
Preparing Students to Write a Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper

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Abstract

This paper describes a process for guiding students through the writing of a Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper and a one-page philosophy statement suitable for use in students' professional portfolios. The authors describe how the review of recreation education literature, scholarship on teaching and learning, and assessment of student learning were used over a 12-year period to arrive at the present design for course content, delivery methods, and the Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper assignment. Over time it was discovered that exposing students to the humanities (e.g., philosophy, literature, film) as a complement to science (e.g., positive psychology, social cognitive theory, evidence-based benefits) was more effective for meeting learning outcomes than merely philosophy and theory alone. The authors also describe how assessment of The Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper provides evidence that students are meeting standard 7.01 for accreditation under the 2013 COAPRT Learning Outcomes Standards.

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The purpose of this paper is to describe the process of preparing students to write a Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper and a one-page philosophy statement suitable for use in a professional portfolio. Since an important part of preparing to write the philosophy paper involves writing a short paper called "This I Believe," instructions for this assignment are also included. The first author has been working toward refining this course for the past 12 years, including content, teaching methods, and writing assignments. The second and third authors collaborated with the first author at different stages of the project and at different stages of their careers. The third author has had the opportunity to implement similar assignments at two other universities (California State University, Long Beach and The University of Georgia). The remainder of this introduction addresses two topics that we believe are important to understanding the design of the Professional Philosophy Paper. First, we explain the importance of using the humanities in recreation education, and philosophy in particular, as a complement to scientific inquiry to prepare students to become convincing advocates for the profession. Second, we elucidate two current issues that illustrate why this type of assignment should be a priority for recreation educators.

Our Motivation

Recreation educators have engaged in substantial discussion aimed at resolving uncertainty related to what the profession is about, what its central tasks are, and what we should be teaching our students. A number of authors have made good suggestions (Burton, 1991; Butts, 1992; Fox & Warren, 1990; Goodale, 1992, 1995; Hemingway, 1993; Howe, 1986; Lahey, 1991; McDonald, 1986; Rancourt, 1986; Riggins, Sylvester, & Moore, 1985; Sapora, 1986; Sessoms, 1995; Vokel & McGuire, 2007). Estes (2000) published a paper arguing for more humanities in the curriculum, and philosophy specifically. As of 1999 there was no resolution in sight with regard to the three questions posed at the beginning of this paragraph (Audience comments, 1999; Neipoth, 1997). Related to Estes' argument for more philosophy, a number of recreation educators proposed that more critical thinking, philosophy, and liberal arts were needed to assist students in recognizing and evaluating claims about leisure from different conceptual frameworks (Fox & Warren, 1990; Goodale, 1992, 1995; Hemingway, 1993; Howe, 1986; Lahey, 1991; McDonald, 1986; Riggins, et al., 1985; Vokel & McGuire, 2007). Estes (2000) concluded that:

The culminating effect of the students' studies of leisure through the humanistic disciplines will be an understanding of leisure that they can discuss critically, defend, understand, and apply to professional practice. In so doing, our students will be able to argue for and justify the role of the recreation and leisure studies professional in helping others lead good lives and actualizing their human potential. (p. 26)

While it is arguable that those with degrees in recreation and leisure studies should *know more* about leisure than the average citizen (Estes, 2003; Parr, 2000), *knowing* more has not readily translated into students' ability to define what *leisure* means using language that demonstrates a much deeper understanding than the socially accepted view of leisure as *free time*, which is the view that dominates in America today (de Graaf & Batker, 2011; Gini, 2005). A pre-and post-course assessment of students definitions of

leisure at East Carolina University, in the United States, showed that following a course in philosophy of leisure, upper division students definitions were only slightly more varied than those in the pre-course (Estes, 2003). However, several students did report that what they learned helped them advocate for the profession, educate others about leisure, and enhance clients' ability to connect leisure to quality of life (Estes, 2003). Veal (2012) extends the discussion about the meaning and importance of leisure globally, pointing out that during the era from 1980 to 2011 the "leisure society thesis" (p. 99), which developed during the 1960s and 1970s has been relegated to a historical reference point and the discussions about work-leisure relationships that are currently relevant include, but are not limited to, periods of high unemployment; underemployment of workers with long hours and low wages; subjective feeling of time pressure in United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Japan; longer work hours in some countries with consumerism and increasing debt-to-income ratios; a post-manufacturing era where creative workers are finding meaning in their work; and, groups (outside of leisure studies) advocating for shorter work weeks and more vacations.

Given these assertions, the authors of this learning activity agree with Stevens, Sylvester, de Graaf, and Parr (2012) that the humanities are essential in the recreation and leisure curriculum as a complement to scientific inquiry, because the humanities help students understand how human beings express themselves and experience their lives. Sylvester et al. state, "advocacy and the humanities are relevant to each other because advocacy amounts to persuasion. In our case, we wish to persuade people that leisure and recreation are desirable behaviors and ways of living" (p. 2). Thus, while most positivist or postpositivist scientific inquiry endeavors to discover objective (or more verifiable) truth, the humanities are needed to enlighten and inspire recreation professionals who need to know something about leisure. Two current issues show the continuing relevance of this discussion to today's recreation educators.

Dustin et al. (2012) describes outcomes from a three-day summit hosted in 2010 to discuss the future of leisure studies in research universities. The summit was attended by chairs, deans, senior faculty with administrative experience in leisure studies at research universities, and selected external consultants from sport management and parks and recreation. Participants discussed, in detail, the question of what holds leisure studies together given its highly interdisciplinary nature. The consensus among participants was that "... leisure is the 'glue' that gives form and substance to what we study" (pp. 15-16). However, at the same time, little progress was made beyond this general statement toward determining an actual collective identity. Thus, when the summit ended with the creation of a "to-do" list, the first item was to "articulate our collective identity. We must decide who we are, what we do, and what our body of knowledge is. We must communicate what distinguishes us from other academic fields of study, and what it is that only we can offer to the resolution of pressing social and environmental problems [i.e., problem solving through practice]" (p. 22). Thus, the recommendations of leaders in our field are the very questions recreation educators have been asking since the 1980s: What is the recreation and leisure studies profession about? What are its central tasks? What we should be teaching our students? The authors of this learning activity argue that if recreation educators would do a better job teaching students how to develop their professional philosophy, the young professionals moving into recreation and its related professions will be better prepared to answer these questions.

The second need is illustrated by the Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT): Learning Outcomes Standards and Assessment (Nov. 2011). To begin, COAPRT defines foundations as “includ[ing] the background, nature, scope of the profession, including its history, philosophy, and social and behavioral science underpinnings” (p. 12). More specifically, standard 7.01 states “students graduating from the program shall demonstrate the following entry-level knowledge ... c) the foundations of the profession in history, science and philosophy” (p. 12).

Consequently, the authors of this learning activity believe these discussions and evidence, taken together, demonstrate the continuing need for using more humanities in our teaching, and especially philosophy, as a complement to scientific inquiry. The next section explains the theoretical foundations that guided the revision of our course content, the pedagogical methods, and the description and outcomes of our Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper.

Theoretical Foundations

In light of the issues raised in the introduction, the authors endeavored, over time, to continue improving students’ abilities to write the Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper by implementing various strategies based on teaching and learning theories and the assessment of students’ papers. Around 2005 the first author came to the realization that she was working a lot harder thinking about how students could write better papers than they were. Thus, over time, she began to look for ways to implement more student-centered learning methods in the classroom. Estes (2005) described teacher-centered learning as the teacher assuming the role of authority and directing the learning process. Conversely, student-centered learning actively engages the learner in the process of learning by requiring that the learner pose questions, be curious, solve problems, assume responsibility, and construct meaning (adapted from the Association for Experiential Education as cited by Estes, 2005). Since the Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper requires philosophical thinking, students need to practice thinking philosophically throughout the course (or courses).

The first student-centered strategies included increasing points for students’ participation while having students track their own attendance and quality of participation. Regular quizzes were implemented to ensure students were prepared for class discussion. Following a teaching grant funded in 2007, and review of Huba and Freed’s (2000) book on learner-centered assessment and Fink’s (2003) book on creating significant learning experiences, additional student-centered strategies were also adopted:

- A learning activity was added to each topical unit to keep students actively involved (Huba & Freed) and pre-class preparation and during- and post-class reflection (Fink) for each activity was facilitated and tracked through the use of semi-structured worksheets kept by students in learning portfolios. As Dewey (1938/1988) pointed out, all genuine education comes about through experience, but not all experiences are equally educative; what it depends on is whether the experience is engaging to *the student*. Reflection worksheets were designed to facilitate such student engagement.

- Students were required to write journals to synthesize the most important things they learned in each unit and come up with creative ideas for applying what they learned to recreation practice (Fink).
- All papers assigned, whether short papers, or the longer Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper, were completed as first drafts and brought to class for discussion, and formative feedback was given before the final paper was due. As Huba and Freed stated, "The opportunity to self-correct and try again is essential to self-improvement and the development of life-long learning skills" (p. 47).

Additional changes were made based on Fink's (2003) recommendations, including (a) selecting the key knowledge to teach and spending more time teaching that knowledge and eliminating unnecessary topics, (b) referring to accreditation standards when choosing what to teach, (c) finding ways to integrate learning in this class with what students learned in other classes (e.g., evidence-based benefits and scientific research methods), and (d) being explicit with students by explaining the role reflection has in their learning process. The following paraphrase from Fink's book is read with the students before they write their first learning journal:

The process of on-going reflection is essential because, as Fink informs us, humans are intrinsically driven to make meaning based on experiences, information, and ideas, but problems arise because people are overwhelmed by packed schedules and bombarded by too much information in their day to day routine. Fink explains that while all events have initial meaning, meaning often remains at the subconscious level where it is likely to be distorted, limited or even destructive. Therefore, in order to become thoughtful practitioners and convincing advocates, students must learn to philosophically examine the meaning, process, and values underlying recreation and leisure to become conscious of what they believe and why they believe it.

Other changes were made based specifically on recommendations by Huba and Freed (2000):

- We assumed that teaching and assessing are intertwined, so students grade their own quizzes and exams in order to get immediate feedback.
- We placed continuous emphasis keeping the classroom environment open to risk-taking by emphasizing the importance of generating better questions and learning from errors.
- Assignments were designed based on ill-defined problems (i.e., problems that have many possible solutions). Ideally, the problems came from real life recreation practice.
- Detailed rubrics were developed with clear, high standards and expectations so everyone (i.e., the students and teacher) would be clear, from the outset, about the standards required for excellent performance.

Concurrently, the authors sought ways to incorporate more humanities into the class to complement philosophy because it was clear from students' general lack of enthusiasm that they needed more inspiration. The most influential change was the

addition of the “This I Believe” (TIB) assignment, created by the third author and his co-instructor Joseph Pate. The TIB directs students to listen to personal radio essays about individuals’ beliefs and requires them to write about what they believe. As stated in the instructions from “This I Believe, Inc.” (n.d.):

We know this is a tough job. What we want is so intimate that no one can write it for you. You must write it yourself, in the language most natural to you. We ask you to write in your own words ... You may even find that it takes a request like this for you to reveal some of your own beliefs to yourself” (para. 2).

This personal narrative gets students in touch with their own motivations, and their own stories, in a way that provides inspiration for their Professional Philosophy of Recreation Papers.

Other humanities adopted included fiction and film via use of the text *Sophie’s World* (Gaarder, 2007), which is a novel about the history of philosophy, and the film *Freedom Writers* (LaGravenese, 2006) as the activity a Humanism and Ethics unit. Students find the film particularly inspirational because it illustrates a true-life story where youth who are on the fast-track to jail are deeply influenced by an inspired teacher who believes in their innate abilities to learn. The teacher, Mrs. G., provides educational experiences that model classical leisure, Socratic Irony, and other inspirational methods. The direction of the youth’s lives are changed for the better. The authors’ students find the film very inspirational; in post-course feedback one student wrote, “The thing I will remember most about this class was watching *Freedom Writers* and applying it to so many different units throughout the semester. It was a great movie and it taught many valuable lessons and concepts.” During post-film discussion students and the instructors examine multiple ways concepts developed by the Ancient Greek philosophers were successfully used by the high school teacher to open students minds to new beliefs. It is the authors’ belief that the film is particularly effective because it both illustrates and creates irony. Wolfsdorf (2007) explains that irony is a method of using questions, scenarios, or experiences to cause a person to confront his or her own close-minded beliefs by realizing, for him/herself, a truth that is in obvious opposition to a previously held belief. The high school students make a dramatic change from being members of a gang to being college-bound. Thus, the students in our classrooms are shown the power of ironic experiences through film. We believe this is highly influential in helping them write meaningful Professional Philosophy of Recreation Papers, because ironic experiences open their minds to their own moments of irony. One example of how they change is that many students move past their socialized view of leisure as free time activity to defining it as a synthesis of modern and classical views that can lead to a sense of well-being.

Learning Outcomes

There are five learning outcomes that relate to the writing of the Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain classical and modern perspectives of leisure.
2. Apply the formula for philosophical thinking (i.e., define their metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological positions as they relate to recreation, leisure, and their specialty area within the discipline).
3. Explain the beliefs of rationalism, empiricism, humanism, ethics, and applied psychological theories as they relate to leisure.
4. Create a professional philosophy of recreation paper.
5. Advocate for recreation and leisure services.

The Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper Assignment

The first writing assignment that prepares students to write their Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper is a shorter paper called "This I Believe" (or TIB). The spirit of this writing assignment is to provide students with an opportunity to do guided, critical, and essential pre-work before they embark on writing their Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper. To complete the TIB, student's first answer the question, "What does it mean to believe?" Next, they visit National Public Radio's (NPR) "This I Believe" website to select and listen to at least three prerecorded essays from the radio show's archives (<http://thisibelieve.org/>). After students listen, they select the most personally meaningful essay and write a reflection that explains why they chose the essay, how the piece was effective, how the person communicated their beliefs, how the essay affected them, what influenced the person's beliefs, the tone and style of the essay, and how the essay made the student feel. Finally, students write a paragraph that explains *what they believe* (the NPR "This I Believe" website has instructions about how to complete this part of the activity). During a subsequent class, students collectively reflect on what they learned from writing the TIB paper. They also write themselves a reminder about how they will use what they learned from the TIB assignment when writing their Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper at the end of the semester.

The Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper is constructed from topical paragraphs, each with specified content that guides the student in constructing his or her paper by becoming philosophers themselves. They construct their own professional philosophy by addressing the same primary questions addressed by other philosophers: "What is real?", "How do we come to know?", and "What is valued?" Papers tend to be approximately 8 to 12 pages long, and students often break topics into more than one paragraph, as warranted by the content they choose.

The first topic is an introduction, and this section typically contains three paragraphs. Students are required to: (a) provide a convincing rationale for knowing one's professional philosophy (this is discussed, at length in the detailed assignment given to the students); (b) situate his or her unique perspective and experience (i.e., his or her area of intended practice and related beliefs and values. This is where the student will likely draw on his or her "This I Believe" paper for an engaging story about how he or she got interested in this career); and (c) provide an overview for the remainder of the paper, which amounts to an outline of the remainder of the topics to be covered.

For the second topic, students write one to two paragraphs about their metaphysical perspective on recreation as a profession (i.e., "What is real?"). They do this by defining a minimum of three terms, including recreation and leisure, and they

are required to choose at least one term related to the student's area of practice (e.g., therapeutic recreation, parks, tourism, community recreation, recreational sport, youth development, experiential learning, or play). Many students choose to define more than three terms. Students are instructed to construct definitions that are personally meaningful, drawing from credible, professional, and scholarly sources.

For the third topic, students write one to two paragraphs about their epistemological perspective (i.e., "How do we know?"). They explain things such as how clients learn through recreation and why recreation, as a form of experiential learning, is such an effective modality for helping people learn. The assignment suggests several options for what to discuss, and students choose according to what speaks to them. For example, students must explain: (a) why experience combined with client-centered reflection is key to effective learning; (b) how life-long healthy behaviors and attitudes can be developed via recreation and leisure performance accomplishments (e.g., self-efficacy); and (c) how people can use reason to look within and connect with their consciences to develop good character and more ethical behavior.

For the fourth topic, students write about their axiological perspective (i.e., "What is valued?"). In one to two paragraphs they explain what is valuable about recreation in terms of well-being and living a good life and/or achieving the common good. Suggestions include: (a) explaining how recreation and leisure experiences promote human flourishing through healthy, loving experiences freely chosen for intrinsic reasons; (b) how they can support clients' self-motivation and commitment to life-long healthy behaviors (e.g., through self-determination and internalization); and (c) how people can add meaning to their lives through recreation and leisure.

For the fifth topic, students continue describing their axiological perspective by discussing the most compelling evidence-based benefits clients will likely acquire from recreation and leisure experiences in their particular area of practice (e.g., recreational therapy, community recreation, tourism, park management, outdoor recreation, or sports). Students are instructed to invoke credible evidence backed by appropriate references that support the benefits they choose. Students are required to write a minimum of two complete paragraphs to address this topic.

The last paragraph is a conclusion where the student summarizes the paper. The conclusion should reiterate why this information is important by suggesting how it will be useful in practice. Considerations for applying philosophy to practice include: (a) deciding what work they want to do and where they want to do it; (b) deciding what kind of programs and facilities they plan to promote; (c) making informed decisions about marketing, funding, partnerships, volunteer recruitment, hiring and mentoring staff, and evaluating programs; and, (d) advocating enthusiastically and convincingly for recreation, leisure and his or her professional area of practice. Of course, the conclusion should connect logically to the rationale set forth by the student in the introduction.

Finally, the student (re)writes a one-page statement called "My Philosophy of Recreation," which makes a good addition to their professional portfolio. The student can customize the name of their philosophy statement by substituting the name of their professional area for the word "Recreation" (e.g., "Therapeutic Recreation," "Outdoor Recreation," "Sports Leadership," "Youth Development"). Students are instructed to engage the reader (i.e., a potential employer) by starting with their personal narrative that tells the story about why they are in this profession (similar to, or drawn from, the

"This I Believe" paper). Following the narrative, they continue with the most important ideas for their longer Professional Philosophy of Recreation paper.

Recommendations for Use

It takes time for students to undergo the paradigm shift necessary to become philosophical thinkers. Therefore, students work on the paper twice during one semester at East Carolina University and over four semesters at the University of Georgia (Powell, Johnson, James, & Dunlap, 2011). It is important that the content and practice writing exercises that build up to the end product, the Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper, be introduced over time, but each instructor should design how the process will work best. If instructors have the option to utilize a team approach where content, learning activities, and reflection papers can be assigned over several courses leading up to the final writing of the Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper, this approach would be preferable, but it would require a high degree of coordination among instructors.

In terms of content to be learned in preparation for writing the paper, students should be introduced to the basics of the philosophy and history of leisure in an introductory course. Ideally, they will begin to learn about evidence-based benefits during programming, and continue learning more about benefits and social and contemporary issues in their upper-division courses.

Students can write the "This I Believe" (TIB) paper during an introductory course or during the first third of an upper-division, semester-long course on philosophical and theoretical issues in leisure. In order for students to learn how to become philosophical thinkers, and gain the tools to build their own philosophy, students are taught: (a) the formula for philosophical thinking along with the evolution of classical and modern leisure (see Dare, Welton, & Coe, 1998, for an example of the historical-social views as they have changed over time); (b) Plato's and Socrates' version of Rationalism; and (c) Aristotle's version of Empiricism (see Dare et al., 1998; Gaarder, 2007). Since students need practice in order to understand how a philosophical belief system is constructed, the metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological views of Rationalism and Empiricism are emphasized so students can understand the formula they will be using when they eventually write their own professional philosophy. In terms of theoretical content, students complete units on humanism and ethics, positive psychology, and applied psychological theories, which emphasize the social sciences foundations of self-determination theory and social cognitive theory.

At around the mid-point of the semester course, or mid-way through the course of study if instructors are using a multi-semester, team approach, students are introduced to the Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper assignment and required to write a draft of the introduction. As mentioned in the learning activity instructions, the introduction contains three paragraphs, and it should be carefully edited by the instructor and returned to the student to provide timely, formative feedback (as recommended by Fink, 2003; Huba & Freed, 2000).

Additional teaching strategies that have helped students write high-quality papers include active learning exercises related to course content, with individual and group reflection, and students write journals periodically to reflect on the most meaningful content they have learned and its possible applications. At East Carolina University,

students also write two vignette papers in order to practice solving ill-defined problems that occur in their specialized areas of recreation practice using philosophical concepts and/or scientific theories (see Stevens & Schneider, 2010). As Huba and Freed (2000) explained, requiring students to address ill-defined problems provides the most learning. At UGA they use a peer review process of papers to illustrate how to provide useful yet critical feedback to peers. Regardless, each instructor should determine his or her own process, but the takeaway points for all instructors are that students need to be prepared to write their philosophy paper by (a) learning specific types of content (both humanities and science), (b) being involved in active learning, (c) continuous reflection, and (d) practice writing shorter papers that address ill-defined problems (Fink, 2003, Huba & Freed).

The Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper assignment, if varied, could be suitable for introductory recreation courses, as well as senior-level courses, depending on the progression of knowledge, skills, and abilities within the degree program's curricula. Some options include using the Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper as a final exam, capstone project, or a required item in an E-portfolio. When graded with a rubric developed by faculty and checked for reliability and validity, the evaluation of this writing assignment can provide a high-quality direct measure that will demonstrate how well students in a recreation program have met standard 7.01 (COAPRT, Nov. 2011, p. 12 & p. 16). The philosophy papers (artifacts of student learning), and composite of rubric scores, can be used to demonstrate students acquisition of knowledge of philosophy and social and behavioral science underpinnings, as well as their ability to apply their knowledge in order to advocate for the profession and make grounded decisions to problems they are likely face in recreation practice.

During 2011-2012, the first two authors gathered scores on rubrics used to grade students Professional Philosophy of Recreation Papers and their one-page Philosophy Statements (see Table 1).

Almost three quarters (72%) of the ECU students achieved a score of 18 or higher on the "My Philosophy of Recreation" summary statements suggesting most were able to convey what they believed to be real and important about recreation (i.e., benefits) in a succinct format. However, the standard deviation and range were higher than expected. At ECU, this summary statement is the last thing students write, and they would likely benefit by working on it earlier and receiving formative feedback such as they might in the UGA model (no empirical evidence exists to support this assertion). The lower mean scores for topical areas 3 and 4 also suggest that the ECU students find these topics challenging. A suggestion for improvement would be developing exercises to facilitate more student reflection when these topics are covered during class. Topic 5, what is valuable about recreation, in terms of benefits, showed a higher standard deviation indicating some ECU students had difficulty integrating this information, which was taught in other classes. Suggestion for improvements include better coordination with faculty teaching classes that cover this topic, team teaching, or grouping courses into blocks to facilitate integration of information between classes.

Table 1

Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper Rubric Scores from 51 student papers written at East Carolina University (ECU)

Sections and Topics of Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper	Possible Points	M	SD	Min.	Max.	Range
My Philosophy of Recreation (One-page summary statement for portfolio)	20	17.61	4.25	0	20	20
Topic 1: Introduction (provides rationale for why student is writing this paper, personal narrative, and overview)	10	9.10	1.07	6	10	4
Topic 2: What is real? (defines key terms using professional sources)	10	9.23	1.05	7	10	3
Topic 3: Why is recreation such an important and valuable way of knowing?	10	8.78	1.10	7	10	3
Topic 4: What is valuable about recreation (well-being)?	10	8.71	1.33	5	10	5
Topic 5: What is valuable about recreation (evidence-based benefits)?	20	17.45	2.98	10	20	10
Conclusion – summarizes what the paper has covered and why important.	10	9.59	0.77	8	10	2
Writing grade Quality of writing and APA format	10	8.39	1.07	5	10	5
Total Score	100	88.86	9.56	54	100	46

Overall, scores support that students were successful in articulating what they believe in a succinct manner and through the exercise are able to clearly communicate, and thus advocate, their professional philosophy of recreation. As mentioned earlier, students “may even find that it takes a request like this to reveal some of your own beliefs to yourself” (This I Believe, Inc., n.d., para. 2). The authors believe the process of writing the longer paper can help students reveal their beliefs to themselves, and thus they are better prepared to write the personalized summary of their Professional Philosophy of Recreation Paper, which may be used in students’ portfolios.

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