

Continuing to Bridge Research and Practice

Editors' Notes

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We are pleased to present the third issue of the *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership* to be published since moving to a quarterly format. Our team strives to include papers in each of the three submission categories (Research Papers; Essays, Practices, and Commentaries; and Research Notes). The editorial team and advisory board encourage academics and practitioners to consider submitting manuscripts in the additional categories beyond traditional Regular Papers. This issue includes one Research Note and five Regular Papers that continue to highlight the diversity in research efforts and implications for practice.

First, Sharp, Bradley, and Maples provide a Research Note addressing issues surrounding evaluating the effectiveness of environmental education programming. They provided middle school children with surveys to measure interest in nature, importance of nature, and environmental stewardship and to compare paper-and-pencil and electronic evaluation methods. They found that children may be more willing to provide more truthful responses through digital evaluation methods. These findings are instructive for those working to evaluate youth outdoor and environmental education programming effectively. Second, Starbuck and Bell used 36 in-depth interviews to investigate how student leaders of college outdoor orientation programs understand the effects of their leadership experience on their personal growth and development. They found that the majority of students placed high value on their leadership experiences and that the experiences led to positive changes. More specifically, the student leaders believe that the leadership experience increased their confidence to face adversity, their confidence in exercising their voice appropriately, and their leadership self-efficacy. As outdoor orientation programming continues to grow, these results can assist program managers and others to understand the potential effects of the program on the student (peer) leaders, in addition to the program participants.

Third, Wahl-Alexander, Howell, and Richards evaluated 101 summer camp counselors' perceived competency prior to and after an 8-day training at an independent, for-profit, overnight camp. They found significant increases across all constructs with the three factors with the largest increase being (a) typical day routine, (b) counselor expectations, and (c) developing camper skills. The two factors with the smallest increase were behavior management and creating a safe camp environment. Their study suggests that devoting additional time for conflict resolution training and cultivating camp skills may lead to stronger competency in staff, which might, in turn, help summer camp administrators and others seeking to improve their staff training program. Fourth, Jackson takes a unique look at the outdoor leadership field and its understanding

of activity safety and objective measures of risk exposure. Using 15 years of injury data from a college guide training diploma program, he examined the inherent challenges of comparing one data set to another. Jackson asserts that any one data set is most valid when compared only to itself, and his work provides useful suggestions regarding use of activity safety data and improving the comparability of such data to inform practice.

Fifth, Asfeldt, Purc-Stephenson, and Hvenegaard add to our understanding of journal writing as a tool in wilderness programs to promote a greater sense of community. In particular, they investigated students' perceptions of a group journal activity on the development of a sense of community during a wilderness expedition. They found that membership and shared emotional connection increased as a result of participation in the expedition and that the group journal played a role in this increase. Their study is useful for all outdoor and wilderness-based programs that integrate the use of journaling, particularly those considering implementing a group journal activity within their program design. Finally, in a qualitative study, Isnor and Dawson explored the experiences of families who participated in an adventure running program in Canada. They found that program parents, children, and the coach perceived that the program benefited the families by changing their physical activity patterns and encouraging increased participation in outdoor leisure activities. Their study and its results are helpful for those considering the recreation patterns of families and show the role that recreation and leisure programs can play in increasing physical health among community members. Each of the studies represented in this issue highlights the direct application of research to practice—something that we hope the *JOREL* will continue to promote.

We appreciate the contributions of our current and past advisory groups, associate editors, reviewers, authors, and the staff at Sagamore Publishing. We hope you will consider serving as a reviewer, serving as an associate editor, and/or authoring a manuscript under one of the three submission categories. Please also encourage your academic institution to maintain a current subscription for its library.

Thank you for supporting this journal,

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