

The Development of Expert Male National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Certified Athletic Trainers

Ruemruk Malasarn*; Gordon A. Bloom†; Rebecca Crumpton‡

*California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA; †McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada; ‡California State University, Fresno, Fresno, CA

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Address correspondence to Gordon Bloom, PhD, Department of Kinesiology & Physical Education, McGill University, 475 Pine Avenue West, Montreal, Quebec H2W 1S4, Canada. Address e-mail to gordon.bloom@mcgill.ca.

Objective: To identify the major influences in the development of expert male National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I certified athletic trainers.

Design and Setting: The participants were individually interviewed, and the data were transcribed and coded.

Subjects: Seven male NCAA Division I certified athletic trainers, who averaged 29 years of experience in the profession and 20 years at the Division I level.

Results: We found 3 higher-order categories that explained the development of the certified athletic trainers and labeled these *meaningful experiences, personal attributes, and mentoring*. The growth and development of the athletic trainers were

influenced by a variety of meaningful experiences that began during their time as students and continued throughout their careers. These experiences involved dealing with challenging job conditions, educational conditions, and attempts to promote and improve the profession. The personal attributes category encompassed the importance of a caring and service-oriented attitude, building relationships with athletes, and maintaining strong bonds within their own families. Mentoring of these individuals occurred both inside and outside the athletic training profession.

Conclusion: We provide a unique view of the development of athletic trainers that should be of interest to those in the field, regardless of years of experience.

Successful individuals in any field seek environments that are congruent with the characteristics that allow them to express their attitudes and values while best using their skills and abilities.¹ Although the discipline of athletic training

tance of mentoring with respect to career transition of young professionals. For example, Curtis et al⁴ found that the clinical experience became more meaningful and beneficial when a supervising athletic trainer or mentor provided guidance and