

BOOK REVIEW**Research in Recreation, Parks, Sport, and Tourism, Second Edition**

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The second edition of *Research in Recreation, Parks, Sport, and Tourism* is well suited as a college textbook for the undergraduate preparation of students pursuing a professional career in recreation, parks and leisure services. This new edition further speaks to students interested in the occupational areas of sport and tourism as many applications and exercises in the text are related to recreational sports and travel activities.

Considerable revisions have been made since the printing of the first edition, *Evaluative Research in Recreation, Park, and Sport Settings: Searching for Useful Information*. The content revisions in the text include an overview of basic and evaluative research, information regarding the development of a research topic, and the identification of theoretical underpinnings for conducting either a quantitative or a qualitative approach to research.

Revisions further include information associated with writing the significance of the study, considerations when choosing a measure, and determining an instrument's validity and reliability. Rounding out the changes in the second edition is the presentation of both reactive and non-reactive measures, seeking approval of the research proposal, discussing the need for a pilot test, preparing for data collection, and presenting the research results by using visual aids.

The textbook is appropriate for use in a recreation and leisure discipline-specific research and evaluation course taught by a faculty member within the academic department.

The target audience for this book is both undergraduate and graduate students. Undergraduate students can discover the significance of conducting research and evaluation as they read the text. Practical solutions that address complex questions about research and evaluation practices and methods are strengths of the text. Advanced degree students would utilize the textbook materials as they prepare a proposal for independent study or as they develop a thesis prospectus. This second edition has a great deal of useful value for practitioners holding a full-time staff position with an agency that delivers leisure services. The topics presented in the text would assist the agency worker in efficiently locating information most relative to their agency-based research and evaluation needs.

This book is a comprehensive collection of steps to follow in the planning and development of a research study. The text was written for a beginning researcher, researchers needing a refresher on certain topics within the research process, and

persons who have had little or no prior involvement in a systematic approach to conducting a research study. An experienced researcher and evaluator could view the text as merely a compilation of research and evaluation information void of concentrated discussions on theoretical research topics. Some might consider this a weakness of the text. But, it is what it is, a broad and comprehensive progression of the steps in the research process. For the experienced researcher, Appendices 2 and 3 provide theory-based references for both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to research.

This textbook is not necessarily the new kid on the block. There have been several textbooks that have focused on the evaluation of recreation and park services and the development and implementation of a research study. The understanding, appreciation, and implementation of recreation and park evaluations were initially presented in a textbook written by William F. Theobald, *Evaluation of Recreation and Park Programs* (1979).

Research has become an academic subject that many departments in recreation, parks and leisure services prefer to teach in-house and use discipline-specific research applications. In years past, the preponderance of students in recreation and park curricula were once advised to enroll in a non-discipline research methods course to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for conducting responsible research. This type of course was typically offered by physical education departments and teacher preparation programs (education departments) on college campuses and taught by a faculty person assigned to the department offering the course.

The Riddick and Russell text is well suited for students majoring in recreation, parks and leisure services. In a day and age of discipline-specific research courses this book is worthy of becoming a signature text for a core curriculum course in recreation and park research and evaluation of leisure services. Specialized curriculum options are very prevalent within professional preparation degree programs across the United States. This book easily serves as a required text for students enrolled in a core research course within the undergraduate and graduate curricula.

The text includes both a quantitative and a qualitative approach to research and evaluation. It is a collection of research information, applications and practices nicely presented within 17 steps. It is a dynamic sequence of research steps with a clear and concise sequence of research information. Some of the steps are very appropriate for a graduate student that needs to revisit the steps involved in the research process prior to an upcoming thesis or special topics/independent study meeting with a faculty mentor. And, it would be an excellent refresher prior to an oral and/or written exam that culminates a master's degree program.

Equal attention is given to the quantitative and qualitative approaches to conducting research and evaluation. The mixed-methods approach is discussed to a smaller degree in the text. The textbook is organized into four stages within the scientific research process: Getting Started, Developing a Plan, Implementing the Study, and Reporting the Research. The 17 steps involved in planning and implementing a research study are placed within these four stages.

The six new features of the second edition are the inclusion of case illustrations, the summary of important points to remember, the presentation of ideas

that provide practical “how to” advice, developing your (the student) research, content review and discussion questions, and learning exercises that contain activities of interest to students regardless of their selected curriculum option (career path) within the professional preparation degree program.

The case illustrations throughout the text allow students to try out their understandings of the research steps. The studies are well conceived and very problematically oriented to the field. The text figures are very illustrative and placed within content tables that serve well as summaries to the reading materials in the text. Overall, the content within the textbook’s figures is demonstrable of the text content and succinctly presented for ease in reading.

The Overview (Part I) of the text clearly sets the scene for both basic and evaluative research. Primary and secondary sources of data and descriptive, explanatory and predictive types of research goals are presented for the reader that wants to first see the big picture and subsequently read for deeper understandings.

In Part II (Getting Started), the soon-to-be researcher investigates how to go about deciding on a research topic. Sources for generating research ideas and the selection of criteria to be used in sorting through the many ideas are important content components in Step 1. Practitioners and students alike can read about measuring program effectiveness by looking at program needs, program design, the program development process, the impact on program participants, program cost effectiveness and the economic impact of recreation, parks, sport, and tourism activities on a community.

Steps 2 and 3 involve strategies to use when searching the literature for theoretical underpinnings that assist researchers in refining their search for a topic. Steps 4 and 5 permit the research student to narrow their topic and focus on explaining the significance of the chosen topic.

Part III (Developing a Plan) contains six steps that range from selecting a sample (Step 6) to seeking approval of the research proposal (Step 11). Step 7 focuses on choosing a research design and is followed by giving consideration for the type(s) of measurement (Step 8). Data collection tools are highlighted in Step 9 and the ethical responsibilities of the researcher are presented and discussed in Step 10.

Implementation of the research study (Part IV) includes information related to the administration of a pilot study (Step 12) and preparing for the collection of data (Step 13). Analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data is detailed in Step 14. Employing effective strategies and methods in reporting the research results (Part V) is the culmination of the research process presented in the text. Step 15 includes information on the use of visual aids in reporting the results of a research study. Preparing and delivering the written report are topics presented and discussed in Steps 16 and 17. Part VI (*Mise en Scène*) uses the analogy that conducting research resembles the appearance of an hourglass. Simply put, the student starts the research process in a broad fashion, then narrows in on particulars, and consequently broadens and expands once again.

Research and evaluation textbooks for use in the field of recreation, parks and leisure services have been around since the 1970s. Many thanks must go to the authors of these textbooks, books that have transcended generations of professional

preparation degree programs. It has been the writings of William Theobald, Betty van der Smissen, Ananda Mitra, Sam Lankford, Karla Henderson, and Deborah Bialeschki over the past 25 to 30 years that have guided our students through the research and evaluation process. Now, Riddick and Russell in their second edition text have stepped up to the plate and taken a mighty swing. The end result is a home run, a textbook that is most appropriate for use by recreation, parks and leisure services students aspiring to become knowledgeable and responsible researchers and evaluators.