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Melissa Anne Savage
AUSTSWIM, melsave76@gmail.com

Richard C. Franklin
James Cook University

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Exploring the Delivery of Swimming and Water Safety Teacher Training to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

Melissa Anne Savage
AUSTSWIM

Richard C. Franklin
James Cook University

The dearth of information on the delivery of specific culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) programs presents a major limitation in the effort to prevent drowning, particularly when drowning rates of people from countries other than Australia are increasing. This study describes programs delivered by the aquatic industry for CALD communities in New South Wales (NSW), explores what CALD communities believe their water safety education needs are, and evaluates AUSTSWIM's current training methods to ascertain which is most effective when training candidates from CALD communities. We found an absence of specialized aquatic programs being run at aquatic facilities for CALD communities. Barriers to participation included a lack of understanding of the cultural perceptions toward water safety and the different emphasis on the need for swimming skills and water safety education. The likelihood of AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety candidates' having successful aquatic training outcomes increases with a combined learning approach that pairs meaningful practical applications with ongoing mentor support. Engagement of CALD communities' using these kind of water safety programs will be essential if Australia wants to reduce the drowning burden.

Keywords: teaching swimming; water safety; drowning; community education; AUSTSWIM

Inability to speak English does not prevent me from swimming, lack of knowledge and skill prevents me from swimming.
—Participant from Vietnam

Melissa Anne Savage is with AUSTSWIM, Baulkham Hills, New South Wales, Australia. Richard Franklin is with the College of Public Health, Medical and Veterinary Sciences, James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland Australia. Address author correspondence to Melissa Anne Savage at melsav76@gmail.com.

In Australia a number of population groups including children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, as well as those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds have been identified as being at greater risk of drowning than others (Australian Water Safety Council, 2012). While extensive research studies have been undertaken in child drowning prevention, very few studies exploring swimming and water safety teacher training have focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and CALD populations. Among the many challenges in drowning prevention include teaching those who are unfamiliar with the aquatic environment and do not understand its risks (Australian Water Safety Council, 2012). Engaging CALD communities with strategies to address drowning prevention and water safety is difficult because these groups are far less likely to access programs via traditional modes (Australian Water Safety Council, 2012). Members of these groups often do not see swimming and water safety education as a priority (Han Avina, Franklin, & Milazzo, 2006). Culturally and linguistically diverse communities, as well as domestic and international tourists, are key at-risk groups for drowning as identified by the Australian Water Safety Council (2012). For example, between 2002 and 2007, 298 people born in countries other than Australia drowned in Australian waters (Franklin, Scarr, & Pearn, 2010).

As the number of new arrivals into Australia continues to increase, so will the drowning risks to these individuals. In 2011–2012 the Australian Government awarded 185,000 immigrant places and 14,000 humanitarian visas through their migration program. The majority of these new arrivals came from India and Asian countries (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2013). Over the last 2 decades, migration flows have largely reflected a unidirectional movement of people from low- and middle-income societies and cultures to Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. Such immigration patterns have produced challenges for organizations working to prevent drowning incidents as many come from cultures where water safety education programs have been minimal (Golob, Giles, & Rich, 2013).

One proposed strategy to increase water safety and prevent drowning is to engage people from CALD communities to become aquatic teachers and leaders who could become swimming and water safety advocates within their communities. Participation rates in aquatic education programs are much lower among CALD communities (Australian Water Safety Council, 2012), so community development can be used to increase the skills and knowledge of the community members to reduce drowning and promote greater social cohesion across Australian communities (Franklin & Scarr, 2014).

Water safety beliefs and attitudes indeed influence CALD members' acquisition of water safety skills (Irwin, Irwin, Martin, & Ross, 2010; Mulvaney & Kendrick, 2004; Quan, Crispin, Bennett, & Gomez, 2006; Taylor-Clark, Koh, & Viswanath, 2007). These studies concluded that a better understanding of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors about water safety within different cultures would be useful for developing and delivering water education programs (Golob et al., 2013). Traditional swimming and water safety programs are Eurocentric in their assumptions and methods including at the instructor level (Ito, 2008). When working with CALD groups, it may be necessary to make important cultural adaptations to these traditional swimming and water safety programs to successfully engage CALD participants; however, to date this hypothesis has not been tested.

Aims

The aims of this research study were as follows:

- Increase our understanding of the programs the aquatic industry is currently offering to CALD communities in New South Wales, Australia.
- Explore what CALD communities believe their needs are in relation to swimming and water safety education.
- Evaluate AUSTSWIM's current training methods to ascertain which are most effective when training candidates from CALD communities.

Method

We constructed a retrospective, mixed-method, cross-sectional study that used community surveys, focus groups, and evaluation of the AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety training with people from CALD backgrounds, swim centers, and other interested stakeholders in New South Wales (NSW), Australia. The James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee granted ethics approval for this study (H5434).

Participants

The AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety course was delivered to a total of 63 candidates under three different contexts:

1. Public AUSTSWIM course (normal delivery mode).
2. AUSTSWIM course delivered in Korean.
3. AUSTSWIM course delivered using the indigenous/CALD resources and mentoring.

Surveys

Surveys were used to gather data and the focus groups used to clarify the findings. A draft survey was developed and piloted with a group of five swimming and water safety teachers who were identified as coming from CALD backgrounds, including those who spoke English as a second language. Representatives from AUSTSWIM and James Cook University also reviewed the survey for content validity. Minor modifications were made to the questions before being delivered via the Survey-Monkey online survey tool.

The surveys were sent to current NSW aquatic facilities and people from CALD backgrounds who had participated in AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety training between January and July 2013. The opportunity to complete each survey was left open for 5 weeks between June 5 and July 10, 2013.

The Swim Centre Survey gathered information about CALD swimming and water safety programs in NSW. This survey collected information on the following:

- Aquatic facilities currently offering CALD programs.
- The demographics of CALD communities engaged in programs at aquatic centers.

- Other agencies collaborating in meeting the needs of CALD swimming and water safety program participants.
- Training received by swimming and water safety teachers providing lessons for students from CALD backgrounds.
- The needs and opportunities from facilities for advancement of AUSTSWIM services that support CALD participation in swimming and water safety education programs.

The CALD Candidate Survey gathered information relating to the following:

- Aquatic experience before training.
- Experience during training.
- Course requirements candidates have currently completed.
- Candidates' employment experience and aspirations once becoming a teacher.

Focus Group

A focus group was conducted around the needs of people from CALD backgrounds in swimming and water safety education programs. It was undertaken at the AUSTSWIM office in Sydney by AUSTSWIM representatives. It ran for approximately an hour and a half with Korean, Farsi, and Mandarin translators present to assist with language translation, comprehension, and understanding.

Focus group participants were recruited via the following:

- An online survey where participants accepted or declined an invitation to contribute to a focus group session and were then sent a follow up letter or e-mail with information about the focus group.
- Advertising through print media and flyers in aquatic facilities.
- Word of mouth.
- Advertising through industry group communications such as AUSTSWIM Aqualife publications.

Focus groups were considered for this stage of the research because this built on the knowledge gained in the surveys by CALD community members. Issues explored during the focus groups included attitudes toward swimming and water safety education programs, barriers to participation, and possible solutions.

Evaluation

Process and impact evaluations were undertaken. Process evaluation determined the best way to train AUSTSWIM CALD Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety instructors and explore current training offered by AUSTSWIM and the experiences of those attending. An impact evaluation explored those who completed the training.

The AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety course. The AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety course is traditionally run over 2 full days (16 hr). It includes theoretical and practical components that candidates are required to complete. Formative assessment elements include successful completion of the following:

- Performing a continuous aquatic skill sequence.
- Demonstrating personal rescue competencies.
- Showing appropriate teaching activities.

To successfully conclude a course of instruction, candidates are required to complete the following:

- An online exam.
- Participation in supervised “on the job” apprenticeship training hours with an AUSTSWIM teacher.
- A teaching competency assessment.
- Possession of a current CPR certificate (AUSTSWIM, 2014).

Candidates have 12 months to complete all requirements and apply for their AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety License. AUSTSWIM course requirements were not altered in any way; however, the method of course delivery was adapted for each condition. In this particular course, theory time was reduced to a more conversational-style learning approach that was complemented by the use of focused in-water sessions in which visual aids were used extensively to explain key concepts and to assist the candidates in using listening, looking, and trying styles of learning.

Data Analysis

Survey data were downloaded into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The data were then cleaned for analysis. All responses were used in the analysis. Descriptive analyses of the data were calculated and chi-squares of independence analyses were used to examine significant differences. Not all respondents answered every question, and where there were a variety of responses to a question, not all responses are discussed in this article.

Coding. The questions from the Swim Centre Survey were coded, and emerging themes recorded to assist with data analysis.

Thematic analysis. The discussion from within the focus groups identified three primary issues. Once the data were de-identified, transcribed, and coded into themes, they were placed into an Excel spreadsheet for further analysis.

Limitations

Every effort was undertaken to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information provided. We identified several limitations. The surveys were written in English, which may have prevented some candidates from participating if English was not their primary language. To minimize the impact of language barriers, the surveys were translated into Korean for the Korean participants, but cost prevented translation into other languages. The response rate for the aquatic facility survey was low, sitting at around 10%. Consequently, results may not be truly representative of the wider aquatic industry. Opening the surveys for a longer period may have resulted in more responses; however, the authors believe that the responses adequately reflect the level of the activity.

Use of the results should be undertaken with caution as this research project employed a relatively small sample. Because of funding restrictions we were only able to run three AUSTSWIM courses to use in the evaluation. It is therefore hard to say whether the results can be applied across all AUSTSWIM courses in Australia.

Finally, with so many participants stating that English was their second language and the fact that we did translate some documents during this project, it is possible that some of the water safety terminology was inaccurately translated with the meaning interpreted differently from its original intention.

Results

We present the results in the following sections: aquatic facility survey, focus groups, participant survey, process evaluation, and impact evaluation.

Aquatic Facility Survey

Fifty-two facilities responded out of a possible 563 (~10% response rate); the majority ($n = 29$) were located in regional areas of NSW with the rest ($n = 23$) located in the Sydney metropolitan area. A third ($n = 19$) of facilities reported they currently run CALD Swimming and Water Safety programs. Reasons given for not running programs included lack of demand in their area, not many cultural diverse people in area, no requests for swimming lessons had been received, and they had attempted to run programs before but no one turned up.

Of the 19 facilities that ran programs, the majority ($n = 16$) had stated they had between 50–100 clients from the possible group choices of 1–10, 10–50, 50–100, 101–500, or 501–1,000 CALD students enrolled from a variety of CALD backgrounds. Their programs catered to both children and adults and were mostly ($n = 16$) user-pay lessons. Aquatic facilities reported that they knew the demographics of the CALD communities that existed in their area as well as external organizations that support them, but little attempt had been made to engage with them.

Half ($n = 26$) of the facilities thought their swimming and water safety teachers had not received sufficient training to work with people from CALD backgrounds. When asked if AUSTSWIM could do anything to help meet teacher training needs, the most common response was that AUSTSWIM could provide training to swimming and water safety teachers on cultural awareness, community engagement, and ideas for culturally appropriate water safety programs. As a way of having access to CALD Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety facilities, we should offer AUSTSWIM courses in multiple languages.

Focus Groups

Fifteen ($n = 15$) interested people working with or identified as originating from the backgrounds of Middle Eastern, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Pakistan, Indian, and Tibetan attended a focus group at the AUSTSWIM NSW office in Castle Hill. They identified as being Swimming Teachers, Aquatic Facility representatives, CALD AUSTSWIM Candidates and Community Leaders.

From the focus group there were three primary themes identified: first, the importance of swimming and water safety; second, the lack of cultural knowledge; and third, water safety education.

Primary theme: Importance of swimming and water safety. Different cultures seem to have very limited knowledge about swimming and water safety in Australia and as a result place a lesser focus on the need for themselves or their children to learn vital swimming and water safety skills (see Table 1).

Primary theme: Lack of cultural knowledge. Participants felt that based on their own experience, aquatic facilities lacked understanding around cultural needs and the identification and management of cultural barriers to participation (see Table 2).

Primary theme: Water safety education. Swimming and water safety education needed to be significantly targeted toward water safety knowledge more than swimming components (see Table 3).

Table 1 Importance of Swimming and Water Safety

Themes	Description	Participant quotations
Cultural understanding	Swimming is a luxury.	“My country was land locked and swimming was always seen as a luxury item that we could not afford” (participant from Afghanistan).
Perception	Swimming is viewed differently in cultures. Water safety does not exist in their culture in the same way that it does for us.	“Swimming was only something athletes did in my country” (participant from Korea). “What do you mean by “Water Safety”—it is not a term that I have heard before—I have no idea what it means” (participant from India)

Table 2 Lack of Cultural Knowledge

Themes	Description	Participant quotations
Language	Misconception that language is the strongest barrier to participation Is there a need for translation?	“Inability to speak English does not prevent me from swimming, lack of knowledge and skill prevents me from swimming” (participant from Vietnam).
Cultural understanding	Facilities did not engage well with their community. Lack of understanding about specific cultural needs.	“People in my community do not go to the pool as we don’t feel invited or welcome” (participant from the Middle East). “The pool cannot and will not cater for my cultural needs as a woman” (Muslim woman from the Middle East).

Table 3 Water Safety Education

Secondary theme	Description	Participant quotations
Perception	Swimming is viewed differently in cultures. Water safety does not exist in their culture in the same way that it does for us.	“Being a teacher of swimming is not a job in my country and even if I wanted to be one there would be no training available—I thought it was the same here in Australia” (participant from Tibet)
Training	Lack of suitably qualified CALD teachers.	“I have jobs for CALD teachers from many different backgrounds but no matter how often I advertise I cannot fill the positions” (facility manager)

Note. CALD = culturally and linguistically diverse.

Three- and 6-Month Postcourse Survey

Sixty-three candidates participated in the three different AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Candidates courses. There were slightly more males (52%) than females; the mean age of participants was 31.9 years (range: 17–60 years); and for 86% of candidates, English was their second language. The highest completion rate was for indigenous/CALD course participants (83%), and intent to complete was a significant predictor of likelihood of completion (94%; $p < .05$; Table 4).

Table 4 Three-Month ($N = 63$) and 6-Month ($N = 12$) Postcourse Surveys

	Public course	Korean course	Indigenous/ CALD course	Total
	Three-month follow-up survey			
Number of candidates	30	21	12	63
Gender*	57% female 43% male	24% female 76% male	67% female 33% male	48% female 52% male
Age				
Mean (<i>SD</i>)	29.7 (<i>SD</i> = 11.2)	35.6 (<i>SD</i> = 10.8)	31.2 (<i>SD</i> = 10.0)	31.9 (<i>SD</i> = 11.0)
Range	17–56	20–60	21–51	17–60
English as a second language	83%	90%	83%	86%

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

	Public course	Korean course	Indigenous/ CALD course	Total
Previous aquatic experience	All had been involved in swimming in their home county before coming to Australia.	Most (62%) had been involved in swimming in some capacity in Korea before migrating to Australia; 44% had no previous aquatic experience.	The majority (58%) of candidates had reported having little if any previous aquatic experience at all.	
Main reason for attending the course	So they could become a swimming teacher in Australia.	So they could become a swimming teacher in Australia.	So they could work within their community as a swimming teacher.	
Commenced additional requirements	30 (100%)	21 (100%)	12 (100%)	63
Intend to complete all requirements*	17/30 (40%)	8/21 (38%)	10/12 (83%)	35/63 (56%)
Completed all requirements at 3 months*	9/30 (30%)	4/21 (19%)	8/12 (67%)	21/63 33%
Of intended*	9/17 (53%)*	4/8 (50%)*	8/10 80%	21/35 (60%)
Six-month follow-up survey				
Had not completed at 3 months; however, completed all requirements at 6 months*	8/21	2/17	2/4	12/41 (29%)
Of intended*	8/8 (100%)*	2/4 (50%)*	2/2 (100%)*	12/14 (86%)
Total number completed at end of 6 months	17/30 (57%)	6/21 (29%)	10/12 (83%)	33/63 (52%)
Of intended*	17/17 (100%)	6/8 (75%)	10/10 100%	33/35 (94%)
Male completion rate	6/13 (46%)	4/16 (25%)	4/4 (100%)	14/33 (42%)
Female completion rate	11/17 (65%)	2/5 (40%)	6/8 (75%)	19/30 (63%)

* $p < .05$.

Process Evaluation

At the commencement of the research we set out to

1. Survey 25% of the aquatics industry although we achieved only 10% (i.e., 52 of 563).
2. Conduct two focus groups with a minimum of 10 participants while we conducted only one focus group with 15 participants.
3. Run three AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety courses with a minimum of 30 candidates, but in fact we instructed 63 participants in the three courses.

Impact Evaluation

Thirty-three candidates (or 52%) had completed all the requirements to become a qualified swimming and water safety teacher at the end of 6 months. The majority of those, $n = 21$, or almost two thirds, completed requirements within 3 months while the remaining 12 completed all requirements within 6 months postcourse. More males than females participated in the Korean course (76%); at the same time this course had the lowest completion rate (29%). Attempting additional requirements was not a strong indicator for completion whereas intention to complete was a much stronger indicator, given that 94% of those who intended to complete did complete whereas none of the others completed.

Discussion

This project explored teaching methods for hard-to-reach populations by comparing traditional swimming and teaching training with a session in another language using specific resources developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with mentoring. The actions of Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety instructors may play a key part in reducing the burden of drowning because well-prepared instructors can provide the link between theory and the delivery of the knowledge and skills to participants. According to Han Avinaet et al. (2006), having information provided to you by someone from your own cultural background increases the effectiveness of the message delivery. Unfortunately, little research has explored the best way to increase the number of swimming and water safety teachers from CALD backgrounds as a means to improve water safety practices and reduce drowning.

Building awareness of hazards and risks and the role of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention measures are proposed to be significant factors in addressing drowning among high-risk populations. Although the drowning rate is improving, lifesaving systems are not as common in developing countries and even some high income countries, meaning that tourists and recently arrived migrants are at the greatest risk of drowning, presumably due to lower levels of awareness and foundation aquatic skills (Australian Water Safety Council, 2012). This research highlighted a number of key issues for the improvement of swimming and water safety instruction and drowning prevention in NSW.

Lack of Specialized Programs for CALD Communities

In NSW, there was a dearth of aquatic education programs operating for CALD populations, with only a third of facilities having a program. Of course, the response rate to the aquatic facility survey was very low (10%). We believe that many did not respond because they were not delivering programs; however, this supposition needs to be tested further. Other challenges faced included engaging those facilities (42%) that had attempted to run programs for people from CALD communities to try again. It appears that with limited experience the success rate of aquatic programs for CALD populations is low. It was unclear as to why participants did not attend; however, this study found that a clear barrier to offering programs was that facilities lacked the knowledge to engage with their community outside of the aquatic facility. Although facilities could have identified other organizations in their area that worked with CALD communities, we discovered that they had not thought about nor attempted to approach such organizations about working in partnership to deliver water safety programs.

This study confirmed our hunch that engaging communities with different values and beliefs presented serious barriers to educational programs. We surmise that employing other models to achieve success is critical. Research has shown establishing community engagement to be a useful way to deliver effective programs. An example of this strategy is work currently being undertaken in cancer prevention (Beach, 2011). We feel the aquatic industry should be looking at similar models to gather ideas they can adapt when developing their own community engagement programs.

Aquatic facilities generally have not operated under community engagement models. Instead typical aquatic programs primarily have expected people to come to them. Programs aimed at special groups such as members from CALD populations that fall outside of the mainstream often require external funding to ensure adequate delivery. Such facilities generally do not have a history or skills to seek out opportunities to access these kinds of funding. An understanding of facilities that initially only require a small injection of funds as an investment is important to study. Once this small infusion of funds has been made, Gentles (2014) claimed that half the battle had been won.

At a time when patronage numbers are low or falling, aquatic facilities often look at other ways to increase their numbers. An innovative CALD water safety program would certainly create a new niche market that could boost patronage numbers and eventually turn into an income stream. More importantly, from a humanitarian perspective, a CALD water safety program could reduce needless drownings and water-related injuries.

There are a few examples of “best practice” programs currently being used in Australian aquatic centers in NSW that specifically serve indigenous peoples’ communities. Many of these programs are using effective community education models (Gentles, 2014) to ensure their communities of indigenous peoples have a say in the nature of programs being offered. Initially, the majority of these programs began by embracing important events within the indigenous community such as National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee Day, where staff from the

aquatic facility involved themselves in the festivities and used it as a platform for spreading water safety messages. Once the aquatic staff forged a relationship with the CALD community, they consulted extensively on the community's needs and based their programs around those needs (Gentles, 2014).

Barriers to Participation From a CALD Perspective

The focus group with participants from various CALD backgrounds provided insights into issues regarding swimming and water safety education and opportunities for people from CALD backgrounds. Participants believed that there was a strong misconception that language was the biggest barrier to participation; they believed categorically it was not: "My English is bad, very bad, but I still know about danger and for my safety in this country I learn how to swim" (according to a Korean participant translated by the interpreter). This finding is consistent with other research (Golob et al., 2013) wherein language translation alone has not increased ethnic and racial minorities' comprehension of water safety information; indeed, there is a great deal of within-group variation that one communication strategy alone cannot address. Factors such as gender, income, educational level, place of residence in the country of origin (rural or urban), and the degree of acculturation can influence responsiveness to health and environmental risk messages (Lindell & Pery, 2004).

In previous research with Hispanic and Asian adults and children in the United States and New Zealand (Moran, 2006; van der Wal & Pauw-Plomp, 1996), focus group participants identified that different cultures seem to have very limited knowledge about swimming and water safety. A similar result was found in this study: "Water safety in my country meant the quality of the water; I never heard it used in the context of swimming" (according to a Middle Eastern participant). This difference in terminology illustrates why people from varying cultural backgrounds may not consider the need for themselves or their children to learn swimming and water safety skills.

Our focus group participants and candidates highlighted ways that swimming and water safety education needed to be significantly targeted toward water safety knowledge and skills rather than just swimming skill components. Giles and colleagues found in their research that Aboriginal people in Canada were at a higher risk for drowning because water safety education programs failed to account for differences in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors toward water safety (Giles, Strachan, Stadig, & Baker, 2010). These researchers claimed that water safety education programs in their country did not reflect the water safety needs of Aboriginal peoples (Giles et al., 2010). The implications from Giles et al. (2010) are that the aquatic industry in NSW and perhaps across all of Australia is currently falling short of meeting the CALD community water safety needs.

Comments from focus group participants revealed that based on their own experiences, many NSW aquatic facilities lacked an understanding regarding their cultural needs as well as failing to identify and manage cultural barriers to full and effective water safety education participation. This finding regarding lack of understanding is similar to previous studies involving Muslim women (Taylor & Toohey 2001) who have unique cultural requirements (e.g., swimming only while fully clothed). These cultural requirements contribute to the challenges associated

with swimming participation, as well as the organization and implementation of recreation aquatic programs.

There are further areas involving beliefs, attitudes, and cultural values pertaining to water and water safety practices that need to be explored and their impact considered in the development of best practices for delivering aquatics programming that are effective for all individuals. There are ongoing challenges to ensure that all Australians (as well as persons in other countries) are educated about basic water safety knowledge, and encourage understanding of the importance of the following:

- Having an awareness of acquiring personal swimming and water safety skills.
- Keeping themselves and those in their care safe in and around the water.
- Appreciating the conditions they may encounter in and around the water.

Training Needs to Increase Understanding and Participation

The group of CALD candidates who participated in this research study obviously believed swimming and water safety was important. They were able to acknowledge a need for it within their own community because the majority of participants stated that the main reason for attending the AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Training was so that they could become a swimming teacher in Australia and work within their own cultural community. This reason for taking the AUSTSWIM course was reassuring because it meant that it may be possible to find “champions” within a variety of cultural communities who can assist with community engagement and education when required. It also was interesting to note that many of them stated that they did not intend to complete all of the requirements from AUSTSWIM to become a Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety instructor. Only 56% reported intending to complete the whole program. This phenomenon needs to be explored further. It may be that many of the candidates intended go back to their communities and teach swimming informally without the wider structure of support offered by AUSTSWIM.

Our research study demonstrated that language and access to translated resources is not as serious a barrier as usually believed. Where translators or translated resources are not readily available during training, as long as the training is supported by other means such as the use of cultural graphics/flashcards/demonstrations or mentoring during training, effective learning can occur. The course that achieved the best results was the indigenous peoples/CALD course, which used many of these facilities and programs.

AUSTSWIM as well as other water safety organizations such as Royal Life Saving have found indigenous people will not generally finish training for a range of reasons not dissimilar to the ones reported by our study participants—for example, trouble understanding what is required to complete all requirements and loss of momentum (Royal Life Saving Society NT, 2010). To overcome this lack of course completion, we decided that program facilitators need to change their delivery methods to meet the needs of CALD participants. One novel method includes the active use of mentors for participants. The role of mentors appeared to be vital to the process of learning. For example, those candidates who had a mentor who could provide them with unique individual support, encouragement, and other forms of

guidance through postcourse requirements had far better completion outcomes than other candidates who participated in our training. We need further research to understand the specific impact mentoring has on course completion and subsequent employment as a swimming and water safety teacher.

Another point of interest to note was that intention to complete the course was a good predictor of actual completion. In our study the indigenous/CALD candidates had the largest number of candidates intending to complete the training initially and they were also the group who ended up with the most completing. We did not calculate exact repeated measures statistics, but those data would be valuable in testing our informal observation.

Water safety organizations need to start “thinking outside the box” when it comes to delivering effective training and acknowledge that “one size definitely does not fit all” when delivering training to candidates who represent CALD communities. To address the deficit in teacher training, AUSTSWIM should and in fact already plans to develop its community education training to include workshops for Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety instructors around cultural engagement, and water safety education without the use of water and building strong partnerships. We conclude that all of these factors are required for achieving the most successful outcomes. By increasing professional development opportunities, we can ensure facilities and teachers are on the right track to accessing their CALD communities in the most effective ways.

To expand on the results of this research study, we need to conduct further investigations into the most effective community engagement and education models that can be adapted for the aquatics industry. In addition it is essential to develop further training using members of CALD communities so that the industry can begin to understand the issues surrounding the teaching of swimming and water safety. Finally, because this study was only based on a small number of candidates, it will be important to replicate this study with a much larger group.

Conclusions

This study demonstrated that successful training outcomes are most likely to occur when a combined learning approach is paired with meaningful practical applications such as using a mentor and providing ongoing mentor support. Both of these elements of mentoring are part of a model that the aquatic industry could adopt to assist with more effective training among minority cultural communities. Our study has only scratched the surface of our understanding of the delivery of swimming and water safety teaching skills to members of CALD communities. Further study is required within the aquatic industry to gain an understanding of the specific needs of each type of CALD community. Such studies will need to include elements such as community engagement, partnerships, and education. Because members of different CALD communities have different expectations associated with swimming and water safety education, aquatic professionals and their organizations need new and novel methods to identify “best practice” models to ensure swimming and water safety skills and knowledge are developed effectively.

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