people didn't. So, it was a good experience, I'm glad I came.

Female: I had been in the water before, all my life, but was afraid ... I didn't know how to swim properly, and was afraid to be around other people in the pool, and afraid of drowning.

Facilitator: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Female: And this has helped me overcome that and learn the correct things to do.
Female: It was a good first experience for me. I didn't know anything about the water, still learning, still work in progress, and I love it. Absolutely love it.

Female: Excited and overwhelmed because I never knew there was so much to swimming properly, and I love it. And I'm going to sick with it until I get it.

Facilitator: Good.

Female: So, I was excited about the class as well. I mean, the most I've been in was like maybe three to four feet, and I didn't know how to swim, just kind of ... I thought I could swim underwater, but I was just kind of under water doing something. But, I was always scared to swim untaught because I was scared I would drown, even though I knew how to navigate under it. I know that's a little weird, but so, but I was excited. And so you got to the deeper end, and I was really freaked out. But, a lot better now. [00:02:52]

Facilitator: Good deal.

Female: Me?

Facilitator: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Female: Oh shoot. No, I never swim. I never been ... Well, I've been in the water before, when I had, I think, it was my oldest son, I was ... Not him in the water with me, somebody as sitting and holding him. I would go under the water hold my nose, come back up. Down, up, but I was terrified of water. But I could, you know, do that and everything, but since I've been coming, I love the water, and still got more to learn. And I appreciate you for having patience with me.

Female: I had mixed emotions. On the one hand, I was uh, I had the same fear, I guess, everybody else had. But on the other hand, I just did not believe what an opportunity because I priced private swimming lessons, and I just couldn't believe the opportunity, so that made me uh vow to myself, I'm gonna try everything, I'm gonna do everything. I'm gonna be here everyday if I can. And also, um, mixed with that fear, it was this welcoming because this is the first time I've been in a sport with other people that look like me. Especially a non-traditional sport. So, that gave me motivation to,
um, embrace it uh in the fellowship. You know, I've met people uh, friends that I see outside of this, so.

Female : Oh, and I left something out. And I had told Rebecca that when you, um, y'all got something free or helps you, I would come, and then the next year I said, "Praise the Lord, I'm coming." So, I'm here.

Male : I was ultimately excited about doing this, something that I needed to do for when I actually get into the water. I know I like to go fishing a lot on a boat. That's one of the things I needed to be able to do was swim, in case I fell off the boat somehow.

Facilitator: Right.

Male : I enjoyed it.

Male : Well, my first day was pretty cool. But the second day, when we actually got into the big pool, I was terrified (laughs).

Facilitator: Was it the temperature, or was just the fact that we were-

Male : It was just everything, everything about it.

Facilitator: Okay.

Male : (laughs).

Facilitator: All right, tell me, who motivated you to come and ... Who or what motivated you to come? I guess that's my question.

Female : I guess I answered that a few minutes ago.

Facilitator: We can go around this way, just speak freely, doesn't matter. What motivated you to come take swimming lessons?

Female : For me, it was just something that um I never really done, and I knew I wanted to conquer, and that I was just going to conquer it. So I just looked it up and showed up.

Female : I knew I wanted to learn how to swim. But, I wasn't sure if this was the way fr me to go until three of my co-workers started talking to me on a daily basis about the adventures they have here, and I just really wanted to do it. And I knew I needed something different in
my life. I uh, told a group a my church that this was a spiritual
move for me also because my body needed to change, because I
have not always felt like this, and I want to look like I used to look,
and I want to use the body that the Lord gave me to begin with. So
I need to get it back there.

Facilitator: Right, I got you.

Female : For me, it was Andrea. She kept talking about it, and I almost
drowned when I was little, so I've always been afraid of water, and
it was free.

Facilitator: Uh-huh.

Female : It was a good opportunity. I'm going to go ahead and do it.

Facilitator: Got ya. Recruiter in chief.

Female : She was. [crosstalk 00:07:48]

Female : Her name was Andrea, encouraging me. Her life is just ... The
things that she's doing in her life, it's going to make me cry. She is
so encouraging, and I want to be healthy, and strong, and live a
long life and be able to serve God the way that I know that I need
to. And this is helping me, it's changed my life.

Female : I wanted them to see that I could do it, they could do it. Because
they were already ahead of me. Y'all already in water.

Female : This one tried to get me in the pool-

Female : They were already in water, and if I could do it, I know you all
could do it. I wasn't even in water.

Female : You could swim.

Female : What I called swimming was really, probably just like dog
peddling. I'd go under the water and I'd just do this [crosstalk
00:08:43]. Point A, point B, and that was all I needed.

Female : Yeah, that's how I was, too.
Facilitator: You know, I head that so many times. I think to myself, what you going to do when you run out of air? You cannot swim underwater forever. [crosstalk 00:09:03] okay.

Female : I did at that point when I did that, I know I got there yet (laughs).

Female : My younger sister and I learned how to swim together. She's four years younger than me, and we still go swimming all summer. We went swimming over the summer and took my nephews, and she said, "Wow, that really does look different. You look professional." (laughs).

Facilitator: It makes a difference.

Female : It makes a difference in your life when you go places now because over the summer ... At the end of the summer when we went on vacation, I was like, "Ooh, I gotta find a hotel with a pool." I mean, it's like I look for a pool. I look for it, and I get excited when I see people in a pool. When Andrea went, and I was watching her, and I'm like, "Oh, God. I want to do that. I want to be graceful. I want to swim just like that." I still fight ducks right now in the water, but I'm gonna get there.

Facilitator: You're getting there.

Female : Absolutely.

Female : I'm gonna get there.

Facilitator: You're getting there.

Female : I think for me, um, it was pretty gonna be another form of exercise, and my ultimate goal was to do the triathlon, so I knew I had to learn how to swim to be able to do that. So that is my goal for 2017, and I've still got a long ways to go with swimming, but I'm here. I'm showing up so that's all that matters at this point.

Female : I've always wanted to know how to swim, and then Tammy started swimming, and that motivated me to want to come, and the fact that I wanted to do a tri and a half iron man.

Facilitator: Wow.
Female: *I always wanted to learn, too. I had friends in the past try, but it's been like a fail every time they're trying to teach me to swim. And then when my brother actually told me about the class, and I was like, "Okay, we really don't have an excuse. It's free. It's not too far from the house." So we decided to come, and it's been great.*

Female: Well, ditto for me. I did relate to what Erica was-

Male: Like them, it was kind of like set up through something else.

Facilitator: Ah.

Male: I got ... I'm trying to go back into special operations, and one of the things we have to do is swim one hundred meters.

Facilitator: Right.

Male: I have to get back in shape then in order to do that again.

Facilitator: I got ya.

Male: I'm just like everybody else. Pretty much had a few scary-

Facilitator: What about uh, the anxiety in the beginning compared to now. Tell me about that. Because I know some people like you were saying, holding on to the deck, even wading out in the shallow end is sometimes tense for most people. And I know, some of you, I would go around and say, "Relax your shoulders," because y'all would, clench ... I'm floating, I'm floating. You're not floating. Tell me a little about that, just the anxiety in the beginning and where you are now.

Female: I know when I first started. Oh God, the anxiety was terrifying. You know, you would tense up, and when you say, "Loosen up," you tense up. But, once I start relaxing, it came even calmer to me, just get up there and float on the water. Now I can just fall back and, you know, I'm great.

Facilitator: Right.

Female: I'm good.

Female: It's amazing to me how the more comfortable I've gotten, the pool has gotten smaller. It was overwhelming at first, and I couldn't do
one lap. I set goals for myself. That's another thing, um, I'm so proud of myself. Um, I said by the end of the summer, I was going to do x number of laps, and I had a big trip out of town, and I thought, "I'm not going to be able to do this," because I go and stay for a month. I don't swim. But anyway, I reached my personal goal, and um, and I used to um have anxiety about being near somebody, bumping into somebody. Um, but everything has just gotten so um attainable now. Not to ... I still have a lot, a long way to go. But, I just feel good with the progress.

Female : I have a very long way to go, but it wasn't so much anxiety, at first. I just ... I wanted what everybody else had. And I felt like I was lagging because I was still in group one, and they was already going on to group three, and I felt alone and by myself. And I wanted to be out there with everybody else. But then when I put those [dit-sings 00:14:27] on, when you took me out to the deep end. That's when my anxiety-

Facilitator: Oh, there's no [dens-ih-nees 00:14:32] on.

Female : I was holding on for dear life because I thought, "I'm a go under." That's when the worst anxiety hit me, and sometimes when I'm out there, it kind of starts coming over me a little bit, and then somebody will say, "You okay, it's all right." And I keep that in my brain, and I keep saying it to myself, "I'm okay." And then I hear it again.

Female : Sometimes, I just need for somebody to look at me, and see my face, and see that you're not swollen, you're not drowning, you're okay. Just that acknowledgement.

Female : Yeah, because I would get to that black line, and honestly, it was like brick wall. That line was like a wall for me. Then, when I finally got over it, you said, "Come on." And I said ... But I went.

Facilitator: Yes you did.

Female : And I stayed, and I've been back several times (laughs).

Female : Part of my anxiety was not just getting in the pool, but getting here. Being in a swimsuit in front of other people that I'm not comfortable with, that I don't know, and having just very self-conscious thoughts, and just getting here, and getting dressed, and getting in the pool. And I still have that a little bit, but it's not ...
Now, it's like it doesn't even matter. That's not what I'm here for. I'm here to learn, and I'm gonna conquer this and move on to the next thing.

Female: Because somebody keeps telling us, "Don't nobody care about what you did." (laughs).

Facilitator: They really don't.

Female: Nobody's looking at you. Now, I feel like, nobody's looking, nobody cares.

Female: See, I was like, "Oh my God, I am way to big for this. I can't do this." But once you get in there, it's like ... When I get in that water, I feel like I weigh all of maybe fifty pounds because I can just go in that water, and I love that.

Facilitator: I can tell you, people know when you're not there. Where's Laurie? Why are they out.

Female: Really.

Facilitator: Get on them. Why didn't they show up? And then what I do tell, I punish you in training. But it's more where you are, why are you not here, and then if they are looking at you, it's more of, "They are really good. They've come so far."

Female: Exactly.

Facilitator: So think of it that way because that's what people ask me.

Female: And that makes a difference, too. You have people that are more advanced than the other ones to encourage those of where you used to be. That means a lot.

Female: That helps a lot.

Female: It pushes you to that next level. And for me, the anxiety was the day that you said, "I want you to go from the shallow to the deep end." And I said, "I don't think so." And did it, and when I did it, it was like this big relief like, "Okay, I did this. I finally did it after a year! I did it." But, again, I still have a long ways to go. I'm gonna get there ... I've learned ... Same thing you were saying about you want to be where everybody else is, but everybody is different, you
know. It might take you two years, it might take me ten, but I'm in here for the long haul.

Female: Yeah, the deep end definitely was the biggest anxiety. Even with the noodles at first, I was like, "Uh-uh (negative)," and then I know like you guys are there, and like you're not going to drown. I'm like, "Yes, I am." Then we had to jump off the jump. I like froze, I was like, "Uh-uh (negative), don't want to do it." And I know you guys are right there and like, I'm not going to die. But in my mind I'm like, "I'm going to die." But now I can jump in. Not the diving board yet, that was a bit much right there but ... Mainly because I keep belly flopping, but that's another-

Female: That really motivates when I watch them dive, and I'm like, "Oh, wow. I really want to do that."

Female: And that's not so much anxiety anymore, unless you're up on the platform. And then it's like, somehow this like two ... What is it? Maybe two feet.

Female: If that, right?

Female: At the most. Is like-

Female: Scary.

Female: It is. I mean-

Female: So it's worse up on the-

Female: Yeah.

Female: Then the ledge, yeah [crosstalk 00:19:29]. Once you're in there, you're good. It's just the jumping.

Female: You belly flop.

Female: It's something else to get used to, and something else to conquer.

Female: I just know for me, I had to encourage myself because I just showed up that day, and I was like, "I'm just going to do it. I'm just going to do it. If it kills me." I know I say that a lot. If it kills me, I'm just going to do it. I just had the ... I came be myself, and I just encouraged myself just to go all the way.
Facilitator: Because think about it like this, every time somebody jumps off the deck from the deep end, everybody else stops and watches. Then after you go in, and you come back up, everybody's clapping. So everybody's there- [crosstalk 00:20:19]. Everybody's there to just support and just help with that anxiety. I know you all touched on it a little bit from the last couple of questions, but how would you describe your progress at this point? Are you, "Oh I'm going to the beach. I'm jumping off the boat. I'm snorkeling."

Female: That's right.

Female: I want to go snorkeling.

Female: I'm gonna jump in the lake [crosstalk 00:20:51].

Female: It's life changing, it really is. It's life changing, for me it is.

Female: Go ahead.

Female: No, I'm through.

Female: I was like, "What's your name?"

Female: Me?

Female: Tabitha, Tab.

Female: I was like, Tabitha, when we go out, go to you know, all somewhere, I would look for a swimming pool. I would make sure they got one inside and one on [ren 00:21:19]. I don't care too much, well, outside. But mainly the inside. I would look for one. I said I would get my husband, I said, "Come on, we going to the pool." And then he got some four inch, I'm like, I said, "It ain't but three, maybe three foot, right?" Then he get's a little, and I'm like- I can't even stand ... I'm not going over this. He's three foot, she's what six foot what tall, I guess [crosstalk00:21:46]. But he wouldn't go. I went swimming, so I love the water. I still got a long ways to go, but I love the water.

Facilitator: Right. So it's no longer a fear that if I got in the water, something might happen, it's just now, in hindsight, it's like, "Why was I even scared to begin with?"

Female: It depends.
Male: There's still a fear.

Facilitator: Still a fear?

Male: Yeah, because every time when I get to that black line to cross up to the deep end, I always have to stop and compose myself, and then swim over.

Facilitator: But to us, you look like a fish. [crosstalk 00:22:21] But when you hear other people talk about being scared of the water and not wanting to swim, do you have a different perspective now? Tell me a little bit about that. Like are you thinking in the back of your head, "Why are you scared? You shouldn't be scared? Just try it."

Female: See, all that comes out with me, to my husband. "Why don't you wanna go get in the water?" "You go right ahead, honey. I'm fine." You need to, I want our kids to know how to swim. I need for them to know how to swim. I need to know that if they're out there in that water, they'll be able to survive, with or without me.

Female: Jamal's been on both ends of that because ... How did you feel? Because I begged you for six years to go, and now you're on the other side.

Male: I was scared to death.

Female: Scared of dying.

Male: No, [crosstalk 00:23:24] quickly, that I would [inaudible 00:23:25], and then-

Female: You can get through, you can do this, in the water.

Male: If I die, I'm coming back to haunt you.

Female: Now you know that you would have just- 

Male: I know why most people won't get in water because I've been in their shoes. But, you just have to take that step.

Facilitator: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Female: Especially in our culture, like an African-American community. A lot of us never learned how to swim, and it's like I don't think
anybody in our family can swim. Now they're all like, "Wow. I wish they offered that where I lived," or trying to encourage them now to go take swimming lessons, some of our relatives and stuff, you know, too.

Female: We're always told to stay away from the water. "Stay away from the water." [crosstalk 00:24:16]. Okay.

Female: I still get that, I still get that. From my husband, from my daddy, "You're going to drown yourself, keep on." I can do this, y'all. It's not that hard anymore. But, I don't know how to convince other people that even people my size can get in the water and swim. And it's not that big of a deal if you just get your tail in there and learn.

Female: It's your lifestyle. It's your lifestyle. When you talk about it, and you're so happy, like you can see it on your face. That was the motivation for me with Andrea.

Female: With Andrea, yeah, yeah.

Female: Because she was so excited about it and so happy about it, and it just spills out of her.

Female: It does.

Female: That this has just been so life changing. And then, that's what ultimately changes people’ minds. That's what happened with Jamal. There was nothing I could say to convince him. If I had found out about this program and tried to get him to come, he would have never done it. But having somebody-

Female: That didn't know. Maybe that was it. That couldn't swim.

Female: -that had something in common. To be able to learn together. [crosstalk 00:25:39]

Female: The one person that nag everybody else to come ain't even here yet.

Female: Did that [crosstalk 00:25:45]-

Female: "Okay, I'm going today, you coming?" "No, I can't today, but uh-"
Female : That's why you have to do it for yourself.

Female : Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Female : You cannot wait on anybody.

Female : You can't wait.

Female : And I kept that in my brain. You gotta do it for yourself because she kept saying it, and she would tell us this. Every Wednesday-

Male : She got mad because we went without her. Yeah.

Female : Y'all started swimming, and nobody waited on me.

Female : Not me, somebody else.

Female : Sherry, yeah, you'll see her.

Facilitator: Okay. I can come by there. I come over there with a swim cap on.

Female : But when you see motivation in somebody else, which we see it-

Female : *I seen it in Andrea a long time ago, I've know Andrea pretty much all my life. Not as well as I do now, but I've known her all my life, and then to see her running all the time, and doing all these races. Then getting in that water and diving. I'm just like, "Gollee." It's like she just blossomed into a whole other person, it's like I don't even know who that is.*

Female : Yep.

Female : And she really brings ... She makes me want to pull out pom-poms and cheer for her on the daily.

Female : I love it though.

Female : I got pom-poms, I'm ready. That's how I am. That's just how I am.

Female : When you do something you love, whether you're tired, whether you don't feel like it, it'll pull you through.

Female : It does.
Female: It'll pull you through, it'll make you forget how big I am in a swimsuit, or who's looking at me, or you know, it doesn't matter. You know, if you love it, you're going to do it.

Female: And now when I get in that water, I feel like everything else goes away. All my problems are gone, all my issues are gone, all that from mamma, and daddy, and everybody else saying, "You're going to kill yourself." That's gone, that's gone. My whole day's worry, it's gone. I can get in that water, and I can concentrate on me, and when I get out, I feel good about me.

Facilitator: Right.

Female: You can't think about anything else, you will kill yourself.

Female: I know. I will drown if I think about everything else.

Female: You have to concentrate on what you're doing.

Female: I gotta breathe now.

Female: Yeah, breathing is horrible.

Female: Yeah, because my whole thing now is trying to get that breath. You know?

Female: Trying to catch that breath.

Female: Yeah, get that breath, turn your head.

Facilitator: It sounds like all of you are at a point now where you're comfortable in the water. And there's a difference between being comfortable and being confident. Now some of you are confident, some of you may not be there. For those of you that are, at what point was it ... Did it click, where you stopped worrying, and it was more, I gotta get this lap? I gotta dive down and touch the bottom of the pool?

Female: Ain't got there yet.

Facilitator: When was it more towards the task and less about "Just don't die." When did that happen for you?

Male: Last year about this time, I got mad.
Female : You had to get mad.

Male : I said, "I'm either going to do this, or I'm going to die tonight."

Female : I don't know if I want to say that, or not.

Female : He really had to get mad, and he has not talked to me for two days because he's just not going to talk about it. He's gotta figure it out in his mind, and he watches all these YouTube videos. Then he demonstrates for me. He's like, "This is what I'm going to do." Whatever it is, and he just shuts down for a couple of days until he can figure out what it is.

Female : You know I don't like it when I can't get something. When you demonstrate something, and I can't get it, it just tears me up because I'm like I know I can do it. You know, I can get it, and I used to come and like jump in the ten feet, just to make myself jump when nobody's here. That helped me build confidence because if I can do it when nobody's here, then I know I got it. I know I got it for me. You know, because I mean, sometimes they're not watching there, but you know. So once I did that, you know, I was like, "I got it." Then-

Facilitator: I can tell you, don't compare yourself to me. Don't do that.

Female : Right.

Facilitator: I've been learning to swim since 2005. I mean, 2005 I decided I wanted to be a lifeguard. It took me a month to get ready for the lifeguard test, and then it took me thirty minutes to swim six laps. Then, I had to do it over again because I swam three of the laps wrong. So, after that, my chest was burning, I was tired, I was like, "I don't even care if I get this certification, I'm tired." I went back, I was like, "Okay, I'm gonna get this." I studied, and I literally taught myself how to swim to the point that you see today. Don't compare yourself to me, this is something that, like you were saying, it's a lifestyle change. You have to want to do it. And in my mind I thought, "There are not many black lifeguards out there." I'm in recreation, I work at pools, I need to know how to swim, I need to be able to lifeguard. And that's what motivated me to learn, to the point where I can go one breath down the pool, one breath back, and do all this crazy stuff that you see me do. So, don't compare yourself to me. Compare yourself to yourself.
Female: So you didn't know how to swim in '05?

Facilitator: I knew how to swim, but I wasn't a proficient swimmer. I could swim on top for a little while, I always used to keep my head above water. I wore my shoulders out. I was just ... I exhausted myself after half a lap.

Female: You should have done this.

Facilitator: I was doing ... I was side-stroking, doggy paddles. I was stuck with flippers for like three months because it felt so good to move through the water quickly, and when I took them off, I can't swim two laps.

Female: So that's why you know what it feels like when don't have flippers on, and I say, "I'm stuck, I'm not moving. I'm just at a stand still, killing myself, at a stand still."

Facilitator: And now you see, I can keep up with y'all, no flippers, and y'all have flippers on.

Female: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Female: Dang.

Facilitator: It's a process.

Female: Yes.

Facilitator: It's a process.

Female: With no flippers, then we have flippers.

Facilitator: It takes time.

Female: I want to see what you're going to do when you're wearing stuff, that's what I want-

Female: I hope so.

Facilitator: I want y'all to beat me. I want y'all to beat me. I want you-

Female: Talking some talk.
Facilitator: I want you to talk trash to me, that's what I want.

Female: -because he's so gorgeous.

Female: Are you ready, Joe? [crosstalk 00:32:53]

Female: Catch my breath.

Facilitator: Now, I want you all to be completely honest with me. I need you to rate the instructors. Now for the most part, I would say almost a year, maybe, it's just been me, and we had Jean for a little while, uh we've had Kathy. We've had Nancy. But for the most part, it's just been me. So, tell me how I'm doing. What are some weaknesses, what are some strengths that I can improve to help you improve?

Female: You were my favorite because I feel like you pushed us, and you ... Miss Kathy watches us and helps us improve technique. But I feel like you watch us when we don't know you're watching, and you know us each individually, and really know our personalities, and what scares us, and what we're comfortable with. And you were able to push us beyond what we feel like we're capable of.

Female: I don't feel like ... Miss Kathy does technique more than that. She doesn't push us, or she doesn't me, um in my experience with her.

Female: She has me.

Female: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Female: She knows how to make me reach for my goal for some reason, I don't know why. You make me want to do things in water. You make me want to swim from this side to the deep end and back.

Female: He don't make you want to, he says, "Come on, you're going to beat this." [crosstalk 00:34:42]

Female: But I feel like if he thinks that I can do it, he's got enough confidence in me to say I can do this, then I guess I must do this. I'm going go do it, so I do it. I try to do it. You know.

Female: And I trust that you can get me out of trouble.

Female: Exactly.
Female: If something happens.

Female: That's the main thing.

Female: I will drown Miss Kathy. [crosstalk 00:35:08] I mean, I'm a big girl, I'm just afraid that I would drown her with her trying to save me if I really got in trouble, and I feel like if I got in trouble, and you're there, I know that I'm okay.

Female: Yeah, because you would probably knock me out, drag me to the side, and throw me up on deck, and I'd be okay.

Facilitator: Yeah, I would. [crosstalk 00:35:36]

Female: But yeah, I feel like I would drown Miss Kathy. Now, when I started I had Alex, and he was a motivator for me because he would just look at me, "You'll get it." I'm not getting this. "Yes, you are. You'll get it because you know more that what you say you do." And that's ... And we would tell me, and you know I would try harder every day because he kept telling me, I'm going to take that gravy train away from you, talking about my little kick board. And I was like, "Uh-uh (negative)." "Yeah, you know what you're doing. I'm going to take that gravy train."

Female: He tried to do it in the other pool.

Female: Yes, and when he did that, I was like, "I've made it!" I don't need my kick board anymore. It's still a pacifier for me.

Female: I used to call it pacifier.

Female: But, way more than a noodle. I don't know why I trust that board more than my noodle, but that noodle is just as tall as I am, and me and that noodle both going to go to the bottom cause Miss Kathy had me out there riding that sucker, and I was like, not gonna work. But when I was out there with you, I had ... I think I had on flippers when I was out there with you the first time, and I felt like, after that I felt like I could get it.

Facilitator: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Was it like that for y'all, like more of a you knew I could rescue you if something happened?

Female: *Or I just thought it was more so like the confidence, like you know me and Shawn have like these gaps, so when we came back, we*
were like, "Oh, we gonna be so behind" cause, you know, we were up, and then we like, "Uh, they so advanced, look at what they're doing. They even got little snorkel things now." Then you were like, "Go over there with them," and we were like, "Why? We're not at the same level anymore." But you had that confidence like, "No, you're fine. Go back over there"

Female : And y'all were. You could do it.

Facilitator: Yeah.

Female : We got fired back up.

Female : I think you put uh thought into making the skills interesting and uh, I mean, you have a lot of good qualities. Just the fact that you're a black male that's teaching this class, which I have never seen before, that's a whole um area in itself. Um, but I think you do put thought into keeping it interesting. However, the negative is that sometimes you'll have us do a skill, and I miss the relevance of it. Like you tell me to jump off a building, I'll jump, but I don't always know where this will come again. That's the only negative.

Female : Yeah, you right because when we were sitting on the boards, I didn't understand the relevance of that. But then as I went along I understood, oh I gotta have some time of balance in the water, you know, I gotta know how to keep my balance. It helps, but, yeah, if we just knew a little bit more of why we were doing this.

Facilitator: Right, okay.

Female : I think there's more order with the classes when you're here because I guess you already have things prepared on what you want us to do. I noticed, a couple of weeks ago, we had two other people ... I mean, they did well, but you could tell they were new and didn't quite know what they needed to be doing.

Facilitator: Right, right.

Male : You're a good instructor, and I've learned a lot from you. But I've also learned something from the lifeguard, the blonde haired lifeguard. She tried to teach me how to flip turn. I haven't quite mastered that yet. But, yeah.
Facilitator: Cause I'm trying to learn that with y'all, too. I've always had trouble now.

Female: I think you're witty, your sense of humor helps. It's kind of dry, but (laughs) [crosstalk 00:40:12]-

Facilitator: Yes I did, yes I did.

Female: I'd like you say, you are awesome [inaudible 00:40:24]. One of us was doing something, he said, "I believe in you better than you believe in yourself." So, I appreciate that, and everything, everything that you've done. Lot's of patience.

Female: Lot's of different personalities.

Female: Yeah.

Female: He does, he watch everybody.

Female: -you said, pushes us.

Facilitator: It helps because I know how long it took me to learn by myself. So I don't want you all to have to go through that six years to be, you know, five six years to be proficient. I don't ... Y'all are getting it so fast. So that's why I devote that time and intend to do it. And if there's ever anything that doesn't make sense to you, ask me. I don't mind telling you. Like sitting up, like you said, sitting on the kick board, that is balance, core, strengthens your core. A lot of times when we swim, and I still forget to do it to this day, life my hips. If my hips drop, my legs drop, and you drag. So now, you're just slowing yourself down. It's the same thing with your head. A lot of you were kind of lifting your head up, and it was slowing you down, and then when I made you use the tennis ball, you were shooting through the water. I know you hate the tennis ball. It pops everywhere, but when you look down [crosstalk 00:41:51]-

Female: We do a lot of stuff like that-

Female: I don't want to ever learn all of it because I don't want to stop taking the class.

Facilitator: Oh, you don't have to stop.
Female: *That's where I'm at. I enjoy this so much that I don't want the class to end. Like I don't ever want to get to a point where, okay, I'm done. I don't want to be done, I just want to keep-

Male: So, with sitting on a kick board, was it balance, or trying to teach us how to tread water?

Facilitator: Balance.

Male: Okay.

Facilitator: I mean, a lot of the activities we do, you can combine them. Um, when we take the kick board into the deep end, then yeah, it's about treading water and balance. But when we're more on the shallow end, it's about being able to move around in the water with just your arms, and knowing how to move your arms. So I try to break it up into pieces because you want to be an efficient swimmer. A lot of times when we jump in the deep end, and we try to tread water, it just ... Everything is moving so fast, and you tire yourself out. But if you can just do that and then slowly kick your legs, then you can tread long enough for somebody to come get you. So, there's always a reason why I might break it into parts and then, I kind of leave it out there for you to say okay, I get it now. Because it's a lot easier for you to grasp it and understand than for me to say, "You're gonna get this." So yeah. [crosstalk 00:43:26]

Let's see, okay, my last question, what can I do, or what changes can I implement to make the program better? Does it need to change? I know one is I need more instructors who are kind of like me to help out, especially during the summer when we had thirty people, and I was the only one in the water. But, what other things can we do?

Female: Are there opportunities to kind of ... Not individual lessons, but like break up ... Like, I'm not comfortable treading it, I can't tread so much, but I know a lot of times we're doing laps, but maybe have the opportunity during class for me like to practice treading or something. I think that would help me get to that confidence level, and then I can feel okay, like treading for a while.

Female: I wish we had a little bit more time in the water, just a little bit to, even if it's just free time to say, okay, wait a minute, you need to go practice on this, this, and this. Because, as you know, if I can get one of them to stay with me, I usually try to stay for a little bit,
and, you know, when I know what I need to practice on, just like to freestyle. I had to just keep on, and I finally kept doing it until I finally turned my head and breathe. I mean, I don't do it like I'm supposed to, but I had to stay there long enough to turn my head and breathe because I was not going to get out of that water until I did.

Facilitator: I got you.

Female: So if we'd have just a little bit more time.

Female: So, after our lessons is done, we can stay longer?

Facilitator: Mm-hmm (affirmative). What I can do is put that on the schedule. You'll have instruction for an hour, and then thirty minutes you can just, like you said, free time, and do whatever.

Female: Oh, I always thought there was a class coming in after.

Facilitator: There's usually just lap swimmers that want to come in. But this time of the year, not many people come in to swim. So I can leave three lanes open for y'all to do whatever.

Female: I wonder if it's possible to make allowances for like a different learning style. Like I, you can tell me how to do something, but I learn better when I see what I'm doing, so sometimes like video taping, and let me look at where my body is, and then I correct it. Like I can do something all day but I don't feel confident because I don't see myself, see what it looks like. So um maybe introducing technology like video.

Facilitator: Oh yeah. We have a water proof camera, uh, it takes pictures and it records. But you want to see your technique and look at it, or you want to see someone else's technique and look at it?

Female: Me.

Facilitator: Okay.

Female: Me, like uh, I still can't believe I'm diving. That's always something that I always wanted to do, and I'll do it. And sometimes one does not always get feedback um you know, you look in people's eyes, and if they turn away, you know. Um, but just let me see what I did, and um it will help me.
Facilitator: Right.

Female: Do you have a tripod for the camera?

Facilitator: I do, but I want to get a pro-cam, just one of those little portable cameras that you can attach to you.

Female: We have Go-pros at the library to check out.

Facilitator: Really?

Female: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And they have water proof cases.

Facilitator: I will go check one out.

Female: I will bring you one.

Facilitator: Even better, even better. Yes, that would be awesome.

Female: And we have the tripod, selfie stick, and we have regular video cameras that we could set up a video camera with the tripod outside the pool, just to record people as they go in, and then have the go-pro for under the water, maybe?

Facilitator: That would work.

Female: Would that work?

Facilitator: Is the temperature an issue?

Female: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Female: Sometimes.

Female: Yep (laughs).

Facilitator: Nobody complains during the summer, but as soon as the temperature starts to drop, it's like, "It's too cold in here."

Female: I was cold in the summer.

Female: It was cold in the summer. But, today the water was awesome. Oh, god that water-
Facilitator: Yeah, I cranked it up to eighty-four, eighty-five.

Female: I didn't have to nothing, jump in, it was awesome.

Facilitator: Okay, let me ask this. Let me ask you this. When I really push you to do a warm up in the pool, is it cold then?

Female: No.

Female: No.

Female: No, because you warm up.
REFERENCES


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