

Leisure Education

**A Person-Centered,
System-Directed,
Social Policy Perspective**

Rodney B. Dieser

Prologue by
Robert A Stebbins and Atara Sivan, members
World Leisure Commission on Leisure Education

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DEDICATION AND RECOGNITION

for

Ricki Saxton-Dieser, Helen Dieser, Karen Fox, Jean Mundy, and Julia Dunn

When I set out to write this book—my third textbook but first as a leading (and eventually sole) author—I knew I was going to dedicate it to the three most important women in my life. First, my wife, second, my mother, and third, my doctoral supervisor. However, as this book moved along, Joe Bannon (CEO of Sagamore Publishing) wanted me to work with Dr. Jean Mundy to write a book that merged Jean’s 1998 *Leisure Education* with the ideas I shared with Joe. We even talked about taking Jean Mundy’s book and updating it extensively and having it coauthored by Jean and me. Although Jean was interested, she was in the later stages of cancer and was too ill to write. Her hope was that her friend and colleague, Dr. Julia Dunn, could take her spot and coauthor the book with me. I agreed, and had many long e-mail and telephone conversations with Julia. I did not know her prior to writing this book, and we found some wonderful middle ground when discussing our ideas. At that point in time, Julia was healthy. Within a few months, Julia learned that she had a terminal and aggressive cancer and died within a month of our last conversation, even before Jean Mundy. Although Joe and I spoke about adding another author and bounced some names around, I wrote this book as a sole author. At the end of this four-year endeavor, with many sacred pauses due to Jean and Julie’s deaths, I struggled with whom to dedicate this book to. I was pulled in two directions; I wanted to dedicate it to Jean and Julia, but I also wanted to dedicate my first solely authored book to my wife, mother, and doctoral supervisor—three remarkable women who have helped me grow and become the person I am today. As such, this book is dedicated to these five women, and I will donate a portion of the royalties of this book to the American Cancer Society.

I dedicate this book to my wonderful wife, Ricki Kristine Saxton-Dieser. She has borne the pressures, interruptions, stress, late nights, and last-minute schedule changes as I completed this book. More important, as a woman from an educated family, she married me close to 25 years ago and accepted my blue-collar, working-class, and uneducated background and taught me how to learn. The first day I attended the University of Utah, after I transferred from the Lethbridge Community College, I asked her to help me negotiate the campus and she walked around the massive University of Utah campus holding my

hand. In those early days, she proofread every paper I wrote and taught me how to write. This was no small task, as my writing was problematic because I struggled with a writing disorder (dyslexia). She has been holding my hand ever since in all sorts of life journeys.

I dedicate this book to my mother, Helen Dieser. My mother was illiterate and could not drive. When I was a child, we had all sorts of adventures riding buses, and that is why one of my favorite books is *Riding the Bus With My Sister* by Rachel Simon and why I love the Bruce Springsteen song “Does this Bus Stop at 82nd Street?” My mother was ill with cancer throughout my childhood and died two weeks after I graduated from high school. Her graduation present to me was a roll of money—many \$1 bills, some \$5 bills, and even a few \$10 bills, rolled together that summed to about \$100. She hid it from my father and literally asked me to promise two things. The first was that I would use this money to go off to university. The second was to not tell my father she was hiding this money from him. Two years after she died, I used that roll-up money to buy a Papalia and Olds (1986) book titled *Human Development* as I took my first class at a small community college in my hometown of Lethbridge. From that experience of taking a human development class, I discovered leisure studies. That human development book still sits in my office and is one of the most sacred books I have ever read, because it was the book that my mother bought me, two years after she died.

I dedicate this book to Dr. Karen Fox, a true mentor. Karen mentored not only a doctoral student, but she mentored my family in a holistic way. Grandma Karen—as my three young sons used to call her as she jumped on a trampoline with them or let them pick apples from her trees or walk her dogs—taught me not to turn away from an academic conflict and how to fight for those values that many academics hold tight to their hearts. She taught me how to be a qualitative researcher and how to be successful in academia. Before I moved from Edmonton (Canada) to take my first academic job at the University of Northern Iowa, Karen took me to lunch at the Olive Garden (in the city of Edmonton) and taught me how to create a seven-year research agenda, which was my road map to tenure, and more importantly, the joys of academia. The longer I am in academia, the more I realize how great a mentor she was.

I dedicate this book to Dr. Jean Mundy and Dr. Julia Dunn. Their past academic labor and the conversations I had with both of them directed this book. One of the early books I read on leisure education was penned by Dr. Jean Mundy, and although I offered critique of her work, as I grew as a scholar, I also realized that her leisure education model examined the interchange of how leisure influences society and how society influences leisure. Dr. Julia Dunn influenced me to keep the leisure education activities in Dr. Mundy’s 1998 *Leisure Education*. They are located on the Sagamore website at <http://>

www.sagamorepub.com/products/leisure-education under the resources tab. Although these activities are approximately 15 years old, they are still relevant and useful today and can be used in professional practice. I have used them in the classroom over the past 15 years. I am grateful to Jean for writing these activities and am grateful to Julia for persuading me to keep them.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rodney B. Dieser, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the School of Health, Physical Education, and Leisure Services in the College of Education at the University of Northern Iowa. Rod currently serves as the chair of the Division of Leisure, Youth, and Human Services and program coordinator for the master's degree in Philanthropy and Nonprofit Development.

Dieser holds a bachelor's and master's of science degree from the University of Utah in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, with a graduate level minor in educational psychology. He holds a doctorate of philosophy in physical education and recreation from the University of Alberta (Canada). Dieser is in the final year of completing a second master's degree in mental health counseling from the University of Northern Iowa. His research and teaching interests include (1) cross-cultural therapeutic recreation and leisure practice; (2) therapeutic recreation as an adjunctive therapy for people with mental illness and people with disabilities; (3) historical and philosophical foundations of leisure, youth, and nonprofit human services, including Hull-House from 1889-1953; (4) the connection between leisure, sport, and physical activities with gender identity; and (5) the philanthropic labor and service of musician Bruce Springsteen.

Dieser has coauthored two academic textbooks in leisure studies, has written over 60 academic articles, and has made countless national and international research and professional presentations. Although the bulk of Dieser's academic writings are in the areas of leisure studies (e.g., *American Journal of Recreation Therapy*, *Annuals of Therapeutic Recreation*, *Journal of Leisure Research*, *Leisure Science*, *Leisure Studies*, *Leisure/Loisir*, *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, *World Leisure Journal*) his research has appeared in other academic fields, including counseling psychology, education, human services, and physical education (e.g., *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *Human Service Education*, *Journal of College Student Development*, and *Nonprofit World*).

Dieser has served as an associate editor for the *Therapeutic Recreation Journal* and *Leisure/Loisir* (Journal of the Canadian Association of Leisure Studies). Dieser has also served as an editor for the academic newsletter, the *SPRE Professor*, and was awarded a Presidential Citation by the Society of Parks and Recreation Educators for his work as the *SPRE Professor* editor. In 2006, he received the Outstanding Professional Research Award by the National Therapeutic Recreation Society in the United States. He has also received outstanding research and writing awards by the Alberta Therapeutic Recreation

Association and the Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association, respectfully. In 2010, Dieser was inducted as a senior fellow in the American Leisure Academy as an outstanding scholar in the field of recreation and leisure in the United States. In 2012, Dieser was inducted as a senior fellow in the World Leisure Academy as an outstanding international scholar in the field of recreation and leisure.

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I am appreciative of the good efforts of Andrew F. Kazmierski from Andrew F. Kazmierski Photography for his outstanding photo of Madam Marie’s fortune telling booth on the Ashbury Park boardwalk in New Jersey (located in chapter

2). I am also thankful to my three sons who helped me engage in leisure and play as I worked feverishly to complete this project. I remember receiving a phone call one evening from my oldest son after spending an entire day writing asking me if I wanted to go to the new Batman movie. I sure needed the break! I am also indebted to my furry four-legged friend, Louie, who also taught me to take breaks in writing this book in order to walk about and enjoy wonderful smells.

PREFACE

Although different leisure professionals and academics have outlined the importance of leisure education programming during the 1960s (e.g., Humphrey, 1964; Kraus, 1964; Rusk, 1960), Charles Brightbill is one of the first academics to provide a body of scholarly work devoted to leisure education. In 1960, in his book, *The Challenge of Leisure*, Brightbill dedicated an entire chapter to leisure education and argued that education for leisure is vital. In his next book Brightbill (1961) augmented this argument, and 5 years later Brightbill (1966) published one of the first books dedicated to leisure education, titled *Educating for Leisure-Centered Living*.

Since Brightbill's academic work, different leisure theorists have developed leisure education models that give voice to their creation, usually without acknowledging that there are many different leisure education theories and models. For example, McDowell (1975, 1984) created a theory of leisure counseling/education that only speaks about his theory. When you read Holmberg, Rosen, and Holland's (1997) leisure education model based on Holland's (1973, 1992) six personality types designed to help in career development and satisfaction, you read nothing about other models of leisure education. Holmberg et al.'s leisure education model explains only their conceptual framework of leisure education. Although Mundy (1998) provides a small amount of attention toward different leisure education models, the overwhelming majority of her book outlines the leisure education model she created. Likewise, albeit Dattilo (2008) outlines different leisure education models, and does a very good job of providing research-based evidence of the effectiveness of leisure education, the bulk of his leisure education book outlines the model that Dattilo advances, which includes the leisure education components of leisure appreciation, awareness of self in leisure, self-determination in leisure, social interaction leisure resources, and decision making in leisure. Stumbo (1992, 1997) created numerous leisure education manuals that list all sorts of leisure education activities aligned to the Peterson and Gunn (1984) leisure education model with little overview of the many different leisure education models that have been developed.

An incorrect and oversimplified view might be that these leisure education theorists and creators are self-maximizing people who only want to communicate their own academic work. However, professional fields grow—and areas of specialization develop—by “pioneers” who often have to work alone in order to develop new theories, sometimes embraced by colleagues, sometimes challenged by colleagues, and sometimes rejected by colleagues. That is to say, it is part of

normal social science and professional development for pioneering researchers and thinkers to work alone on their ideas until a body of knowledge is created that brings together differing academic and professional theories, research, and services. Although collaboration is vitally important in all human service fields and can contribute to creativity, Cain's (2012) recent scholarly summary regarding the power that introverts can cause in the world underscores that collaborative efforts can sometimes destroy creativity and that working alone can free people from the problem of groupthink and can be essential to creative developments.

To underscore the importance of how working alone to develop theories and professional practice can be beneficial, I would like to draw on the field of counseling psychology. Many of the developing theories regarding mental health and therapy intervention were developed by pioneers who worked relentlessly in creating their theories, and sometimes those theories went against the common norms of academic and professional practice. For example, although Sigmund Freud was rooted in medical practice and science, the development of psychoanalytic therapy was at odds with the medical model of his era and he worked persistently in developing the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society (circa 1902) and the International Psychoanalytical Association (1910), which created separation from medical practice (Winter, 1999). Talk therapy, in order to understand the unconscious, was the new intervention that Freud developed that challenged medical practice. After approximately 10 years of working in collaboration with Freud and the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, Alfred Adler resigned as the President of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1911 and worked uncompromisingly to develop the Society of Individual Psychology in 1912, which not only challenged Freudian psychoanalytic practice but also developed a new type of counseling theory called Adlerian therapy. Adler's disagreement with Freud on psychological determinance from sex and the libido to other environmental factors (e.g., family, birth order, sibling relationships) caused Freud to call Adler a heretic (Corey, 2005). Karen Horney also needed to work in separation from Freud and his cohorts, and her continuous work developed the seeds of feminist views to counseling psychology and psychoanalytic knowledge (Hitchcock, 2004).

Drawing a parallel to leisure education, I see many of the early thinkers and pioneers of leisure education—people such as Charles Brightbill, John Dattilo, John Holland, Richard Kraus, Chester McDowell, Jean Mundy, Atara Sivan, Robert Stebbins, Norma Stumbo, and many, many others—as important thinkers who have worked relentlessly and passionately to develop different models and theories of leisure education. One of the chief aims of *Leisure Education: A Person-Centered, System-Directed, and Social Policy Perspective* is to provide a book that brings all of these leisure education voices together

and provides a broad overview of the many different theories and models of leisure education. My humble hope is that this book propels the field of leisure education forward by helping readers (a) understand the history of leisure education, including the many theories and models of leisure education; (b) outline the progress and dynamic aspects of leisure education, such as the difference between person-centered and system-directed leisure education; and (c) move the leisure education field forward toward social policy development so that leisure education can have a voice related to preventing and remedying social problems. In regard to connecting leisure education to social policy, one of the unique features of this book, as Kleiber (2012) has recently suggested, is the integration of leisure education and media literacy (see Chapter 5).

In the United States, leisure education is often associated with the field of therapeutic recreation. As outlined in Chapter 4, there is a solid body of research evidence that leisure education can help people with special needs that has its roots in therapeutic recreation practice. However, this book aligns with the thinking of Edginton, Hudson, Dieser, and Edginton (2004); Farrell and Lundegren (1991); Henderson (2007); and Sivan and Stebbins (2012) that leisure education can be part of leisure programs and services in different leisure settings (e.g., public, not-for-profit, commercial), with different leisure and human service professional orientations (e.g., community recreation, family recreation, park planning, therapeutic recreation, youth services, social policy planning, community development, urban planning, outdoor recreation, mental health counseling, social work, school-based education, tourism), and with diverse population groups (e.g., people with special needs, neighborhood groups, adolescents, special interest groups, members of city council, tourists). For example, community recreation professionals can partner with social policy planners to create TV or computer diets, a leisure education program offered at community recreation facilities to address the social problem of obesity.

To this end, *Leisure Education: A Person-Centered, System-Directed, and Social Policy Perspective* is broken into six chapters. Chapter 1 provides a broad understanding of leisure education from a social policy perspective. Although this book aims to provide a broad overview of the many different theories and models of leisure education, from a social policy perspective this book is strongly linked to Mundy's (1998) definition of leisure education as a developmental process through which an individual develops an understanding of leisure, of self in relation to leisure, and of the relationship among leisure, lifestyle, and society. Understanding the relationship among leisure, lifestyle, and society is a foundational concept in the development of social policy. For instance, understanding how the consumption of violent media can increase violence and aggression in society and how leisure education can help remedy the societal concerns of aggression is an example of understanding the relationship among

leisure, lifestyle, and society. Likewise, being aware that Internet-based leisure—which usually means sitting in a chair at a computer—can contribute to the social problem of obesity and providing leisure education programming toward changing passive types of leisure toward more active-living leisure to prevent obesity is another example of understanding the relationship among leisure, lifestyle, and society. Chapter 2 outlines that there are many different theories of leisure. This book departs from other leisure education books in that it does not present a single theory of leisure, but rather it suggests that leisure education specialists need to understand the many different theories of leisure. Too many American leisure education models are based on Neulinger’s (1981) leisure paradigm, and *Leisure Education: A Person-Centered, System-Directed, and Social Policy Perspective* suggests that leisure education specialists need to pick different theories of leisure based on differing settings and population groups. Chapter 3 outlines the beneficial aspects of leisure but departs from other leisure education books by positing that leisure can be destructive and can harm people and communities. The key is for leisure education specialists to augment the net benefits of leisure by preventing the negative outcomes of leisure. In order to do this, awareness of the dark side of leisure is needed. Chapter 4 provides a historical overview of the many different theories and models of leisure education and specifically outlines the difference between person-centered leisure education and system-directed leisure education. Chapter 5 might be the most unique contribution to this book. Although Chapter 1 posits that leisure education needs to move toward social policy development, Chapter 5 is an in-depth explanation of how leisure education can be linked to a social policy perspective. Furthermore, Chapter 5 provides an in-depth example of how media literacy leisure education can be integrated into a social policy perspective related to human and societal welfare. Chapter 6 is a very brief chapter related to leisure education programming. While there are many other outstanding books that articulate how to provide basic programming, this chapter simply identifies the most basic aspects of leisure education programming, such as how to write goals and objectives and how to be cross-culturally competent.

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PROLOGUE

by

Atara Sivan, Hong Kong Baptist University
Robert A. Stebbins, University of Calgary

Members of the
World Leisure Commission on Leisure Education

To bring up the subject of leisure education is to raise the issue of the importance of leisure. In other words, by engaging in the former we are arguing that the latter is worth promulgating. Such promulgation, such education, takes place at the formal level primarily in schools, institutions, and organizations. True, as Dieder shows in this book, leisure education can be—indeed often is—informal and self-directed, but it is its formal side that may lead to policy and to conscious decisions to inform various target groups about leisure. This, the formal side of the process, is where the question of the importance of leisure comes to a head.

Most readers of this book will be either university students or specialists in leisure education. They will peruse the volume fueled by the conviction that leisure is important, very important, and therefore is badly in need of being described and explained to the general public. That public may be as broad as all primary and secondary students or all overworked adults or as narrow as people in rehabilitative therapy or those facing the abrupt surge of free time felt at retirement. As for the readers, they will see leisure as a main route to well-being and a decent lifestyle. Furthermore, they will hold that all people must be educated about such benefits.

If only the general public understood leisure in at least some of the depth that leisure studies specialists do. Unfortunately, that public, especially in the United States, has labored for better than a century with a mixed sense of leisure (Stebbins, 2012, pp. 98–99). Thus the modern work ethic, a “dereligionized,” contemporary version of the old Protestant Ethic, stresses a person should work, work hard, and avoid leisure as much as possible. Work is good and leisure is not (though today a little of it after a good session of work is acceptable).

Moreover, some people today see leisure as frivolous, as simply having a good time, or, in the language of leisure studies, as casual leisure and the quest for hedonic experiences. The image of frivolity fades into that of leisure as a waste of time because some people believe frivolousness leads to nothing substantial (even though several benefits of casual leisure have been identified by, among others, Hutchinson & Kleiber, 2005; Kleiber, 2000; Stebbins, 2001). A related image is that leisure is unimportant, in the sense that there is little need to plan for it, that what we do in free time can be determined on the spot. Finally, the larger community defines some leisure as deviant. This kind of activity, to the extent the larger society sees it in unfavorable terms while defining it as leisure, also carries a negative public image.

Most people nowadays probably see leisure in both a negative and a positive light. They think about leisure in general as frivolous, insubstantial, unimportant, or deviant or as a combination of these evaluations, but they also see leisure in at least two positive ways. One, they commonly see it as fun, as manifested in participants smiling, laughing, and being at ease with what they are doing. Hence, the concentration of the serious leisure athlete or performing artist, for example, is incongruous for them, possibly not really leisure. Two, they look fondly on their own leisure as something positive. They want to pursue their personal leisure, for here they find satisfaction or fulfillment, if not both. This composite image has, to be sure, inconsistencies. So it is with common sense.

In promoting leisure education to the public and to policy makers, we must contend with this complex, sometimes logically inconsistent, view of leisure. To be effective, leisure education programs in schools, at work, and for retirees, for example, will have to neutralize leisure's negative side. The same strategy will be required when dealing with policy makers. In short, as long as an unfavorable image of leisure prevails among our target groups, leisure education will not get far.

Leisure education, in this instance and in spite of the diverse ways of looking at it, is important to individuals and to their societies. Although the wide range of opinions about the whys and wherefores of leisure education might imply that it is everything and thus perhaps "nothing at all," these opinions also indicate that it is an area of great interest and at times even of great concern to researchers and practitioners in leisure. Some attribute the wide range of opinions about leisure education to its roots in two significant multidisciplinary and all-encompassing areas (Sivan & Stebbins, 2011). Others examine it from a specialized perspective, a way that mirrors the growing trend toward specialization observed in all professions. In this book, Dieser addresses both perspectives, thereby offering a holistic view. His perspective is vitally important for anyone interested in understanding the place of leisure in life and especially for those who plan to undertake an active role in educating for leisure.

Even though the initial calls for leisure education were heard first in the West, they are now reverberating around the world as part of the international leisure agenda. Position papers from academics and professional practitioners have been advocating for implementation of formal and informal leisure education. They suggest a multitude of concrete ways to do this and stress the need for a more active approach by governments, international bodies, and local organizations than presently taken. Amid mounting recommendations to integrate the voices of leisure studies from around the world (Roberts, 2010), the calls for leisure education could also eventuate in the development of international and multicultural models that cross all political boundaries. Such models should be person- and system-centered.

Leisure education, be it process, content, context, or a combination of these, requires personal active learning through facilitation and empowerment. Because they are the principal agents of formal education for all, the schools are enjoined to take on the role of leisure educator (Sivan, 2008). Success in this role is not solely determined by the schools, however, for there are external forces to be reckoned with, notably the different educational stakeholders and policy makers. This situation underscores the need to also pursue leisure education on the policy level. The examples Dieser provides attest to this need and, it is hoped, will inspire those embarking on a career in leisure education whatever their instructional level and sociocultural area.

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