

THE IDENTIFICATION OF CORE COMPETENCIES AT THE MASTER'S
DEGREE LEVEL IN RECREATION AT KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

by

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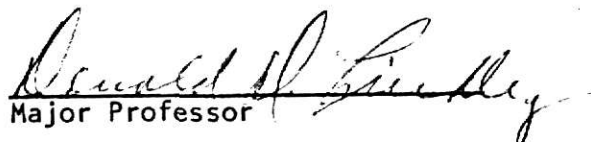
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Leisure time was once a luxury that very few people could afford. In fact, the early history of the United States was characterized by long hours of hard work with the people looking down on idleness. Since leisure time was very rare, the worthy use of leisure time was of little concern.

As the twentieth century began, many new ideas started to take root. One new idea was that people needed to have leisure time to relax and rejuvenate themselves. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" was an expression that symbolized the people's desire to create leisure time for themselves. The work week was shortened and people finally had some time during the week to pursue their own interests. The forty hour work week eventually became a reality and, during the 1960's, Americans started considering the establishment of a four day work week.

As the United States experienced more and more leisure time, a new problem developed. When people who were not used to leisure time were suddenly given a day or two a week of their own, they found they did not know what to do with this gift of free time. In order to meet the nation's need to train people to help others use leisure time, a new profession was born--that of the professional recreation specialist.

By 1974, the need for professionals in the field of recreation was great enough that over one-hundred and fifty universities in the United States and Canada were offering some type of curriculum in recreation (16).

In October of 1974, the Society of Parks and Recreation Educators (SPRE) which is a branch of the National Recreation and Parks Association held an institute in Denver, Colorado. One recommendation from the institute was the need to establish national guidelines for recreation curriculums both at the four year level and the Master's degree level (16).

In 1973, there were sixty-five students majoring in the undergraduate recreation curriculum at Kansas State University. As of the spring semester of 1975, there were ninety-seven undergraduate students and five graduate students majoring in recreation. Two students have completed or received their Master's degrees in Health, Physical Education and Recreation, with an emphasis in recreation. Since the number of recreation majors was continually growing at Kansas State University, it appeared that a curriculum at the Master's degree level was justifiable.

As of 1975, Kansas State University, located in Manhattan, Kansas, was offering a Master's degree in Health, Physical Education and Recreation, with an emphasis in recreation. It was felt that recreation should have its own distinct Master's curriculum and offer a Master's degree in recreation rather than the conglomerate degree.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to identify competencies which could be used in developing the core classes of a curriculum at the Master's degree level in recreation at Kansas State University. A subproblem of the study was to determine if recreation educators and professionals working in the field differed in the competencies they felt were most important in a curriculum at the Master's degree level in recreation.

DELIMITATIONS

The author sought to identify competencies which could be used in developing the core classes of a curriculum at the Master's degree level in recreation at Kansas State University. This study was undertaken specifically to determine the necessary knowledge and skill level expected of any candidate who had completed a Master's degree program in recreation.

There were many different groups who might have been asked to participate in the study, such as employers of recreation graduates and undergraduate students in the field of recreation; however, the twenty-four panel members who participated in the study represented recreation educators and professionals working in the field.

The study was not intended to apply to the Undergraduate program or the Doctoral level in recreation.

LIMITATIONS

The author of this study realized his lack of knowledge in the area of curriculum development. Therefore, a curriculum specialist from the College of Education was asked to serve as a committee member for this study. The author enrolled in an instructional improvement class in order to increase his competency in this area.

Time was another factor in making this study. The study was begun in November of 1974 and terminated in July of 1975.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Competencies: Skills and knowledge which are required by a profession.

Competency-Based Curriculum: A curriculum based on standards or skills that a profession feels are required by a graduate.

Curriculum: The learning experiences offered by an educational institution or one of its branches (20:204).

Curriculum Development: That aspect of teaching and administration that designedly, systematically, cooperatively, and continuously seeks to improve the teaching-learning process (8:9).

Curriculum Theory: The general or abstract principles of curriculum development.

Leisure: Time free from the activities involved in making a living in which an individual may pursue his own interest (4:4).

Modules: A set of learning activities intended to facilitate the student's achievement of an objective or set of objectives (2).

Recreation: Activity voluntarily engaged in during leisure and motivated by the personal satisfactions which result from it (4:5).

SPRE: The Society of Park and Recreation Educators.

Traditional Method of Education: For purposes of this study, the traditional method of education refers to the philosophy that "the main function of education is the acquisition of certain bodies of knowledge, and that these bodies of knowledge remain constant in relation to all students" (19:1-2).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter was to briefly review both the growth of recreation in the United States and the advancements made in educational curriculum development during the same period of time. An attempt was made to discuss the growth of recreation in light of the thinking of prominent people in the field of education during the period from 1853 to 1974. The chapter has been organized into specific time periods in order that the reader might more clearly be able to follow the historical developments in the field of recreation along with the thinking of prominent educators in the field of education during the same time periods.

Recreational activities have not always been accepted as a worthy use of leisure time in the United States. During colonial American history, recreation was associated with idleness which was considered evil and of the devil (10:12). Calvinist doctrine was largely responsible for this attitude; however, the early pioneers in the United States could devote very little time to anything but hard work if they wanted to survive.

The 1800's

Eventually, as early Americans began to have more free time to devote to their own interests, the strictness of the Calvinist doctrine was replaced by attitudes that saw nothing wrong with leisure time

activities. As early as 1853, Central Park was created in New York City in order that people might have a place to spend their leisure hours. By 1870, P. T. Barnum, Bailey, and Ringling Brothers had developed the traveling circus under canvas. In 1872, Yellowstone National Park became the first national park in the United States (10).

During the year 1886, the Boston Playground was established with leadership to oversee the activities. Hull House in 1892 opened their model playground in Chicago, Illinois. The first employee recreation association was established in 1894 by The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in New York City. School buildings were opened as evening recreation centers in New York City in 1898 (10).

The Early 1900's

As the 20th century began, recreation had become an accepted facet of life in the United States. More and more cities were establishing city parks, organizing baseball teams and people were starting to look forward to enjoying the free time that was quickly becoming available to them. In 1903, the Chicago Southside Park Commission voted to spend \$5,000,000 to build ten neighborhood parks in order to supply the increasing number of people in the Chicago area with suitable places to spend their leisure hours (10).

Interest in recreational activities continued to grow and educators started to realize that the school had a responsibility to instruct students in the worthy use of leisure time. During the early 1900's, Dewey stated:

Education has no more serious responsibility than making adequate provision for enjoyment of recreative leisure; not only for the sake of immediate health, but...for the sake of its lasting effect upon habits of mind (4:113).

Dewey was one of the few men of great authority and prestige who had an influence on educational curriculum change in the United States prior to 1920 (8:10). At a time when the majority of educators were very reluctant to accept any change in the educational system, Dewey spelled out the importance of experience to learning, the relation of the school to society, and the implications of democracy to education in all its phases (8:10).

Although recreation was an important part of American life during the early 1900's, its inclusion in the educational system was a slow process. Many educators felt that recreational activities were learned as one grew up and were really unnecessary in the school curriculum. Most educators also felt the physical education classes which were being offered were sufficient.

Most educators in the early 1900's felt the main function of education was the acquisition of certain bodies of knowledge and that these bodies of knowledge would remain constant in relation to all students (19:1-2). Making changes in the curriculum was a very difficult undertaking. Since educating people in the worthy use of leisure time was not considered important by most educators of the day, its inclusion in the school curriculum seemed unnecessary to them.

The 1920's

The Recreation Training School was opened in Chicago, Illinois, at Hull House during October of 1920. The curriculum took one year to

complete and offered a certificate to those who satisfactorily completed the course of study. At first, admission was open to anyone with the equivalent of a high school education. Later, two years of college were required for those who wished to complete the course of study in one year (14:13).

The curriculum of The Recreation Training School was organized into five areas: theoretical courses, technical classes, dramatic art, supervision and administration, and social treatment (14:13-14). Boyd was hired as the director of the school and did much to give the field of recreation an air of professionalism.

At the time The Recreation Training School was being organized, the curriculum revision movement was underway. Educators were beginning to deal more thoroughly with such topics as the role of the school in society, the objectives of education, selection of effective learning experiences, the organization of learning experiences into a total curriculum, evaluation of the curriculum, and cooperation in curriculum improvement (8:5). The curriculum revision movement during the 1920's was motivated primarily by a rapidly growing interest in experimental psychology and educational philosophy (8:2). The curriculum revision movement had a positive effect on the field of recreation and, in 1927, Boyd was invited to offer recreation courses through the Sociology Department of Northwestern University. She developed the recreation program for Northwestern University and "taught her courses in play theory, leadership, group organization, and other subjects until her retirement in 1941" (13:15).

The 1930's

The great depression of the 1930's had several effects on curriculum development in the field of education. "Education was subjected to severe criticism, educational research and experimentation were encouraged, education began to expand into new areas, democratic principles and practices were applied to education, curriculum programs were expanded and strengthened, and the roles of those concerned with curriculum development were re-oriented and clarified" (8:15).

During the 1930's, many important advancements were made in the field of recreation. In an attempt to curb the great depression of the 1930's, the "New Deal" agencies initiated the most extensive public recreation program ever attempted up to that time as one of their make work projects (10:18). A project in community public recreation was established for two purposes: 1) to make work for the unemployed, and 2) to provide recreation services to the community. The "make work" programs of the federal government stimulated mass recognition of and participation in community recreation.

One agency called The Federal Emergency Relief Administration supervised the construction of recreation facilities and developed recreation programs and activities with trained leadership (10:18). Another agency called The Work Projects Administration developed a training program for recreation workers in which workers could spend at least two hours a week in some type of in-service training. Because of the make work programs of the federal government, the field of recreation was advanced 25 years (10:18).

In 1937, The College Conference for Training Recreation Workers was held at the University of Minnesota (10). "The Society of Recreation Workers of America" later known as "The American Recreation Society" was established in 1938 (10). As the great depression in the United States came to an end, recreation emerged as a profession which had grown tremendously and which enjoyed a great deal of prestige.

The 1940's

During the second World War, the armed forces of the United States employed recreation specialists in order to provide recreational outlets for soldiers in foreign countries and in the United States.

Once the second World War was finished, educators began to return to the task of curriculum development and improvement. The first large scale discussions by educators on the subject of curriculum theory were held in 1947 at the University of Chicago (3:56). At the conclusion of this conference, the following three-fold tasks were prescribed for curriculum theory development in education: a) to identify the critical issues or points in curriculum development and their underlying generalizations, b) to point up the relationships which exist between these critical points and their supporting structure, and c) to suggest and forecast the future of approaches made to resolve these critical issues (3:56).

A year later, in 1948, discussions were held concerning offering graduate courses in recreation at the meeting of The National Conference on Graduate Preparation for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (10).

The 1950's

During the 1950's, many educators in the field of education in the United States became dissatisfied with the traditional educational system of curriculum development. Many educators started to claim the responsibility of education was to prepare people to live successfully in and attempt to improve a rapidly changing society (18:2). Knowledge, values, ideas, and ways of life, were changing rapidly and educators felt that people needed to be prepared through education to cope with these changes (19:2).

During the 1950's, study at the master's and doctoral level in recreation emerged along with the already existing four year undergraduate programs (10:25). National workshops on recreation were undertaken and underwritten by the Athletic Institute. The First National Recreation Workshop was held in Jackson's Mill, West Virginia, in 1952 (10:25).

One development that had far-reaching implications for recreation was the decision of the United States Supreme Court in 1955 which ruled as unconstitutional any race segregation on public playgrounds and parks (10:25).

During the 1950's, Americans began to participate in recreational activities more than ever before and, by 1955, the average American was spending about one-twelfth of his or her total income on recreational activities (4:52).

Although educators in the field of education were discussing curriculum theory and the changing role of the school as early as 1947, there were no texts available on the subject as late as the closing years of the 1950's.

The 1960's

Beauchamp's text, Curriculum Theory, was published in 1961.

"It was the first single volume to clarify the status and dimensions of curriculum theory based on conceptual structures and relationships derived from theory development efforts in closely related fields" (3:5). This publication and others that followed provided some long needed guidelines concerning curriculum theory and development.

In 1963, a paper analyzing the scientific approach to the task of theory building in curriculum development was presented at the National Conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development by Beauchamp (3:57-58). Another paper by Smith explored the role of philosophy in the developmental stages of scientific curriculum theory (3:58). These papers were evidence of the desires of educators in the field of education to promote the scientific method of curriculum development over the traditional method.

In 1966, Koopman attempted to define the most important issues in curriculum development. He stated that the five most important issues were:

1. What shall be the public policy on the role of education?
2. What shall be the public policy on centralization of educational administration?
3. What shall be the educational policy on the role and nature of curriculum development and staff growth?
4. What shall be the role of research and development in education?
5. What shall be the role of curriculum specialists and related personnel? (8:97-98)

Koopman believed the answers to these questions could only be obtained through the scientific method when he stated:

It is the process of research and development at the heart of which lies curriculum development which gives promise of demonstrating the enlarged role of education in a period of swift social change (8:110).

Defining the underlying values of curriculum theory and development was another issue which received much attention. When curriculum theorists spoke about the values of curriculum development, they generally referred to them as educational aims. Most educational aims have been stated in terms of specific ends the curriculum was supposed to meet. The aims then, were statements of value judgement (3:160). In reference to values of curriculum theory and development, Beauchamp stated:

The first task for curriculum planners with respect to values is to identify and state those expressed as attitudes, beliefs, ideas, or concepts, that the school should bring to the attention of pupils (3:162).

He also went on to say that curriculum planners and other educators had failed to deal with values of curriculum development adequately for modern schooling (3:168).

During the 1960's, the recreation explosion was five times as large as the population explosion in the United States. The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) was created by Congress in 1963 and Mission 66 was started in order to improve the national parks in America (10:26). It was during the 1960's that national leaders, including President Kennedy, started placing great emphasis on the young people being fit. This concern for the fitness of the young people led to the establishment

of the President's Council on Youth Fitness, now known as the President's Council for Physical Fitness and Sport.

One of the most important developments in recreation during this period was the emergence of scientific research in the field. The field of recreation expanded into several different areas such as, therapeutic recreation, commercial recreation, industrial recreation, and outdoor recreation, as well as community recreation (10:26).

Although the community school concept had been conceived long before the 1960's, it was during this period that the first training center for community school education was established in Flint, Michigan (9).

With the increased interest the field of recreation received during the 1960's, it became more important than ever to develop training programs that would keep pace with the rapid changes the field was experiencing. Corbin suggested a more professional approach be used in designing curriculums in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. The approach consisted of foundations or a professional philosophy, objectives or competencies which the curriculum was based on, programs which were designed to achieve the objectives, and continual evaluation of the curriculum to make sure the desired ends were being met (6:173).

The 1970's

In 1970, Nerbovig introduced a system of curriculum development called "Unit Planning" (13). A unit was described as

an organization of objectives, activities, and resources, with its focus on a purpose or problem prepared for use in a teaching-learning situation (13:11).

The unit was also broken down into what was referred to as a "teaching unit." The teaching unit was described as

a collection of objectives, activities, materials, etc., on a specified topic, prepared by a teacher for a specified time, to be used with a particular group of learners (13:12).

The unit planning approach to curriculum development was a system that educators could use to keep pace with the changing demands that were being made of education. If the units were based upon competencies that would be required of prospective graduates in any given field, it would be a relatively simple task to change the units as changes occurred in the field.

Competency-based education has received much attention by educators in the United States because of its emphasis on criterion-referenced measures rather than norm-referenced measures. Nagel and Richmond tried to point out the advantages of competency-based education over the traditional or norm-based method of education by use of four axioms of competency-based education (12). These axioms were designed to define the philosophical differences between competency-based education and the traditional methods of education. The four axioms were as follows:

1. In traditional programs time is held constant while achievement varies, while in a competency-based program achievement is held constant while time varies (12:4).
2. Traditional programs place greatest weight on entrance requirements, while competency-based programs place greatest stress on exit requirements (12:12).
3. If you want somebody to learn something, for heaven's sake tell him what it is (12:14).
4. Competency-based instruction equals criterion-referenced instruction plus personalization of instruction (12:57).

Competency-based curriculums have been the subject of several studies since 1970. Informal and subjective data were gathered by Bailey in which students generally felt that courses taught using the competency-based education approach were more meaningful and realistic than the traditional or standard educational approach (1). Bailey's An Educator's Notebook on Competency-Based Education describes the process of using specific competencies to develop instructional modules with specific goals (2).

Some research on competency-based education has been done in the field of Health, Physical Education and Recreation in which questionnaires have sought to determine the competencies most important to prospective graduates of two and four year college curriculums in Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

A competency survey was made concerning therapeutic recreation by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1974 (18).

The National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) has used a competency-based approach in defining the purpose of recreation education programs. The association has stated:

The general aim of the recreation and park programs is to prepare persons to live and to serve in a democratic society in which recreation plays an ever more important role (11:1).

The NPRA has also suggested that the basic core classes in a Master's degree program include at least three areas of competency:

1. Basic understanding of various research methods and procedures, including the use of the ability to interpret statistical data.

2. The ability to design, conduct, analyze, and interpret research related to a recreation or park problem.

3. An understanding of the philosophical, psychological, physiological, and social basis for recreation's contribution to individual and societal welfare (11:13).

In October of 1974, the Society of Parks and Recreation Educators (SPRE) which is a branch of the National Recreation and Parks Association held an institute in Denver, Colorado. One recommendation from the institute was the need to establish national guidelines for recreation curriculums both at the four year level and the Master's degree level. At that meeting, it was also determined that recreation educators needed to apply themselves to four areas of concern. The areas of concern included a need for SPRE to develop guidelines for curricula in recreation, the need for a national manpower study, the need for follow-up studies of graduates in recreation at the different institutions, and the need for heavy involvement of state organizations in the development of curriculum standards in recreation (16).

The field of recreation has become an important profession in the United States. There has been a real need to identify the competencies which graduates in recreation needed in order to be successful in the field. Recent attempts to identify important competencies in recreation and to make graduates in the field competent in these areas has started to improve the learning experiences which students in the field of recreation have been receiving.

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURES

This study was undertaken for the purpose of identifying competencies which could be used to develop the core classes in a curriculum at the Master's degree level in recreation at Kansas State University. A second objective of the study was to determine if recreation educators and professionals working in the field differed in the competencies they felt were most important in a curriculum at the Master's degree level in recreation.

The procedures used in solving the problems in this study are expanded in this chapter.

Development of Survey Instrument

In order to develop the mail survey used in this study, the competencies to be rated by the panel needed to be identified and listed on the survey.

The competencies which were used in the survey were selected from the "National Park and Recreation Education Accreditation Project" of 1972, the "Graduate Student Handbook" from the Department of Recreation and Park Administration at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for 1973, a list of graduate competencies in recreation at the University of Iowa, and from discussions with the author's major professor at Kansas State University.

From the large number of competencies that might have been used, forty-six competencies representing eight general subject areas were selected (see Appendix A). The forty-six competencies and eight general subject areas were chosen in order to provide the information desired without making the survey time-consuming.

The forty-six competencies listed on the survey were divided into eight areas: 1) Administration, 2) Facilities, 3) Finance, 4) History, 5) Leadership, 6) Philosophy, 7) Programming, and 8) Research (see Appendix A).

The survey was sent to all members of the panel in order to obtain their opinions concerning which competencies were most important in developing the core classes of a curriculum at the Master's degree level in recreation.

A cover letter which explained the purpose of the study and how information from the survey would be used was sent with the survey to each of the selected participants (see Appendix B). The participants were asked to sign a statement that they understood the purpose of the study and agreed to participate. Participants were asked to indicate whether they would permit themselves or their institutions to be identified or not. Participants were assured that their identities and the identity of their institutions would be kept confidential if they so indicated. Participants were asked if they would desire an abstract of the completed study (see Appendix C).

The study was submitted to the "Committee for Rights and Welfare of Human Subjects," Department of Health, Physical Education and