

An experiential learning-teaching model for recreation modules in higher education

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DECLARATION

Student contribution and agreement of co-authors

STUDENT CONTRIBUTION TO ARTICLES

I, Cornelia Schreck, student number 11941111, declare that this thesis is my own work and I contributed adequately towards the research findings published in the articles stated below. As per the regulations of the North-West University's article format, I am permitted to include the three articles as part of my thesis. The thesis therefore serves as fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Recreation Sciences at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University.

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AGREEMENT OF CO-AUTHORS

The co-authors of the three articles that form part of this thesis, Dr J Theron Weillbach (promotor) and A/Prof Gerda Reitsma (co-promotor), hereby give the candidate, Cornelia Schreck (11941111), permission to include the three articles as part of a doctoral thesis. The student is the main author of all three of the articles and was responsible for the conceptualisation and writing of the three articles. All the research was conducted by the student. The contribution (advisory and supportive) of the co-authors was kept within reasonable limits, thereby enabling the candidate to submit this thesis for examination purposes.



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SUMMARY

Recreation is a unique career field with specific skills, competencies and abilities (graduate attributes) expected of recreation graduates. However, only a handful of these graduate attributes are developed through current traditional lecturer-focused teaching methods. It may be more appropriate to teach recreation studies in a way that supports the development of these graduate attributes with an active, hands-on approach that accommodates a variety of learning styles, for example, through experiential learning. The purpose of this study was firstly to determine relevant graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals in South Africa (SA); secondly to contextualise the Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model (TCELM) for use in recreation modules; and thirdly to evaluate the effectiveness and workability of the adapted TCELM. A ranking-type Delphi method with three iterations, spanning four months from initial recruitment to final data collection, was used to collect data for the first objective of the study. Ten recreation experts from recreation organisations in the public, non-profit and private sectors in SA participated in the Delphi process. Descriptive statistics, specifically the mean scores, were used to determine the order (rankings) of importance of the graduate attributes and Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W) was used to determine the level of agreement amongst participants. For the second and third objectives of the research, a holistic, single-case case-study design was used, employing a convergent, parallel mixed method and pre–post-test design. The adapted TCELM, containing a planning and an implementation phase, was implemented in a final-year recreation module at a higher education institution. Thirty-three students volunteered to participate, of whom 28 completed all the required quantitative measuring instruments. The Review of Personal Effectiveness and Locus of Control (ROPELOC) questionnaire and a self-report competency assessment survey were completed at the beginning and end of the semester. Participants completed six guided reflections throughout the semester. Three focus group interviews were conducted with available participants at the end of the semester. Paired sample t-test and practical significance (Cohen's d values) were used to compare the pre- and post-test scores of the ROPELOC and the self-report competency assessment survey. Data analysis for focus group interviews and the student reflections was conducted by

adopting Yin's five-phased cycle: compiling; disassembling; reassembling and arraying; interpreting; and concluding. A list with 18 essential graduate attributes was compiled from the results of the Delphi process. The results from the Delphi concluded that "passion for the profession", "trainability and a willingness to learn", "communication skills", "personal qualities" and "adaptability" were the top five ranked attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals in SA. "Knowledge of the profession", "personal qualities", "leadership skills" and "communication skills" were the graduate attributes that showed significant improvement within the overall quantitative and qualitative data during the implementation of the adapted TCELM. This study further proved the importance of both cycles of the TCELM in student learning. Group work and time management were two factors identified that may challenge the implementation of experiential learning; however, both these factors contribute to the development of essential skills for the work place. It was conclusively determined that an effective and workable adapted TCELM, focusing on graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals in SA, can be contextualised and implemented by lecturers in a recreation module in a higher education setting. This sets the stage for delivering graduates who not only have the needed theoretical knowledge, but also the essential skills, competencies and abilities to excel in their careers as recreation professionals.

Keywords: Experiential learning, graduate attributes, higher education, pedagogy, teaching and learning, recreation, university.

OPSOMMING

Rekreasie is 'n unieke beroepsveld waarin spesifieke vaardighede, bevoegdhede en vermoëns (graduandi eienskappe) van rekreasiegraduandi verwag word. Nietemin word slegs 'n handvol van hierdie graduandi eienskappe deur huidige tradisionele, dosent-gefokusde onderrigmetodes ontwikkel. Dit mag moontlik meer gepas wees om rekreasie studies op 'n wyse aan te bied wat die ontwikkeling van hierdie graduandi eienskappe ondersteun, deur 'n aktiewe, praktiese benadering wat 'n verskeidenheid van leerstyle akkommodeer, soos byvoorbeeld deur ervaringsleer. Die doel van hierdie studie was eerstens om die relevante graduandi eienskappe vir intreevlak rekreasieberoepslui in Suid-Afrika (SA) te bepaal; tweedens om die Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model (TCELM) vir gebruik in rekreasiemodules te kontekstualiseer; en derdens om die effektiwiteit en werkbaarheid van die aangepaste TCELM te evalueer. 'n Rangorde-tipe Delphi-metode met drie herhalings, wat oor vier maande strek van eerste werwing tot finale data-insameling, was gebruik om data vir die eerste doelwit van hierdie studie in te samel. Tien rekreasiekenners van rekreasie organisasies in die publieke, nie-winsgewende en privaatsektor in SA het aan die Delphi-proses deelgeneem. Beskrywende statistieke, spesifiek die gemiddelde tellings, is gebruik om die rangorde van belangrikheid van die eienskappe van die graduandi te bepaal en Kendall se koëffisiënt van ooreenstemming (W) is gebruik om die vlak van ooreenstemming onder deelnemers te bepaal. Vir die tweede en derde doelwitte van die navorsing, is 'n omvattende, enkel-geval gevallestudie-ontwerp gebruik, wat gebruik gemaak het van 'n ineenlopende, parallelle gemengde-metode en voor-na toetsingsontwerp. Die aangepaste TCELM, wat uit 'n beplannings- en 'n implementasiefase bestaan, was geïmplementeer in 'n finalejaar rekreasiemodule by 'n hoër onderwysinstelling. Drie-en-dertig studente het aangebied om deel te neem, waarvan 28 al die vereiste kwantitatiewe meetingsinstrumente voltooi het. Die Review of Personal Effectiveness and Locus of Control (ROPELOC) vraelys en 'n self-gerapporteerde bevoegdheidsbepaling is aan die begin en aan die einde van die semester voltooi. Deelnemers het ses geleide refleksies deur die loop van die semester voltooi. Drie fokusgroep-onderhoude is met beskikbare deelnemers aan die einde van die semester gevoer. Gepaarde steekproef t-toetsing en praktiese betekenis (Cohen se

d waardes) is gebruik vir die vergelyking van die voor- en na-toetstellings van die ROPELOC en die self-gerapporteerde bevoegdheidsbepaling vraelys. Data-analise vir fokusgroep-onderhoude en die student-refleksies is gedoen deur Yin se vyf-fase siklus toe te pas: versameling; montering; hermontering en opstel; interpretering; en afsluiting. 'n Lys van 18 noodsaaklike graduandi eienskappe is vanuit die resultate van die Delphi-proses bymekaargestel. Die resultate van die Delphi het beslis dat 'passie vir die beroepsveld', "opleibaarheid en bereidheid om te leer", "kommunikasievaardighede", "persoonlike kwaliteite" en "aanpasbaarheid" die top vyf gelyste eienskappe was wat van intreevlak rekreasieberoepslui in SA verwag word. "Kennis van die beroepsveld", "persoonlike kwaliteite", "leierskapsvaardighede" en "kommunikasievaardighede" was die graduandi eienskappe wat noemenswaardige verbetering getoon het in die al die kwantitatiewe en kwalitatiewe data tydens die implementasie van die aangepaste TCELM. Hierdie studie het verder die belangrikheid bewys van beide siklusse van die TCELM in studenteleer. Groepswerk en tydbestuur is twee faktore wat geïdentifiseer is wat moontlik die implementering van ervaringsleer kan hinder; nietemin, dra beide hierdie faktore by tot die ontwikkeling van kritiese vaardighede vir die werksplek. Daar is onweerlegbaar bepaal dat 'n effektiewe en werkbare aangepaste TCELM, gefokus op graduandi eienskappe vir intreevlak rekreasieberoepslui in SA, in rekreasie-module deur dosente in 'n hoëronderrig-omgewing gekontekstualiseer en geïmplementeer kan word. Dit berei die weg om graduandi op te lei wat nie net die nodige teoretiese kennis het nie, maar ook die kritiese vaardighede, bevoegdhede en vermoëns om in hulle beroep as rekreasie beroepsleier te blink.

Sleutelwoorde: Ervaringsleer, graduandi eienskappe, hoër onderrig, pedagogie, onderrig en leer, rekreasie, universiteit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	I
Acknowledgements	iii
Summary	V
Opsomming (summary in Afrikaans)	vii
Table of contents	ix
List of tables	xv
List of figures	xvii
List of abbreviations	xviii

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 PREAMBLE	1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT	2
1.3 OBJECTIVES	6
1.4 PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK	6
1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS	7
REFERENCES	9

CHAPTER 2

Literature review: Experiential learning and recreation studies in higher education

2.1 INTRODUCTION	13
2.2 RECREATION AS A STUDY FIELD IN HIGHER EDUCATION	14
2.2.1 Concepts of leisure and recreation	14

2.2.2	Nature of the recreation profession	16
2.2.3	Recreation in higher education: a global view	17
2.2.4	Recreation in higher education: South Africa	21
2.2.4.1	<i>A concise history of recreation in higher education in South Africa</i>	21
2.2.4.2	<i>Current status of recreation in higher education in South Africa</i>	22
2.2.4.3	<i>A brief overview of higher education structures in South Africa</i>	23
2.2.5	Graduate attributes	26
2.2.6	Teaching recreation in higher education	29
2.3	LEARNING THEORIES AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AS TEACHING METHODOLOGY	30
2.3.1	A brief introduction to the main learning theories	30
2.3.1.1	<i>Behaviourism</i>	31
2.3.1.2	<i>Cognitivism</i>	32
2.3.1.3	<i>Constructivism</i>	32
2.3.1.4	<i>Connetivism</i>	33
2.3.2	Experiential learning as teaching methodology within constructivism	34
2.3.2.1	<i>Experiential learning theory</i>	36
2.3.2.2	<i>Kolb's experiential learning cycle</i>	37
2.3.2.3	<i>Kolb's learning style inventory and four basic learning styles</i>	39
2.4	THE TWIN CYCLE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MODEL	40
2.4.1	Learning potency and learning-activity types	40
2.4.2	The Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model	42
2.5	SUMMARY	44
	REFERENCES	46

CHAPTER 3

Article 1: Preparing recreation professionals: graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals in a South African context

INTRODUCTION	54
METHODS	60
Study design	61
Participants	61
Measuring instruments and methods	62
Procedure	62
Data analysis	63
RESULTS	64
First iteration	64
Second iteration	65
Third iteration	65
Difference between South African and USA ranking of graduate attributes	66
DISCUSSION	67
CONCLUSION	71
DISCLOSURE STATEMENT	72
REFERENCES	72

CHAPTER 4

Article 2: Improving graduate attributes by implementing an experiential learning teaching approach: A case study in recreation education

INTRODUCTION	79
--------------------	----

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	84
METHODS	85
Study design	85
Participants	86
Measuring instruments and methods	86
<i>Review of personal effectiveness using locus of control questionnaire</i>	<i>86</i>
<i>Competency assessment survey</i>	<i>87</i>
<i>Focus group interviews and guided student reflections</i>	<i>89</i>
Data gathering	89
Data analysis	90
<i>ROPELOC questionnaire and self-report competency assessment survey</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>Focus group interviews and analysis of student reflections</i>	<i>90</i>
RESULTS	91
DISCUSSION	95
Knowledge of the profession	95
Personal qualities	96
Leadership skills	97
Communication skills	98
CONCLUSION	98
DISCLOSURE STATEMENT	99
REFERENCES	100

CHAPTER 5

Article 3: An experiential learning-teaching model in recreation studies: Reflections on implementation

INTRODUCTION	106
--------------------	-----

RECREATION AS UNIQUE STUDY FIELD	107
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AS TEACHING METHODOLOGY	108
METHODS	110
Context	110
Contextualisation of the Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model	111
Study design and procedure	113
Data analysis	114
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	114
Student expectations and final experiences	115
Student experiences of the planning phase	119
Student experiences of the implementation phase	122
Additional influencing factors	122
CONCLUSION	125
DISCLOSURE STATEMENT	126
REFERENCES	126

CHAPTER 6

Summary, conclusion, recommendations and limitations

6.1 INTRODUCTION	132
6.2 SUMMARY	133
6.3 CONCLUSION	135
6.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY	138
6.5 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	140
6.6 FUTURE RESEARCH	141
REFERENCES	143

APPENDIX A

Guidelines to authors

World Leisure Journal instructions to authors	144
Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education instructions to authors	151
Active Learning in Higher Education instructions to authors	170

APPENDIX B

Ethics documents

Permission to use third-party information	179
NWU HREC approval certificate	180
Institution approval letter	181

APPENDIX C

Acceptance letter

World Leisure Journal acceptance letter	182
---	-----

APPENDIX D

Measure instruments

Delphi process: First iteration questionnaire	183
The Review of Personal Effectiveness and Locus of Control (ROPELOC) questionnaire	189
Self-report competency assessment survey	193
Sample of reflection questions used	196
Focus group interview schedule	197

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 2

Table 2.1:	Summary of COAPRT learning outcomes, standards and assessment	20
Table 2.2:	Recreation programme summary of South African universities	23
Table 2.3:	Competencies and skills required of entry-level recreation professionals	28
Table 2.4:	Summary of basic learning styles	39

CHAPTER 3

Table 1:	Competencies and skills required of entry-level recreation professionals	59
Table 2:	Final data from Delphi method	64
Table 3:	Graduate attributes potentially not mandatory for the South African context	65

CHAPTER 4

Table 1:	South African graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals	83
Table 2:	ROPELOC subscales	87
Table 3:	Competency assessment survey factors	88
Table 4:	ROPELOC questionnaire results	91
Table 5:	Competency assessment survey results	92
Table 6:	Qualitative results: Themes emergent from qualitative data analysis with samples of supportive quotes	93

CHAPTER 5

Table 1:	Themes of reasons for value of class sessions, with sample quotes ..	119
----------	--	-----

CHAPTER 6

Table 6.1:	Alignment between North-West University domains of desired attributes and necessary graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals in South Africa	137
------------	--	-----

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 2

Figure 2.1:	Schematic representation of the higher education structure in South Africa	24
Figure 2.2:	National Qualifications Framework	25
Figure 2.3:	Kolb's experiential learning cycle	38
Figure 2.4:	Level of learning potency of six learning-activity types on the CoAcPr–AbPaSe learning potency scales	42
Figure 2.5:	Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model	43

CHAPTER 3

Figure 1:	Comparison between ranked graduate attributes of SA and the USA	66
-----------	---	----

CHAPTER 4

Figure 1:	The Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model (TCELM)	85
-----------	--	----

CHAPTER 5

Figure 1:	Adapted Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model	112
Figure 2:	Student expectations compiled from guided reflections	118
Figure 3:	Value of the experiential learning module, compiled from guided reflections and focus group interviews	124

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following table lists the abbreviations and acronyms used throughout the thesis. The definition and page on which they are first used are also given.

Abbreviations / acronym	Meaning	Page
AC	Abstract conceptualisation	37
AE	Active experimentation	37
APS	Abstract, passive, secondary	41
CAP	Concrete, active, primary	41
CCFO	Critical cross-field outcomes	26
CE	Concrete experience	37
CHE	Council of Higher Education	23
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation	19
COAPRT	Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions	18
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training	21
ELT	Experiential learning theory	33
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualification Sub-Framework	24
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework	24
LSI	Learning Style Inventory	38
NRPA	National Recreation and Parks Association	18
NQF	National Qualifications Framework	23
NWU	North-West University	5

OQSF	Occupation Qualification Sub-Framework	24
RO	Reflective observation	37
ROPELOC	Review of Personal Effectiveness and Locus of Control	78
SA	South African/South Africa	1
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority	24
SoTL	Scholarship of teaching and learning	1
SRSA	Department of Sport and Recreation, SA	21
TCELM	Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model	5
UK	United Kingdom	17
USA/US	United States of America	6
WPA	Works Projects Administration	18

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 PREAMBLE

Ernest Boyer turned the attention of higher education to the scholarship of teaching with his book *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate* in 1990 (Pitso, 2013:198). Since then, the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) has gained tremendous momentum, with numerous academic journals and conferences exclusively dedicated to research within the field of teaching and learning in higher education. SoTL is important for professional growth (Case, 2013:37), where not only students but also scholars (lecturers) are learning, and has great potential to influence teaching and learning practice (Pitso, 2013:206). However, SoTL is still in its infancy, with limited impact on teaching and learning in South Africa (SA) (Pitso, 2013:206). Furthermore, limited SoTL research has been published in the field of recreation, one of the reasons more research in this area needs to be generated. Research findings would not only contribute to SoTL in SA, but also have an impact on the teaching and learning of recreation as a study field across the globe.

In this chapter, recreation as a unique career field with specific skills, competencies and abilities (graduate attributes) expected of recreation graduates is highlighted, providing motivation for the need to revise the pedagogical approach used in higher education. A case is made as to why experiential learning needs to be considered as an appropriate teaching approach to prepare recreation graduates. Clear research objectives are given, derived from the problem statement, within the study's theoretical framework. Finally, the structure of the thesis is outlined.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The study of recreation and leisure is a broad field and can include a wide range of subjects. In SA, the main focus of recreation and leisure studies is on outdoor recreation (NWU, 2018:71-74), general recreation (NWU, 2018:71-74; UNIVEN, 2018), recreation and leisure management (NWU, 2018:71-74; UWC, 2018:5) and recreation within the health and sport sector (NWU, 2018:71-74; UKZN, 2018:19; UWC, 2018:5). Therefore, the study of recreation and leisure focuses on various segments of society and includes a wide range of interest areas in a variety of settings; leisure and recreation can be described as highly practical and varied fields for study (O'Sullivan, 2013:17).

The varied fields of recreation require that graduates who want to excel in their careers as recreation professionals need a wide range of knowledge and skills. Although the knowledge imparted will differ depending on their focus within recreation, the skills needed by recreation professionals are mostly generic. A study by Chase and Masberg (2008) asked 98 recreation professionals in supervisory or higher positions to identify the skills and competencies needed by recreation professionals. The fifteen most desired skills, competencies and personality traits identified for entry-level professionals in the field were communication skills; personal qualities (including being fun, patient, practical, ambitious and energetic); knowledge of the profession; adaptability; responsibility; supervisory skills (including time and general management); organisational behaviour skills; leadership skills; passion for the profession; experience; trainability and a willingness to learn; education in the field; teamwork; problem-solving skills; and technical or computer skills (Chase & Masberg, 2008:84). However, only a handful of these skills, competencies and traits are developed through current traditional lecturer-focused teaching methods (Fisher *et al.*, 2017:191). Therefore, it may be more appropriate to teach recreation studies in a way that supports the development of these skills and competencies with an active, hands-on approach that accommodates a variety of learning styles.

Various pedagogies exist that help educators understand how people learn and these can be categorised into three prominent learning theories: behaviourist, cognitivist and constructivist (Said *et al.*, 2012:1; Kay & Kibble, 2016:23). Behaviourist learning theory focuses on the conditioning of students to environmental stimuli to enhance their behaviour (Jordan *et al.*, 2008:21-22; Said *et al.*, 2012:3). Cognitivist learning theory is

teacher-centred, and students are expected to memorise and reproduce information (Said *et al.*, 2012:5; Kay & Kibble, 2016:20). Constructivist learning theory focuses on the use of an active, joint (teacher, student and peer) learning environment to construct learning (Said *et al.*, 2012:6). Behaviourist and cognitivist learning theories are seen as the more “traditional” way of teaching, whereas constructivist learning theory includes a range of teaching approaches, including active learning, learning by doing and problem-based learning, to name a few (Jordan *et al.*, 2008:62-65; Said *et al.*, 2012:6; Kay & Kibble, 2016:21).

John Dewey’s philosophy of education, which criticised the traditional way of teaching, became important during the 20th century (Monk, 2013:64). In traditional teaching the focus is only on the cognitive aspects of learning (Clem *et al.*, 2014:491). According to Dewey’s philosophy, learning is rather “a process whereby the individual reacts to, learns from, and builds on experiences. Experiences are continuous in that they build on each other, each one affecting future experiences” (as cited by Monk, 2013:65). Scholars such as Kurt Lewin and Jean Piaget further examined this “new” concept of teaching and learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005:194). However, it was with the publication of the book *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* by David Kolb in 1984 that an experiential learning theory was introduced that could be used in the higher education setting (Kolb & Kolb, 2005:193).

According to Kolb and Kolb (2005:194), the experiential learning theory is based on six propositions:

- 1) Learning is a process and not a product or outcome;
- 2) All learning is based on previous beliefs and ideas on a topic;
- 3) The learning process is encouraged by conflict and differences;
- 4) Learning is a holistic process, involving the whole person;
- 5) Learning occurs when assimilation of new concepts into old ideas happens;
- 6) Learning is the process of generating knowledge.

Experiential learning can therefore be described from a constructivist framework where “knowledge is created and recreated in the personal knowledge of the learner” (Kolb & Kolb, 2005:194) and not just by conveying pre-existing ideas to the learner.

Various benefits and beneficiaries of experiential learning have been reported (Lukenbill, 1976:196-201; Clem *et al.*, 2014:490-493; Schwartz, 2015:2-3), but the greatest beneficiary is the student. Students in modules taught through experiential

learning methods are reported to be better prepared for the workforce, with better ethical reasoning, higher levels of creativity and improved lateral and critical thinking skills (Clem *et al.*, 2014:490,492), and they display enhanced multicultural understanding and sensitivity (Clem *et al.*, 2014:493; Schwartz, 2015:2). Clem *et al.* (2014:492-493,504) further stated that these students are better equipped to link theory and practice, have higher levels of confidence and display enhanced motivation levels. The lecturer benefits as well when applying an experiential learning-teaching model, as he or she gets to know the students better as individuals and is forced to reassess the course content (Lukenbill, 1976:200). These benefits were also accentuated by Schwartz (2015:3) who stated that through experiential learning, universities ensure that students have the necessary skills to excel professionally and that universities stay relevant.

Selected studies have investigated experiential learning as a teaching approach in recreation modules (i.e. Kucharewski, 2002; Heintzman, 2005; Wolfe & Green, 2006; Delamere, 2007; McCormick *et al.*, 2010). Kucharewski (2002) designed an experiential learning activity to help students to understand group theories and practice communication. The author stated that amongst other things, students realised that perceptions are not always accurate and the major impact first impressions have during communication. Heintzman (2005) found that different experiential learning activities in a class on spirituality and leisure encouraged students to self-explore the course content. Delamere (2007) reported that by having students use wheelchairs in class for a simulation of disabilities in a therapeutic recreation module, students showed a more complex understanding of the reality of a person with disabilities and being disabled, and how it felt to be disabled (Delamere, 2007:7). McCormick *et al.* (2010:74) reported on the development of critical thinking skills, creativity, technology knowledge and a better understanding of subject matter as the result of using videos on current or future trends in leisure that students had to produce and share on YouTube. However, in the mentioned studies only experiential learning activities for certain aspects of a module were implemented and none reported on the development of an experiential learning-teaching model that could be adapted for all recreation modules. Wolfe and Green (2006:187) recommended that experiential learning should form the basis of all recreation modules to ensure that not only the necessary knowledge is taught but that students also develop necessary skills and competencies.

David Kolb's experiential learning model is probably the most prominent model used in higher education in the implementation of experiential learning, with numerous studies reporting on its application (Lukenbill, 1976; Erickson & James, 2005; Almeida & Mendes, 2010; Bethell & Morgan, 2011; Cant & Cooper, 2011; Bower, 2013). The model encompasses a single cycle consisting of four stages (Chen *et al.*, 2014:47). The cycle starts with a "concrete experience", followed by "reflective observation" and "abstract conceptualisation" and finally moves towards "active experimentation" where concepts and solutions, produced during the cycle, are tested. This cycle is then repeated as new experiences are gained (Chen *et al.*, 2014:47).

Despite the prominence of Kolb's experiential learning model, recent research questions its validity and reliability (Bergsteiner *et al.*, 2010; Bergsteiner & Avery, 2014; Schenck & Cruickshank, 2015). However, Bergsteiner and Avery (2014:257) suggest that most of the criticism of Kolb's experiential learning model can be resolved by re-conceptualising the single cycle to a twin-cycle model. Therefore, the Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model (TCELM) developed by Bergsteiner and Avery (2014) was used as the theoretical framework for this study. The TCELM offers major improvements on existing learning models, including the re-conceptualisation of the model and a clear and logical organisation for the categorising of classes of variables, with subcategories addressing various gaps (Bergsteiner & Avery, 2014:270). These improvements also address the validity and reliability issues of Kolb's experiential learning model.

In view of this background, the purpose of this study was twofold: firstly to determine relevant graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals in SA, as identified by experts in the field of recreation, and secondly to contextualise and use the TCELM, in order to create a suitable experiential learning-teaching model for recreation modules at North-West University (NWU). Therefore, the question answered by this research is "Can an effective and workable TCELM, focusing on graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals in SA, be contextualised and implemented by lecturers in a recreation module in a higher education setting?" To answer the research question, the TCELM was adapted to make it more practical to implement by allowing for overlap between the two cycles and incorporating various teaching activities within the different cycles. The model was applied to a recreation module to evaluate its effectiveness and workability in terms of improving graduate attributes.

The results from this study were expected to give a strong indication of the graduate attributes expected of SA recreation professionals entering the workforce for the first time, and indicate how these attributes differ from those required in the United States of America (USA). Furthermore, the study underlines which graduate attributes can be improved by utilising an experiential learning-teaching model, as well the best way to achieve these graduate attribute improvements. The development of an effective, workable and applicable experiential learning-teaching model for recreation students and lecturers may lead to a more practical and student-centred teaching approach for recreation modules, allow lecturers to better prepare students for the workplace and ensure that NWU stays at the forefront of teaching and learning.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were:

- to determine the main graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals by recreation experts in a SA context;
- to evaluate the effectiveness and workability of an experiential learning-teaching model implemented in a recreation module in a higher education setting;
- to contextualise the TCELM, focused on graduate attributes, for use by lecturers in a recreation module in a higher education setting.

1.4 PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK

The research was conducted from a constructivist methodological point of departure. An evaluation of the main methodological philosophies in qualitative research, namely positivism, interpretivism, critical analysis and constructivism (Hammersley, 2013:21) gave the conclusion that the concept of experiential learning is best studied on the basis of constructivism. Constructivism is considered to be a broad and diverse methodological philosophy (Hammersley, 2013:35) that poses that knowledge cannot be transferred, but must rather be constructed (Singh, 2005:3) through a complex

process of interactions amongst people who, in this case, were the participants and the researcher (Henderson, 2006:49).

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is structured according to the 'article format' of NWU. The article format differs from the traditional format in that chapters 3, 4 and 5 are written as separate articles for specific peer-reviewed academic journals. Therefore, each of the chapters is able to stand independently whilst some overlapping occurs. The articles incorporate the method and results of the study; therefore, no separate method or results chapters are included. However, despite three standalone articles, the final chapter provides an integrated conclusion and recommendations, based on all the chapters of the thesis. The specified journal of each individual article was selected based on the journal's purpose and audience. The formatting and reference list of the articles are in accordance with the requirements of the scientific journal, and the "Information to authors" journal requirements are bound as annexures.

Chapter 1: **Introduction:** *Problem statement, objectives and structure of the thesis.* The chapter gives an overview of current research in the field and introduces the research problem and objectives. The references included in this chapter are represented at the end of the chapter in accordance with the NWU 2012 guidelines for quoting sources.

Chapter 2: **Literature review:** *Experiential learning and recreation studies in higher education.* This chapter provides an overview of relevant literature and research, as well as theoretical models on which the study is based. The references included in this chapter are represented at the end of the chapter and in accordance with the NWU 2012 guidelines for quoting sources.

- Chapter 3: **Article 1:** *Preparing recreation professionals: graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals in a South African context.* (Research objective 1.) This article was accepted¹ for publication by *World Leisure Journal* and is formatted and sourced accordingly. Exceptions were made for the prescribed margins and line-spacing, to adhere to the NWU guidelines to maintain uniformity of the thesis.
- Chapter 4: **Article 2:** *Improving graduate attributes by implementing an experiential learning teaching approach: a case study in recreation education.* (Research objectives 2 and 3 in part.) This article was submitted to the *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education* (JOHLSTE) and is formatted and sourced accordingly. Exceptions were made for the prescribed margins and line-spacing, to adhere to the NWU guidelines to maintain uniformity of the thesis.
- Chapter 5: **Article 3:** *An experiential learning-teaching model in recreation studies: reflections on implementation.* (Research objectives 2 and 3 in part.) This article is written for publication in *Active Learning in Higher Education* and is formatted and sourced accordingly. Exceptions were made for the prescribed margins and line-spacing, to adhere to the NWU guidelines to maintain uniformity of the thesis.
- Chapter 6: **Conclusion:** *Summary, conclusion, recommendations and limitations.* This chapter summarises the entire study and draws conclusions based on the research objectives. Limitations and recommendations for future studies are also discussed. The references included in this chapter are represented at the end of the chapter and in accordance with the NWU 2012 guidelines for quoting sources.

¹ Acceptance letter included in Appendix C.

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CHAPTER 2

Literature review

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND RECREATION STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

“Experiential learning stimulates original thinking and develops a wide range of thinking strategies and perceptual skills which are not called forth by books or lectures” (Williams, 1983:170).

2.1 INTRODUCTION

“Sustainable employability means that, throughout their [employees] working lives, workers can achieve tangible opportunities in the form of a set of capabilities. They also enjoy the necessary conditions that allow them to make a valuable contribution through their work, now and in the future, while safeguarding their health and welfare. This requires, on the one hand, a work context that facilitates this for them and on the other, the attitude and motivation to exploit these opportunities” (Van der Klink *et al.*, 2016:74). Employability can be seen as an individual’s ability to gain and maintain employment (Van der Klink *et al.*, 2016:72). Academics teaching recreation have a responsibility towards students to ensure they are not only equipped with the necessary knowledge when they graduate, but also the right skills and competencies (graduate attributes) to be employable in their chosen career field. More importantly, recreation students must achieve sustainable employability as recreation professionals. This study focused on how academics can ensure that students are trained as recreation professionals who are able to achieve sustainable employability.

In this chapter, a number of topics are addressed. Recreation as a study field in higher education is explored globally as well as nationally. Then the concept of graduate

attributes is discussed in relation to recreation as a career field. Following this, the various learning theories used in higher education are explained. Recreation education is explored and a thorough motivation for experiential learning as a teaching methodology in recreation studies is presented. Lastly, the Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model (TCELM) is explained and the TCELM is proposed as a possible teaching model for recreation modules in a higher education setting that may improve the employability of recreation students and provide them with the skills needed to survive and thrive as recreation professionals worldwide.

2.2 RECREATION AS A STUDY FIELD IN HIGHER EDUCATION

To be able to provide the best possible education to potential recreation professionals, an understanding of recreation as a study field within the scope of higher education, nationally and internationally, is essential. To do so, the concepts related to recreation need to be defined, the nature and importance of recreation education for a professional career must be understood, and the history and current situation of recreation education, globally as well as in South Africa (SA), require examination. Attention must equally be paid to graduate attributes – those skills that ensure the employability of graduates and, lastly, education trends in recreation studies must be considered.

2.2.1 Concepts of leisure and recreation

To understand the concept of recreation, one must first clearly understand the broad term “leisure”. Leisure is frequently seen as “unobligated time” or time spent “doing nothing”, linking a negative meaning to the concept in our work-orientated society (Henderson, 2010:5; Stevens, 2010:5), but the meaning of leisure is much more complex and a deeper understanding is needed.

The word leisure originates from the Latin *licere*, which means “to be free” (Edginton *et al.*, 2004:6). The ancient Greeks used the word *scholē*, meaning “serious activity without the pressure of necessity”, to describe the concept of leisure (Godbey, 2008:4). Even in ancient times, various interpretations (to be free vs activity) existed as to what the concept of leisure entailed (Edginton *et al.*, 2004:6; Godbey, 2008:2) and this is still true today.

According to leisure researchers such as Edginton *et al.* (2004:7), Godbey (2008:3); Henderson (2010:5) and Stevens (2010:5), the concept of leisure is viewed from one of three main perspectives: time/freedom, activities being done or, a state of existence/mind/being. Theorists such as Brightbill (1960), Murphy (1974) and Russell (1996), as examined in Edginton *et al.* (2004:6-8) and Godbey (2008:3-5), concentrated on the various ways to describe unoccupied time and its relationship to leisure and work, and the way it influences our view of leisure. If leisure is seen in the context of time, work and leisure are seen as opposite notions, with leisure referring to the time remaining after work and when life-related necessities have been completed, emphasising how time is used. When defining leisure as free time the focus is rather on what leisure is not – work – as on what it is or can be (Henderson, 2010:6).

Leisure as an activity focuses on the participant's free will to participate in what he or she chooses for a specific benefit they gain from that participation (Stevens, 2010:8). According to Edginton *et al.* (2004:6-8) and Godbey (2008:3-5), experts in the field such as Dumazedier (1960) and Kelly (1996) preferred to look at leisure as an activity, but emphasised that this depends on the context and the perception and motivation of the participant, because some leisure activities can be perceived as work for some people and some work as leisure activities for others. Stevens (2010:8) argues that defining leisure as an activity also excludes non-active leisure experiences, thus suggesting that more than just time and activities are used to define leisure.

Leisure as a state of mind implies that leisure is different for each person depending on their perception, implying that even work that is experienced as meaningful can be leisure to a specific person (Stevens, 2010:7). Kaplan (1975) (as discussed by Edginton *et al.*, 2004:7) referred to leisure "as an end to itself" – referring to perceived freedom and internal locus of control of the participant. Leisure defined as a state of mind normally occurs during free time; it is not limited to a specific activity or time but rather to the satisfaction gained from the experience. Henderson (2010:7) states that "leisure can come from any experience in which motives are more important than the activity itself or the time spent pursuing an activity".

Taking into account the various definitions of the concept of leisure discussed above, the definition provided by McLean *et al.* (2008:39) encompasses all the above-mentioned ideas and underlines the foundation from which this research was approached, that leisure is "that portion of an individual's time that is not directly

devoted to work or work-connected responsibilities or to other obligated forms of maintenance or self-care. Leisure implies freedom and choice and is customarily used in a variety of ways, but mainly to meet one's personal needs for reflection, self-enrichment, relaxation, or pleasure. While it usually involves some form of participation in a voluntarily chosen activity, it may also be regarded as a holistic state of being or even a spiritual experience".

The terms "leisure" and "recreation" are frequently used synonymously (Henderson, 2010:7), but in fact there is a difference between the two concepts. Although various definitions and disagreements among researchers exist (Godbey, 2008:17), greater consensus has been reached as to the concept of recreation. The majority of researchers within the field agree that recreation is an activity that takes place within leisure with a positive effect on the individual and/or the community (Edginton *et al.*, 2004:10). Recreation viewed from a current standpoint, and as ascribed in this research, can be seen as "assisting individuals to have positive leisure experiences that help renew their spirit, restore their energy, and rejuvenate them as individuals" (Edginton *et al.*, 2004:11).

2.2.2 Nature of the recreation profession

People are motivated to participate in recreation activities because of a combination of countless intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, including personal, social-cultural, economic and environmental benefits (Edginton *et al.*, 2004:18; Stevens, 2010:19-20). These numerous benefits associated with participating in recreation activities, as well as the immense amount of recreation activities available from which to choose, creates almost limitless career opportunities for students considering recreation as a profession. The Bureau of Labor Statistics in the United States of America (USA) reports that jobs in the recreation sector will grow by over 10% by 2024 (Seaman *et al.*, 2017:28), making it an even more desirable career choice for young professionals.

The main focus of recreation as a study field is equipping students to build careers within the population's leisure time, managing such leisure time and offering recreation programmes and activities to the benefit of participants as well as the community at large, thus being leaders in the various recreation fields (Goslin, 1983:37). Recreation as a profession offers an extensive selection of career opportunities in the public, non-profit and private sectors (Stevens, 2014:29) that incorporate a range of job

descriptions, from planning and presenting activities in physical education, dance, sport and recreation therapy to the management of recreation centres, camps, staff and events (Chen & Gursoy, 2008:25). These potential jobs are available in an array of recreation programme areas, including the arts, outdoors, adventure, sport and tourism, at all life stages ranging from early childhood to late adulthood. These programmes/activities are presented in many different programme formats such as instructional formats, competitions and clubs (West, 2016:44). However, when evaluating the recreation job market, the need for graduates to be able to think entrepreneurial is essential (Foley & Benest, 1989:22; Dolesh, 2014:36), even more so for graduates in SA faced with high unemployment rates and the need to be innovative and creative (Nicolaidis, 2011:1044-1045). This variety makes the recreation profession one of the most diverse career fields available.

With this diversity, a unique set of challenges are created for academic institutions in the preparation of students for a career in the recreation industry (West, 2016:44). Preparing students globally during their studies at an academic institution for all of the possible career options available in the recreation industry while also training them to be entrepreneurial, is an unmanageable task. Therefore, the focus of higher education institutions should be on matching essential knowledge, skills and competencies to industry requirements (Chen & Gursoy, 2008:22), and ensuring that these are mastered by the student during his or her academic preparation.

2.2.3 Recreation in higher education: a global view

The history of leisure and recreation dates back to early prehistoric times (Genoe *et al.*, 2013:22); leisure and recreation developed throughout history, with various recreation activities recorded in which communities engaged. Abundant documentation (Doell & Fitzgerald, 1954; Sessoms, 1984; Kühn & Meyer, 1988; Edginton *et al.*, 2004; Priest & Gass, 2005; Henderson, 2010; Genoe *et al.*, 2013; Mogajane, 2014) is available examining this development around the globe. However, the worldwide development of recreation education is poorly documented, with the exception of the USA.

What is known is that the first undergraduate degree in “leisure studies” in the United Kingdom (UK) was offered by Leeds Metropolitan University during the 1980s (Spracklen, 2014:20). According to Spracklen (2014:21), the main focus of the first degrees was on three components: critical sociology, policy and management, and

practical elements (sport and active recreation). Other universities in Europe, Australia and New Zealand soon followed suit with similar undergraduate degrees (Spracklen, 2014:22). Almost half of the public universities in Australia offer undergraduate, as well as postgraduate, courses in leisure and recreation studies (Lyons & Brown, 2003:56). Unfortunately, none of these undergraduate degrees in leisure studies survived in the UK, where in recent years leisure studies is only offered as one or two modules within sport management and tourism undergraduate degrees (Spracklen, 2014:22).

Conversely, recreation education in the USA has a long history. The USA is the frontrunner in the field of recreation and leisure in higher education, with more than 70 academic undergraduate programmes currently accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Professions (COAPRT) that forms the accreditation body of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) (NRPA, 2018), and hundreds more that offer programmes in recreation-related degrees.

The first training of recreation leaders in the USA was in the early 1900s, where recreation volunteers were trained at the “West-Chicago training school for playground workers”, established in 1911 (Sessoms, 1984:47). From 1920 to 1926, 6-week training programmes were offered in communities across the USA and in 1926 the “National Recreation School” was founded, which had produced more than 300 recreation leaders by 1935 (Sessoms, 1984:49). The value of recreation was soon realised by the presidency; in 1924, President Coolidge called for the “National Conference on Outdoor Recreation” in Washington, DC (Kühn & Meyer, 1988:14) and in 1929, President Hoover focused on the importance of qualified leaders in the field of recreation (Goslin, 1983:40).

In 1933, the “Works Projects Administration” (WPA) began, with one of the most intense training programmes for recreation workers. In 1940, Purdue University started the first degree programme for recreation leaders in the USA (Fisher, 2015:12) and in 1950, the University of Minnesota followed suit with the first Master’s degree in “hospital recreation” (Doell & Fitzgerald, 1954:110). During 1936 the National Recreation School was discontinued and the training of recreation leaders became the concern of universities and colleges. In 1937, the WPA convened a conference at the University of Minnesota for the development of curricula for the training of recreation leaders (Sessoms, 1984:50). Follow-up conferences were later held at the University of North Carolina and New York University (Sessoms, 1984:50).

Since then the training of recreation professionals in the USA has expanded substantially. Training at universities started within departments of physical education (Fisher, 2015:19), from where it developed into standalone programmes and into interdisciplinary programmes and degrees (Goslin, 1983:46). Today, most recreation degrees focus on specific areas within the field. Research during the last decade indicates that the most popular undergraduate emphasis in the USA is on therapeutic recreation, outdoor recreation, tourism and/or sport management and general degrees in recreation (Caneday & Chalkidou, 2011:24). However, although course names may be similar across universities, content may vary greatly (Goslin, 1983:46).

The focus of the NRPA is on parks, recreation and environmental conservation and the improvement of quality of life for all people (NRPA, 2018). The NRPA sets standards for an accredited degree programme with a focus on parks and recreation. According to the NRPA (2018), accreditation is a mark of distinction that gives external recognition of an organisation's commitment to assurance of quality and improvement. COAPRT, the accreditation body of the NRPA, developed a set of standards, divided into seven sections, used to evaluate the academic programmes (Table 2.1). A degree programme is only considered for accreditation if all these criteria are met. COAPRT accreditation is not mandatory for parks, recreation and tourism degree programmes, but COAPRT is the only accreditation body in the field of recreation and leisure recognised by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) in the USA (NRPA, 2018).

Section seven of the COARPT standards is focused on the required learning outcomes. For any academic programme in parks, recreation, tourism or a related field in higher education to be accredited by COARPT, students must be able to demonstrate knowledge of the nature and scope of the relevant profession; techniques and processes used by professionals in this specific profession; and the foundation of the profession in history, science and philosophy (NRPA, 2018). It also stipulates that graduates must demonstrate the ability to design, implement and evaluate services that embrace personal and cultural dimensions of diversity while demonstrating knowledge on basic operations, strategic management and administration within the relevant field. Furthermore, a student is expected to complete an internship of no less than 400 hours, or 10 weeks, to demonstrate their ability to succeed as a professional in the field of recreation (NRPA, 2018).

Table 2.1: Summary of COAPRT learning outcomes, standards and assessment, compiled from the NRPA website (NRPA, 2018)

Sections	Criteria
1 Eligibility criteria	• The degree programme must be in operation for at least 3 years; • The institution is accredited by CHEA; • Minimum of two full-time staff members are assigned to the programme, hold a Master's degree or higher in a related field and hold credentialing in the subject matter they are responsible for.
2 Mission, vision, values and planning	• The academic programme must have a mission, vision and value statements, as well as a strategic plan; • There must be ongoing curriculum improvement; • There must be an up-to-date assessment plan for all learning outcomes.
3 Administration	• Institutional policies and the organisational structure must afford sufficient opportunity for the programme to succeed in its mission, vision and values; • The programme administrator must be in full-time appointment at a minimum level of associate professor; • The staff must be involved in the setting of policies within the programme; • Practitioners must be consulted regularly on the curriculum.
4 Staff	• Professional development opportunities for academic staff that will impact on programme quality must be provided; • Staff must reflect diversity in education level, gender, ethnicity, race, age and training; • Salaries, promotions, workload and leave must be sufficient; • Full-time staff members must instruct at least 60% of the required courses within the curriculum.
5 Students	• There must be formal ongoing processes for student input to relevant aspects of the academic unit affecting their professional preparation; • Written policies must exist for admission, retention and dismissal of students; • Academic, professional and career advice must be effective, accessible and continually improved; • Student records must be handled confidentially; • Students must be involved in professional organisations and services.
6 Instructional resources	• There must be sufficient administrative support, library resources and access, and computing technology and support to staff and students; • Properly located and equipped staff offices, classrooms, teaching areas and conference facilities must be available; • All instructional areas, staff offices and other educational facilities shall comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the amendments to the Act.
7 Learning outcomes	• The learning outcomes presented in this series of standards are designed to elicit evidence of student learning in the programme's foundational curriculum: foundations, provision of services and experience opportunities for guests, visitors, participants, clients, or other constituent groups, and management/administration.

CHEA, Council for Higher Education Accreditation; *COPART*, Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions; *NRPA*, National Recreation and Parks Association.

Although a thorough set of criteria is suggested by COARPT for recreation academic programmes, it only comprises general outcomes and guidelines focusing mainly on the

institution itself and on the theoretical components needed by recreation professionals. Likewise, no guiding principles are offered on the skills and competencies (graduate attributes) needed by recreation professionals and which must be addressed by these academic programmes. Therefore, although these standards are worthy of consideration when developing recreation academic programmes in SA, they are insufficient to solely rely on. A closer look is needed at the requirements set by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in SA, as well as the unique challenges that recreation professionals in SA face.

2.2.4 Recreation in higher education: South Africa

2.2.4.1 A concise history of recreation in higher education in South Africa

The SA Department of Sport and Recreation (SRSA) was established in 1966, and with that came an increase in demand for trained recreation professionals (Meyer, 2001:24). By 1982, a comprehensive investigation of sport by the Human Sciences Research Council reported that 88% of the country's local authorities did not have professionally trained staff in sport and recreation, and that this had a tremendous impact on the delivery of sport and recreation programmes (Meyer, 2001:27). The majority of employees within the recreation sector were teachers, social workers, sportspeople and horticulturists (Meyer, 2001:32). In 1983, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education – now North-West University (NWU) – began the first degree programme in recreation, which expanded to include a postgraduate degree programme in 1987 (Meyer, 2001:52). Stellenbosch University began training recreation professionals in 1985. Other universities, including University of Durban-Westville (now University of KwaZulu-Natal), University of Pretoria, University of the Free State and University of Western Cape, soon followed suit (Meyer, 2001:53).

On 7 May 1998, the first White Paper on Sport and Recreation was released (Meyer, 2001:31), which brought a new focus on the development of recreation in SA and the training of recreation professionals. The focus of SRSA in this White Paper was on completing groundwork to ensure mass participation in sport and recreation by all citizens, creating a need for a larger number of qualified professionals. To do this, the White Paper identified eight priority areas, the third of which focused on the development of human resource potential for the effective running and administration of sport and recreation at all levels in SA (Mogajane, 2014:48-49).

In 2012, the third White Paper on Sport and Recreation was released, after an updated version in 2001, and with that the first National Sport and Recreation Plan (Department of Sport and Recreation, 2012:10). In the 2012 White Paper, the focus intensified on recreation for all with the vision of SRSA – “An active and winning nation” –emphasising that recreation in SA must focus on involving all citizens in active recreation (Department of Sport and Recreation, 2012:23). The 2030 vision of SRSA includes three priorities that specifically emphasise the importance of having qualified sport and recreation professionals:

- “An effective and adequately resourced sports [and recreation] system that meets the needs of sports people at all levels of participation and that allows for the equitable delivery of school sport, recreation and competitive sport.
- An increased number of suitably skilled and qualified sports [and recreation] practitioners to meet the human resource and capacity needs of the sector.
- The sport and recreation sector being recognised as a legitimate and purposeful career opportunity for athletes as well as sports support staff, with clear career paths and accredited academic and vocational training opportunities” (Department of Sport and Recreation, 2012:23-24).

In line with these priorities, a specific strategic objective (objective 18) further underlines how important the education of recreation professionals is: “To empower the human resource base through the provision of accredited education and training” (Department of Sport and Recreation, 2012:40). Unfortunately, although the education of professionals in the sport and recreation sector in SA is highlighted in the third White Paper, no clear indication is given on what must be included in their education, or the specific skills and competencies needed. More than 10 years previously, Meyer (2001:104) had already called for a body such as the COARPT in the USA to regulate and coordinate the training of recreation professionals at universities and technical colleges in SA; however, to no avail.

2.2.4.2 Current status of recreation in higher education in South Africa

Of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa (CHE, 2018), four offer recreation as a specific undergraduate or honours degree: North-West University (NWU); University of the Western Cape (UWC); University of KwaZulu-Natal and University of Venda. At present, recreation and leisure studies in SA are mainly focused

on outdoor recreation (NWU, 2018:71-74), general recreation (NWU, 2018:71-74; UNIVEN, 2018); recreation and leisure management (NWU, 2018:71-74; UWC, 2018a:5) and recreation within the health and sport sector (NWU, 2018:71-74; UKZN, 2018:19; UWC, 2018a:5). These relate to the current focus at US universities (Caneday & Chalkidou, 2011:24), except for therapeutic recreation, which is a key focus in the USA but poorly represented at SA universities: only NWU and UWC present modules in therapeutic recreation (NWU, 2018:71-74; UWC, 2018b).

Table 2.2 presents a summary of the recreation degrees offered at SA universities, compiled using the webpages of the above-mentioned institutions (NWU, 2018; UKZN, 2018; UNIVEN, 2018; UWC, 2018a).

Table 2.2: Recreation programme summary of South African universities (author's compilation)

Institution	NQF exit levels	Programmes
North-West University	7, 8, 9, 10	Recreation and Tourism; Recreation and Psychology; Sport and Recreation Administration.
University of the Western Cape	7, 8, 9, 10	Sports, Recreation and Exercise Science; Sport and Recreation Management.
University of Venda	8	Recreation and Leisure Studies.
University of KwaZulu-Natal	8, 9, 10	Sport Science with Leisure Studies.

NQF, National Qualifications Framework.

2.2.4.3 A brief overview of higher education structures in South Africa

All higher education training (including recreation and/or recreation-related degrees) is regulated by the DHET. Figure 2.1 shows that the DHET is headed by the Minister of Higher Education, who has overall responsibility for all matters pertaining to higher education (CHE, 2013:12). According to the Higher Education Act (101 of 1997) all qualifications must be registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) through an accreditation process and developed and managed by the statutory advisory body, the Council of Higher Education (CHE), which also acts as a quality control council for higher education (CHE, 2013:13).

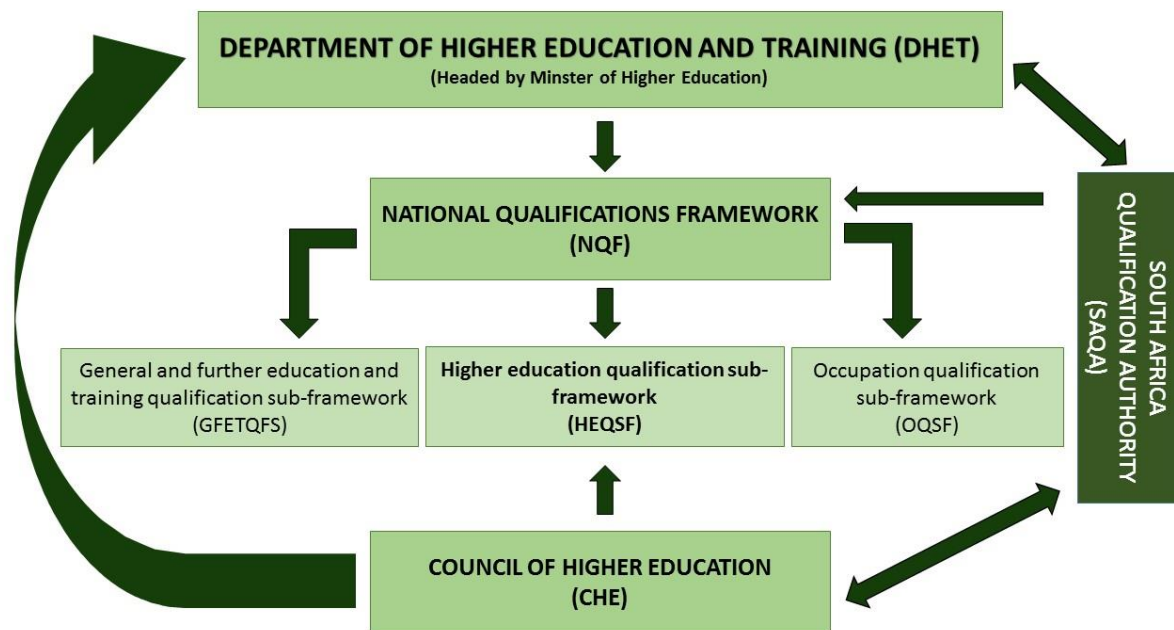


Figure 2.1: Schematic representation of the higher education structure in South Africa (author's compilation)

The NQF (Figure 2.2) is divided into three sub-frameworks: the Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (HEQSF) – under which all recreation degrees fall; the General and Further Education and Training Qualification Sub-Framework (GFETQSF); and the Occupation Qualification Sub-Framework (OQSF). The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) has been mandated to work towards achieving the objectives of the NQF by developing policy and criteria for registering standards and qualifications on the NQF, on the recommendations of the CHE and by direct regulation of the DHET (CHE, 2013:13).

The first National Qualification Framework Bill was passed into law as the South African Qualification Authority Act (No. 58 of 1995) on 4 October 1995 (SAQA, 2014). After a great deal of scrutiny and consultations with various stakeholders, the structure of the NQF changed to include three coordinated qualification sub-frameworks: General and Further Education and Training; Higher Education; and Trades and Occupations (Figure 2.2). This led to the new National Qualifications Framework Act No. 67 of 2008 (SAQA, 2014). As seen in Figure 2, the HEQSF includes all qualifications on NQF level 5–10; i.e. first-year Bachelor's degree level (level 5) up to postgraduate doctoral degree (PhD) level (level 10). Recreation qualifications at NWU are offered from level 5, with exit on

level 7 (undergraduate degree), level 8 (honours degree), level 9 (Master's degree) and level 10 (PhD degree).

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK		
LEVEL	SUB-FRAMEWORK AND QUALIFICATION TYPES	
10	Doctoral degree	
9	Master's degree	
8	Bachelor honours degree Postgraduate diploma Bachelor's degree	
7	Bachelor's degree Advanced diploma	
6	Diploma Advanced certificate	Occupational certificate (level 6)
5	Higher certificate	Occupational certificate (level 5)
4	National certificate	Occupational certificate (level 4)
3	Intermediate certificate	Occupational certificate (level 3)
2	Elementary certificate	Occupational certificate (level 2)
1	General certificate	Occupational certificate (level 1)

Key to sub-frameworks:

Higher Education	General and Further Education and Training	Trades and Occupations
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Figure 2.2: Nation Qualifications Framework, adapted from the Council of Higher Education website (CHE, 2013:6)

Standards for qualifications are set by the HEQSF and include the exit levels of the qualification types, the minimum credit ratings and the purpose and characteristics in terms of the types of knowledge and skills intended for development by each qualification (CHE, 2013:13). However, no specific standards are set in terms of learning outcomes (CHE, 2013:17). The only specifications for learning outcomes are set by SAQA, which stipulates that all SA qualifications should include critical cross-field/generic skills to promote lifelong learning, as well as discipline-specific knowledge and skills (Higher Education act 101 of 1997).

Critical cross-field outcomes (CCFOs) express generic qualities that are deemed critical for development of the lifelong learning that should be achieved in all qualifications. CCFOs are defined by SAQA as “those generic outcomes that inform all teaching and learning” (SAQA, 2014). The following are the CCFOs required by SAQA (SAQA, 2014):

- To identify and solve problems in which responses demonstrate that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made.
- To work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation, community.
- To organise and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively.
- To collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.
- To communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation.
- To use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others.
- To demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

When examining the CFFOs, it is clear that the focus of these outcomes is not on knowledge of specific theory, but rather on the general skills that students need to gain and maintain employment after graduation, thus, graduate attributes.

2.2.5 Graduate attributes

The concept of “graduate attributes” must be understood in order to comprehend their importance in higher education, with a particular focus on the employability of graduates. Graduate attributes are explained by Bowden (as quoted by Barrie, 2006:217) as “the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution”. It is vital to realise that these attributes include, but also exceed, the disciplinary knowledge of the degree and are the necessary qualities that students need to succeed professionally in an unknown future (Barrie, 2006:217). Graduate attributes differ between universities and are referred to by a range of terms (Barrie, 2006:217). Barrie (2006:218) further suggests that these attributes need to vary according to discipline.

Graduate attributes form a key component of the NWU Teaching and Learning Strategy: 2016–2020 (NWU, 2017) and are defined by NWU as “the personal qualities, and

academic, professional and practical knowledge and skills, that the NWU values” (NWU, 2017:28). As a result of these attributes, students are able to “lead fulfilling and productive professional, public and personal lives” and have a “strategic edge in the world of work” (NWU, 2017:11). Furthermore, these graduate attributes defined by the NWU must be tailored further by specific programme design (NWU, 2017:28), thus implying that academic programmes must adapt these, and other, attributes that are relevant in their specific field. The NWU defines six domains of desired attributes (NWU, 2017:12):

- 1) Responsible and engaged member of society.
- 2) Knowledgeable, highly educated individuals and professionals.
- 3) Innovative, critical thinkers.
- 4) Principled leaders.
- 5) Effective communicators.
- 6) Skilled collaborators and team members.

These six domains relate directly to the CCFOs required by SAQA of all higher education degrees.

Numerous articles were written between 2008 and 2018 on the graduate attributes that students wanting to follow a career in the field of recreation require (i.e. Chase & Masberg, 2008; Becket & Brookes, 2012; Wells *et al.*, 2012; Hurd *et al.*, 2014; Fulthorp & D'Eloia, 2015; D'Eloia & Fulthorp, 2016). Hurd *et al.* (2014:53) reported that no consensus existed on a common set of competencies needed by recreation professionals because of the diversity in the field, but emphasised finance, communication, decision making, problem solving and programming as common denominators. The study conducted by Chase and Masberg (2008:84) highlighted fifteen competencies/skills needed by recreation professionals, ranked in order of importance (Table 2.3). Fulthorp and D'Eloia (2015:60) found in their research that skills in communication (oral and written), customer service, developing and implementing budgets, programming, leadership and management, and problem solving were the common competencies needed by entry-level employees in municipal parks and recreation departments. They stated that communication skills and interpersonal skills were rated the highest (Fulthorp & D'Eloia, 2015:67). In their follow-up study, they identified three distinct ways to better prepare undergraduate students for employment.

Firstly, more recreation-related experiences were required; secondly, better knowledge on self-presentation and communication skills was necessary and finally job awareness was required, which included knowledge of the agency, the community and expectations (D'Eloia & Fulthorp, 2016:21). Wells *et al.* (2012:16) accentuated in their article that writing skill, as a part of written communication skills, was an essential skill needed by recreation professionals and that this must be developed over time.

Table 2.3: Competencies and skills required of entry-level recreation professionals, adapted from Chase and Masberg (2008)

Rank	Categories	Clarification
1	Communication	Strong verbal and written communication skills, customer service, self-presentation.
2	Personal qualities	People orientated, enthusiastic, patient, fun, practical, common sense, good attitude, ambitious, energetic, ability to form relationships.
3	Knowledge of the profession	Knowledge of field, especially budgeting.
4	Adaptability/left brain	Adaptable, flexible, creative, multi-tasking.
5	Responsibility	Responsible, reliable, has good judgement, follows through, work ethic, integrity, accountable, mature.
6	Supervisory	Organisation, time management, general management.
7	Organisational behaviour	People skills, able to form relationships and overall organisational behaviour.
8	Leadership	Leadership skills, innovative, initiative.
9	Passion for the profession	Enthusiasm, passion, dedication, commitment, interest in community.
10	Experience	Experience, job, internship.
11	Learner: trainable	Willingness to learn, able to follow directions, accuracy.
12	Education	Degree in relevant field.
13	Teamwork	Able to function successfully in a team.
14	Problem solving	Problem solving and critical analysis.
15	Technical/computer	Necessary skills.

No relevant research can be found on the graduate attributes expected of SA students who want to follow a career in recreation locally. It is, therefore, essential to firstly determine which of the attributes found internationally are also relevant in the SA setting, and what other attributes might need adding for the SA landscape. These

attributes must influence what learning is needed, and the way learning is delivered in SA degree programmes. Hurd *et al.* (2014:56) found that the competencies that students lacked at the beginning of their careers were typically related to those concepts that they were exposed to in a lecture setting with limited or no exposure to practical experiences. They stated that students need a way to put their classroom knowledge into practice, to gain self-confidence and feel prepared for their first employment in the field (Hurd *et al.*, 2014:57).

Numerous teaching methodologies underpin the approach of learning through experience that are not necessarily supported in recreation teaching and learning. Therefore, the teaching methodologies used as foundation for teaching recreation students need to be re-examined, to determine suitable approaches to ensure students are not only equipped with the correct knowledge, but also with skills and competencies when starting their careers as recreation professionals.

2.2.6 Teaching recreation in higher education

A variety of research has been conducted on recreation and leisure education in higher education, a great deal of which has been published in *Scholar: Journal of Leisure Studies and Recreation Education*, a journal first published in 1986 (Cardenas, 2004:146). *Scholar* is seen as the frontrunner for pedagogical research in the field of leisure and recreation in higher education (Myllykangas, 2004:116). Cardenas (2004:149) reported that between 1987 and 2003, 25.4% of all articles published in *Scholar* focused on teaching or learning styles and strategies.

Various teaching approaches have been used to prepare students in the field of recreation, with numerous studies investigating the effectiveness of experiential learning as an approach to learning (Kucharewski, 2002; Heintzman, 2005; Wolfe & Green, 2006; Delamere, 2007; McCormick *et al.*, 2010). For example, Delamere (2007) used experiential learning in a therapeutic recreation module by having students use wheelchairs in class for a simulation of disabilities. She reported that students showed a more complex understanding of the reality of a person with disabilities and being disabled. It “came alive” for the students and they understood how it felt to be disabled (Delamere, 2007:7).

McCormick *et al.* (2010) reported on the use of videos about current and future trends in leisure that students had to produce and share on YouTube. The technique was found

to develop critical thinking skills, creativity and technology knowledge and students were able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter (McCormick *et al.*, 2010:74). Heintzman (2005) showed how different experiential learning activities in a class on spirituality and leisure encouraged students to self-explore the course content. However, in these studies, experiential learning activities were only implemented for certain aspects of a module, and none reported on the development of an experiential learning-teaching model that could be adapted for all recreation modules.

Wolfe and Green (2006:187) recommended that experiential learning should form the basis of all recreation modules, to ensure that not only the necessary knowledge is taught, but that students also develop necessary skills and competencies. This was also emphasised by Cardenas (2004:151), stating that “providing courses that incorporate active and experiential learning and addressing diversity is critical to the success of our students”. In the next section, attention is given to these learning theories and, more specifically, experiential learning as teaching methodology.

2.3 LEARNING THEORIES AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AS TEACHING METHODOLOGY

A learning theory is defined as “a systematic integrated outlook with regard to the nature of the process whereby people relate to their environments in such a way as to enhance their ability to use both themselves and their environments in a most effective way” (Bigge & Shermis, 2004:3). Learning theory helps educators, teachers and lecturers understand how different people learn, guiding their teaching and learning practices.

2.3.1 A brief introduction to the main learning theories

Numerous learning philosophies exist and can be categorised into three prominent learning theories: behaviourist, cognitivist and constructivist, each of which has its own associated learning methodologies and strategies (Said *et al.*, 2012:1; Kay & Kibble, 2016:23). Behaviourist and cognitivist learning theories are seen as the more “traditional” way of teaching, whereas constructivist learning theory is considered the modern paradigm of teaching and learning (Said *et al.*, 2012:6; Viviers, 2016:37).

However, in recent years learning theories have moved into a digital age, with the development of connectivism as learning theory (Siemans, 2005:1).

2.3.1.1 Behaviourism

Behaviourism was the first learning theory used to explain learning. It was developed in the early 20th century by the researchers Pavlov, Thorndike, Watson and Skinner (Said *et al.*, 2012:2; Kay & Kibble, 2016:18) and was the dominant theory on learning until the 1960s (Jordan *et al.*, 2008:26). According to Jordan *et al.* (2008:21-22) classical behaviourists such as Pavlov (1849–1936) believed that a learner simply responds to external stimuli, as illustrated in his well-known experiment with dogs, and that change occurs because of external rather than cognitive actions, therefore referring to “conditioning” rather than learning. Thorndike (1874–1949) built on this theory of classical conditioning by stating, through his research with puzzle boxes, that rewards strengthen behaviour (Jordan *et al.*, 2008:22). In the 1930s, Skinner (1904–1990) experimented by means of the “Skinner Box”, using positive as well as negative reinforcement, stating that “the behaviour of the subject determines the response to the subject’s own actions”, known as “operant conditioning” (Jordan *et al.*, 2008:24).

Behaviourists are said to view the mind as a “black box” (Said *et al.*, 2012:3), with no regard to what a learner thinks or feels (Kay & Kibble, 2016:18). The purpose of learning is seen as the accomplishment of the correct behaviour (achievable learning outcomes) by using conditioning strategies that include rewards and punishments (Said *et al.*, 2012:3; Kay & Kibble, 2016:18). That said, modification of behaviour is still one of education’s main purposes, using some behaviourist principles to different extents and in different ways (Jordan *et al.*, 2008:27). Some learning today remains teacher-centred, with the learner as a passive participant and using teaching strategies such as direct teaching (lecturing), use of incentives and punishments, individual work and examinations – all examples situated within the theory of behaviourism (Said *et al.*, 2012:3; Kay & Kibble, 2016:18-19). Jordan *et al.* (2008:33-34) summarise behaviourism as anti-humanistic, anti-intellectual and ineffective in promoting deep learning. However, Jordan *et al.* (2008:34) also states that it is effective for rapid learning and may serve as a foundation for more complex cognitive theories. This implies that behaviourism still has a place in the teaching and learning environment in specific contexts and with specific outcomes in mind.

2.3.1.2 Cognitivism

With the development of technology, specifically the computer, psychologists recognised the power of the human mind, realising that not all learning is related to stimulus–response and reinforcement and that some learning is more similar to the way a computer processes information (Said *et al.*, 2012:5). They wanted to understand what was inside the black box of the human mind – how knowledge is acquired, constructed and represented (Kay & Kibble, 2016:18).

Ausubel, Piaget and Cagne were the key theorists who developed the cognitivist learning theory (Said *et al.*, 2012:4). The theory focuses on how knowledge is gained, structured, represented and remembered. It emphasises the importance of the organisation of knowledge, the linking of learning to previous knowledge and that basic knowledge must be mastered before moving on to new knowledge, thus focusing on the memorisation and reproduction of knowledge (Kay & Kibble, 2016:20). Cognitivism is the study of mental processes and considers five basic processes: sensation, perception, attention, encoding and memory – all of which influence the way a person learns. Cognitivism acknowledges that learning does not always lead to change in behaviour (Jordan *et al.*, 2008:38,51). Albert Bandura went on to develop the concept of social cognitive learning, stating that behaviour change could well be induced by the observation of someone else's behaviour, be it positive or negative (Kay & Kibble, 2016:18).

Cognitivism sees learning as teacher-centred, but that learners, each with different skills, knowledge and motivation for learning, are active participants in the learning process and must discover information related to their own needs (Jordan *et al.*, 2008:48; Kay & Kibble, 2016:19). Teaching strategies used by cognitivists include pair work, peer-teaching and demonstrations (Kay & Kibble, 2016:18). The learner is still not seen as an active participant in the construction of their knowledge, but only as a bystander assimilating the given information (Said *et al.*, 2012:5).

2.3.1.3 Constructivism

During the 1970s, which was a period of educational reform in Europe and the USA, learning theory was redefined by Jean Piaget (Said *et al.*, 2012:6). He stated that learning “is in the eye of the beholder, knowledge is subjective and actively constructed as learners engage with, and make meaning of their experiences” (as stated in Kay & Kibble, 2016:21). Whereas previous learning theories focused on behaviour change and

how information is processed, Piaget and fellow constructivists were more motivated by what people do with information to develop knowledge, thus how people learn (Jordan *et al.*, 2008:55).

Constructivism focuses on the active involvement of students, a process where new knowledge is “constructed” in an effort to make sense of the world (Jordan *et al.*, 2008:56). Learning is seen as student-centred; it gives students ownership of the learning process and takes place in an authentic environment where gaps in the knowledge of learners are identified and addressed. Learners interpret their current experiences based on what they already know through either assimilation or accommodation of knowledge (Kay & Kibble, 2016:21). Lev Vygotsky added to the theory with his work on social constructivism, describing how learning is a social process and that there is a relationship between social activities and cognitive processes (Said *et al.*, 2012:7; Kay & Kibble, 2016:21). He encouraged the role of teachers/educators and experts (which included peers) in the guiding of learning (Jordan *et al.*, 2008:59). The influence of constructivism led to various new practices in the way that students are taught, including discovery learning, problem-based learning, community-based learning, inquiry-based learning, peer- and collaborative learning and scaffolded learning (Jordan *et al.*, 2008:62-65; Kay & Kibble, 2016:21).

2.3.1.4 Connectivism

How we communicate and learn have changed tremendously in the last two decades due to the influence of technology. Informal learning has become more significant, through personal networks, communities of practice and work-related tasks (Siemens, 2005:1). As stated by Siemens (2005:1) “Know-how and know-what is being supplemented with know-where”, it became more important to understand where to find the knowledge that is needed. This new technology and knowing how to make connections have led to the development of connectivism as learning theory (Siemens, 2005:1). Connectivism is based on the following principles:

- Learning and knowledge rests in diversity of opinions
- Learning is a process of connecting specialized nodes or information sources
- Learning may reside in non-human appliances.

- Capacity to know more is more critical than what is currently known.
- Nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning.
- Ability to see connections between fields, ideas, and concepts is a core skill.
- Currency (accurate, up-to-date knowledge) is the intent of all connectivist learning activities.
- Decision-making is itself a learning process. Choosing what to learn and the meaning of incoming information is seen through the lens of a shifting reality. While there is a right answer now, it may be wrong tomorrow due to alterations in the information climate affecting the decision” (Siemens. 2005:1).

Reviewing the principles of the three main learning theories, as well as connectivism, all clearly have relevant points that address some of the requirements for ensuring recreation professionals are properly educated. However, constructivism as a whole aligns with recreation as a profession and embraces behaviour change and the process of learning. Therefore, it can be argued that constructivism should form the teaching and learning foundation of all academic programmes preparing recreation professionals.

2.3.2 Experiential learning as teaching methodology within constructivism

As mentioned in section 2.3.1, learning theories can be categorised into either a traditional or modern paradigm (Viviers, 2016:37). Constructivism is considered the modern paradigm of teaching and learning, and experiential learning as a teaching methodology is associated with its principles (Viviers, 2016:37). Piaget (the pioneer of constructivism) believed that knowledge arises from actions and the way we reflect on these actions (Von Glasersfeld, 2005:4), the same underpinnings that define experiential learning in its most basic form – learning by doing, with reflection (Priest & Gass, 2005:16). Learning, defined in the framework of Kolb’s experiential learning theory (ELT), is seen as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 2014:49). Clearly experiential learning as a teaching methodology needs to be further examined as a possible solution to how to best prepare recreation students for the profession.

Experiential learning is commonly misinterpreted as just a series of tools and techniques that are used by lecturers to provide students with an experience they can

learn from (Kolb & Kolb, 2005b:193); however, it encompasses much more. Experiential learning is seen as “learning through doing”, which mimics the real world with mostly unpredictable outcomes. The student must take responsibility and manage their own learning (Schwartz, 2015:1). Reflection forms a critical part in the success of these processes (Schwartz, 2015:11); it is important that students have the opportunity to reflect on their experience, analyse and contest the current situation and think critically about the implication on future experiences (Hedin, 2010:109; Monk, 2013:64).

According to Schwartz (2015:3), experiential learning can be integrated into higher education in two distinct ways: firstly, through field-based experiential learning, which includes internships, practicums and service learning; and secondly, through classroom-based experiential learning that involves activities such as case studies, role playing, and simulations. Schwartz (2015:1) emphasises that not every “experience” can be seen as experiential learning, and understanding the underlining principles and theory relating to the methodology is important. To understand its complexity, the development of the theory as a teaching methodology needs to be examined.

The work of David Kolb is seen as ground breaking in the field of experiential learning and has been used by various researchers. Myllykangas (2004:117) states that Kolb’s ELT was the most cited theory between 1986–2001 in *Schole*. Kolb’s work was influenced by various other theorists and according to Kolb (2014:15), scholars like John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and Jean Piaget were the foremost foundational scholars of experiential learning. The term “experiential learning” was first used in 1938 with the publication of John Dewey’s book *“Experience and Education”*. According to Dewey’s theory, “the acquisition of knowledge is an active, questing process, an act of community construction from the building materials that established texts and lectures provide” (Weinstein, 2015). This was in stark contrast with the traditional paradigm of teacher-centred learning theories of the time (Schwartz, 2015:1). John Dewey’s philosophy of education criticised the traditional way of teaching (Monk, 2013:65), and he saw learning as “a process whereby the individual reacts to, learns from, and builds on experiences. Experiences are continuous in that they build on each other, each one affecting future experiences” (as cited by Monk, 2013:65).

Kurt Lewin, well known for his research on group dynamics, made major contributions to experiential learning with the T-groups (training group) method and action research methods. Lewin focused on the life space (a field of interdependent forces including

needs, goals and memories, as well as events in the environment, barriers and pathways) that formed the basis for the ELT concept of learning spaces developed by Kolb (Kolb, 2014:26). However, Piaget's emphasis was on the cognitive development process, how intelligence is shaped by experience, and that action plays a key role in the process (Kolb, 2014:12).

These theorists were the main role-players who shaped the thoughts and processes that formed the foundation for the development of the ELT (Kolb, 2014:19). Kolb also added the names of William James, Mary Parker Follett, Lev Vygotsky, Carl Jung, Carl Rogers and Paulo Freire to the list of scholars instrumental in his work (Kolb, 2014:20). ELT forms the basis of most experiential learning research carried out to date and is seen as one of the most influential theories (Bergsteiner *et al.*, 2010:29; Manolis *et al.*, 2013:44-45), with more than 990 research reports already published between 1971 and 1999 (Kolb *et al.*, 2001:238) and many more published thereafter.

2.3.2.1 Experiential learning theory

ELT provides “a holistic model of the learning process and a multilinear model of adult development, both of which are consistent with what we know about how people learn, grow, and develop” (Kolb *et al.*, 2001:227). ELT is based on the following six propositions, which Kolb compiled using the work of who he described as the pioneers of experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005b:194; Kolb, 2014:37-48):

1) *Learning is a process and not a product or outcome*

ELT states that thoughts are not static, but shaped and reshaped through experience. Learning is seen as an “emergent process whose outcomes represent only historical record, not knowledge of the future” (Kolb, 2014:37). Clearly the focus of learning should be on the whole process, engaging students to increase their learning, and providing feedback on the effectiveness of their learning process (Kolb & Kolb, 2005b:194).

2) *All learning is a continuous process grounded in experience*

According to Kolb (2014:39), all learning is “relearning”; every student already has some ideas about the topic at hand (varying on the level of correctness), gained from some previous experience. Lecturers must implant new ideas but also adjust and/or remove old ones from the belief systems of students, by getting students to investigate and examine their beliefs and integrate them with new, refined ideas.

3) *Learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptations to the world*

The learning process is forced by differences that result in disagreement, tension and conflict. New knowledge and skills are gained through confrontation and students need four kinds of ability (concrete experience abilities; reflective observation abilities; abstract conceptualisation abilities; and active experimentation abilities) to ensure that this process is effective (Kolb, 2014:42).

4) *Learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world*

Learning involves thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving – the whole person, thus a holistic adaptive process. ELT focus on the integration of these functions into the world (Kolb, 2014:43).

5) *Learning involves transactions between the person and the environment*

Synergetic transactions between the student and the environment result in learning, leaving not just the student but also the environment changed (Kolb & Kolb, 2005b:194; Kolb, 2014:47).

6) *Learning is the process of creating knowledge.*

Kolb (2014:48) states that knowledge “is the result of the transaction between social knowledge (previous human cultural experience) and personal knowledge (subjective life experience)”; this process is referred to as learning.

Kolb (2014:50) further defined ELT as “a dynamic view of learning based on a learning cycle driven by the resolution of the dual dialectics of action/reflection and experience/abstraction”.

2.3.2.2 Kolb’s experiential learning cycle

Various experiential learning models have been developed, but David Kolb’s experiential learning cycle published in 1984 in his book *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development* is the most prominent model used in higher education for implementing experiential learning (Hedin, 2010:111), with numerous studies reporting on its application in the last 35 years (Svinicki & Dixon, 1987; Erickson & James, 2005; Almeida & Mendes, 2010; Bethell & Morgan, 2011; Cant & Cooper, 2011; Bower, 2013; Sukavejworakit et al., 2018).

Kolb (2014:50) describes ELT as a learning cycle (Figure 2.3) where knowledge is created through the grasping or taking in of information (concrete experience [CE] and abstract conceptualisation [AC]), and transforming or interpreting and acting on information (reflective observation [RO] and active experimentation [AE]) during an experience. Figure 2.3 clearly shows that the model encompasses a single cycle consisting of four stages. The cycle starts with a CE which forms the basis for RO. Those reflections are integrated and refined into AC, from which new implications are drawn and tested in AE. This cycle is then repeated as new experiences are gained (Kolb *et al.*, 2001:228; Chen *et al.*, 2014:47).

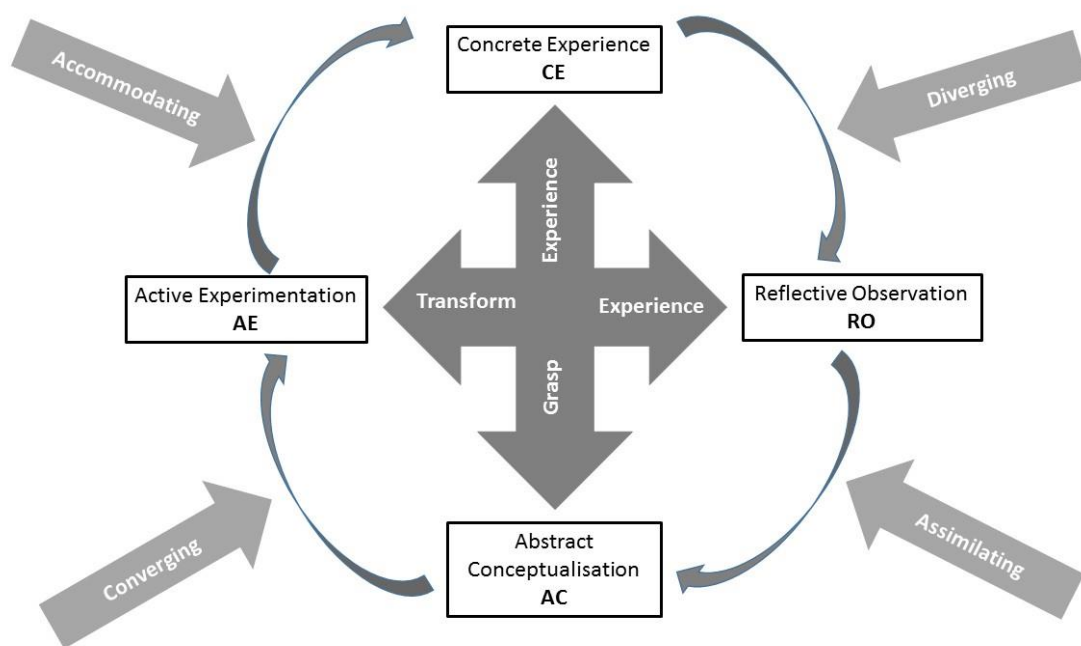


Figure 2.3: Kolb's experiential learning cycle, adapted from Kolb *et al.* (2001:229) and Kolb (2014:51)

According to Kolb *et al.* (2001:228), when examining the learning cycle more closely it is clear that abilities that are polar opposites of each other are required for learning, and that the student must choose which of these abilities will be used in each learning situation. When taking in new information, some students prefer concrete tangible reality (CE), where others prefer symbolic representation (AC). Equally, with the transformation of experiences some watch and reflect (RO), and others rather just start doing (AE) (Kolb *et al.*, 2001:229). These choices are influenced by past life experiences, the present environment and our genetic make-up, described by Kolb *et al.* (2001:229) as “learning styles”.

2.3.2.3 Kolb's learning style inventory and four basic learning styles

Kolb published the first Learning Style Inventory (LSI) in 1971 (revised in 1985, 1999 and 2005), used to determine, through abundant research and clinical observations, four basic learning styles: Diverging, Assimilating, Converging, and Accommodating, that link with the experiential learning cycle's four stages as seen in Figure 2.3 (Kolb *et al.*, 2001:230). Table 2.4 provides a summary of these four learning styles.

Table 2.4: Summary of basic learning styles (Kolb *et al.*, 2001:231-233; Kolb & Kolb, 2005a:5)

	Diverging	Assimilating	Converging	Accommodating
Dominant learning ability	•CE and RO	•AC and RO	•AC and AE	•CE and AE
Strong points	•Seeing different viewpoints. •Imaginative.	•Understanding range of information. •Logically condensing of information.	•Finding practical uses for ideas and theories. •Problem solving. •Decision making.	•Learn from hands-on experiences. •Carrying out of plans. •Relying more on people than on own technical scrutiny.
Weak points	•Emotional.	•Not concerned with practical value.	•Dealing with social and interpersonal issues.	•Act on "gut" and not logic. •Relying more on people than on own technical scrutiny.
Interests	•Cultural. •Information gathering. •People.	•Ideas. •Abstract concepts. •Logical soundness.	•Technical tasks and problems.	•New and challenging experiences.
Learning preference	•Brainstorming sessions. •Group work. •Personalised feedback.	•Lectures. •Reading. •Exploring analytical models.	•Experimenting with new ideas. •Simulations. •Laboratory assignments. •Practical applications.	•Working with others in all aspects of learning.

According to Kolb and Kolb (2005a:6), the learning behaviour associated with each of the four learning styles is shaped by connections between people and their environment and is only partly determined by personality. The student's educational specialisation, career, current job and the task at hand all play a role in shaping the person's learning style. A person's learning style can change according to the context, but most students prefer a constant style of learning, no matter the context (Chen *et al.*, 2014:47).

Nevertheless, recent research questions the validity and reliability of Kolb's experiential learning cycle (the graphical model) and with that the LSI (Bergsteiner *et al.*, 2010; Bergsteiner & Avery, 2014; Schenck & Cruickshank, 2015). Bergsteiner *et al.* (2010:31) stated that Kolb's learning styles are rather learning processes than styles and this constitutes to the main weakness of his experiential learning model; however, Bergsteiner *et al.* (2010:43) still stated that the model was "worth developing further".

Bergsteiner *et al.* (2010:43) suggested the following content revisions to improve Kolb's experiential learning model: remove unnecessary tautological concepts, revise the categorisation and scale of learning typologies and include learning styles absent from the model. These amendments, together with modelling improvements, have led to the development of the TCELM by Bergsteiner and Avery (2014), which is discussed in the next section.

2.4 THE TWIN-CYCLE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MODEL

Bergsteiner and Avery (2014:257) suggest that most of the criticism of Kolb's experiential learning model can be resolved by re-conceptualising the single cycle to a twin-cycle model. The TCELM offers developments on the existing learning models, including the re-conceptualisation of the model and clear and logical organisation for the categorisation of classes of variables, with subcategories addressing various gaps (Bergsteiner & Avery, 2014:270). These improvements also address the validity and reliability issues of Kolb's experiential learning model.

2.4.1 Learning potency and learning-activity types

To understand the TCELM developed by Bergsteiner and Avery (2014:273), it is important to understand what is meant by "learning modes/potency" and "learning-activity types", concepts that form the foundation of the model. The TCELM is developed with a scale for learning potency, rather than just learning modes, based on six learning-activity types. Learning modes are seen as the extent to which a learning experience is:

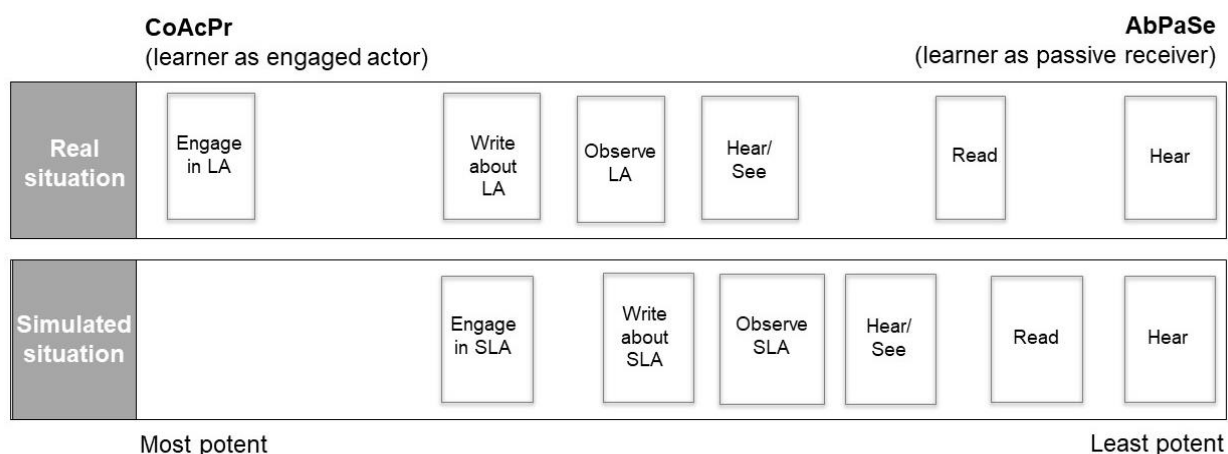
- Concrete (Co) – involves concrete matters that may have real consequences for the learner and/or others,

- Abstract (Ab) – does not involve concrete or real matters with no consequences,
- Active (Ac) – the learner actively participates in the learning,
- Passive (Pa) – the learner is an observer/listener while learning,
- Primary (Pr) – the learning is a first-hand experience with respect to the matter being learned,
- Secondary (Se) – the learning is a second-hand experience with respect to the matter being learned (Bergsteiner & Avery, 2014:258).

These learning modes can combine in different ways to describe different learning situations, depending on “what” needs to be learned and “whose” learning experience it is, thus influencing the potency of the learning experience (Bergsteiner & Avery, 2014:259).

Furthermore, six learning-activity types are suggested by Bergsteiner and Avery (2014:262), also shown in Figure 2.4:

- Hear – Learning is attained entirely by listening (aural means). Includes listening to radio, audio books, iPods or recordings.
- Read – Learning is attained by visual means. Includes reading books, articles, newspapers, case studies, flowcharts, worksheets, checklists, blogs, diagrams, cartoons, designs, maps, plans, websites, silent movies, etc.
- Hear and see – Learning is attained largely by aural means supported by visual stimuli, such as through lectures, interviews, conferences, discussions, seminars, workshops, using digital slides, movies, podcasts, videos, webinars, etc. The learner is an observer only and all learning is secondary.
- Observe live activity – Learning is attained by using visual and aural cues to interpret the behaviour of others, where the learning experience is not filtered through another’s eyes or camera. Thus directly observing a live activity such as a role play, experiment, game, demonstration, re-enactment, etc.
- Write about a live activity – Learning is attained by writing about the object of learning.
- Engage in live activity – Learning is attained by using a combination of kinaesthetic and other senses of the learner. The learner physically contributes to his or her learning by actively participating in live activities such as conferences, debates, demonstrations and games; or in simulations such as role plays, re-enactments, fieldwork; or by generating text and/or graphics such as a poster.



LA, live activity; SLA, simulated live activity.

Figure 2 4: Level of learning potency of six learning-activity types on the CoAcPr–AbPaSe learning potency scales (Bergsteiner & Avery, 2014:262)²

These learning-activity types are either real or simulated situations, arranged along a scale for real situations or a scale for simulations, with the learner as an engaged actor at one end and as a passive receiver at the other end.

2.4.2 The Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model

The TCELM (Figure 2.5) consists of two learning cycles (compared with Kolb's single cycle – CoAcAb): one for CoAcPr (CAP) learning – stages 1, 2, 3, 4, and one for AbPaSe (APS) learning – stages i, ii, iii, iv. Both cycles encompass the four learning stages identified by Kolb. A primary difference between the TCELM and Kolb's model is that the nature of learning – abstract or concrete, active or passive, primary or secondary – is attached to the two cycles as a whole and not the stages of learning as with Kolb. For formal learning the learner will embark on either the CAP or APS cycle, or a combination.

² Permission letter for use of figure included in Appendix B.

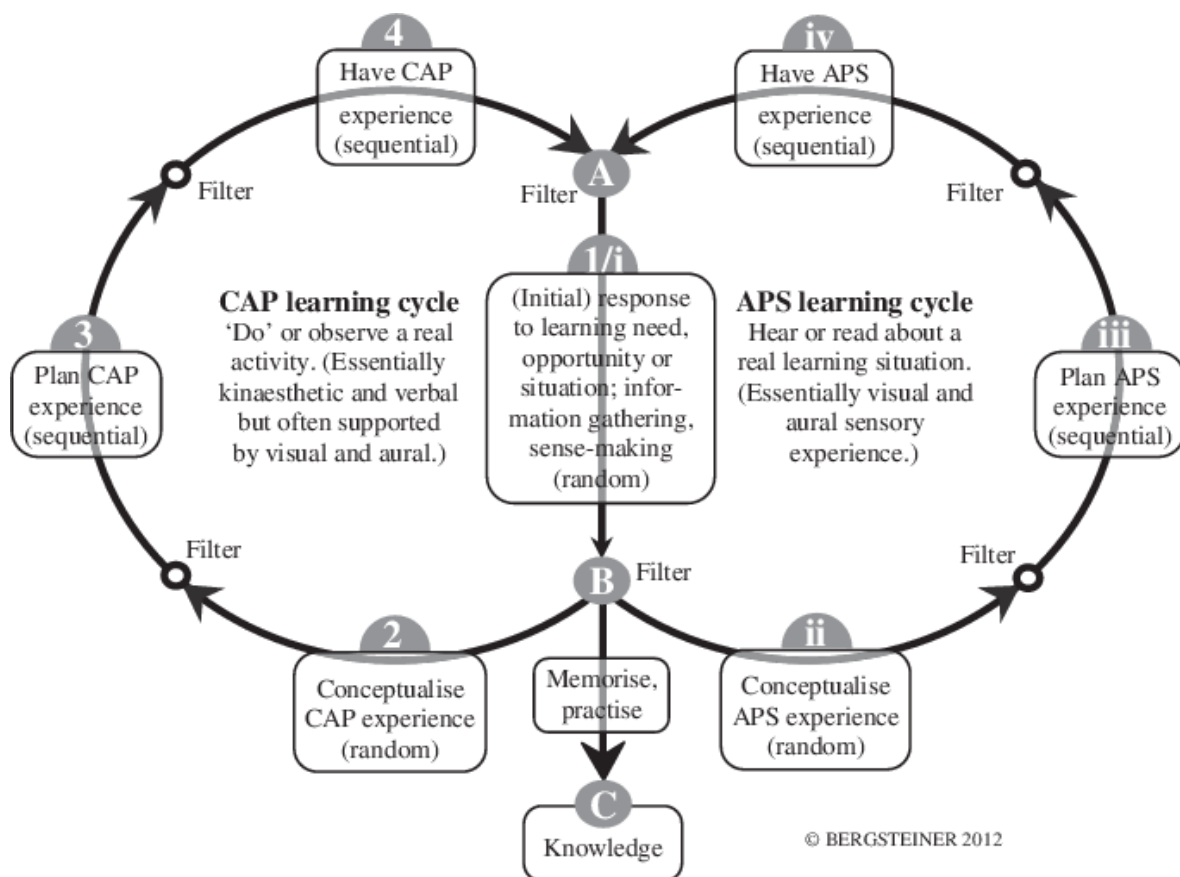


Figure 2.5: Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model (Bergsteiner & Avery, 2014:266)³

The cycle would normally start at 1/i, common to both formal learning cycles (CAP and APS). Here the learner responds to a learning situation, making either a spontaneous decision or an initial response to a learning situation in 4/iv. During this stage, learners engage in behaviour such as observation, information gathering, assimilation of information, reflection and evaluation, referred to by Kolb as “grasping experience”. This is then followed by either stages 2–3 or ii–iii, referred to by Kolb as “transforming experience”. The final stage (4/iv) is “having an experience” and also the start of the next learning cycle. However, informal learning comprising memorising and/or practising covers a simpler sequence: A, B, C. This cycle is seen as a learning “dead end” – having once learned the skill, with some practice it can be maintained for a long time (Bergsteiner & Avery, 2014:266-268).

The TCELM appears to be a suitable model for the implementation of recreation modules, ensuring they are approached from an experiential learning basis. The model

³ Permission letter for use of figure included in Appendix B.

provides the opportunity to present class-based (using the APS cycle) as well as practical (using the CAP cycle) recreation modules within an experiential learning framework. This application needs further exploration, as the application of the TCELM in recreation modules has not yet been reported on.

2.5 SUMMARY

This study's review of the teaching of recreation in higher education in SA clearly demonstrates how SA higher education institutions have unique challenges in the training of recreation professionals. Cardenas (2004:145) supported the view that each discipline within higher education must examine and evaluate its teaching practices, student learning styles, curriculum, course content, faculty development and student population characteristics to determine how it has contributed and can continue to contribute to the scholarship of teaching.

More than just theoretical knowledge must essentially be taught to students; the necessary skills and competencies – graduate attributes – need to be attained by students for them to be employable in the field of recreation. A comprehensive list of these graduate attributes was established by Chase and Masberg (2008), but their relevance in the SA context must be evaluated. In this chapter, study objective 1: “to determine the main graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals by recreation experts in a SA context” was partially addressed by augmenting the importance of graduate attributes. In the next chapter, this perspective is further developed for the SA context.

Experiential learning as teaching and learning methodology within constructivism as a learning philosophy was also evaluated in this chapter. Evidently, the implementation of an experiential learning model in the teaching of recreation in higher education could help with ensuring the employability of recreation students by equipping them with the necessary graduate attributes. Reviewing the critique on Kolb's learning cycle model leads to the conclusion that the TCELM is an improvement on the major flaws of Kolb's model and should be contextualised for recreation education in higher education. The implementation of the TCELM in recreation studies as well as its influence on the improvement of graduate attributes undoubtedly needs further investigation. This is

addressed by looking at research objective 2: “To contextualise the TCELM, focusing on graduate attributes, for use by lecturers in a recreation module in a higher education setting”; and research objective 3: “To evaluate the effectiveness and workability of an experiential learning-teaching model, implemented in a recreation module in a higher education setting” in Chapters 4 and 5.

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CHAPTER 3

Article 1

PREPARING RECREATION PROFESSIONALS: GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES EXPECTED OF ENTRY-LEVEL RECREATION PROFESSIONALS IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

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This article was accepted for publication in the *World Leisure Journal*⁴. The article included is presented in accordance with the specific guidelines for the journal⁵. Exceptions were made for the prescribed margins, line-spacing and font to adhere to the North-West University guidelines to maintain uniformity of the thesis. Tables and figures will also be included with the text to facilitate easier reading and comprehension.

⁴ Acceptance letter included in Appendix C.

⁵ World Leisure Journal instructions to authors included in Appendix A.

Preparing recreation professionals: Graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals in a South African context

The unemployment rate of graduate students in South Africa has increased by more than 4% in the past 10 years. This increase can be ascribed to the economic situation of the country as well as the unemployability of these students. The focus of this study was to determine the graduate attributes (skills and competencies that make students employable) required in entry-level recreation professionals in South Africa. A ranking-type Delphi study design was used, consisting of three iterations. Ten experts from the public, non-profit and private recreation sectors whose organisations employ entry-level recreation professionals were asked to rank the graduate attributes most required in students, and evaluate the relevance of graduate attributes for a South African context. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and inductive coding. “Passion for the profession”, “trainability and a willingness to learn” and “communication skills” were the top-ranked attributes. Clear differences were found in the expectations from South African graduates compared with United States graduates and therefore “creativity”, “ability to work with groups” and “conflict management” were added for the South African context. These results clarified what is expected of graduates entering recreation careers in SA, and it is therefore crucial that institutions preparing recreation students focus on these attributes in their programmes to enhance graduate employability.

KEYWORDS: competencies, entry-level professional, graduate attributes, recreation, skills, South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Equipping entry-level professionals with the necessary graduate attributes (knowledge, skills and competencies) is essential to ensure their employability (Suleman, 2016). Currently, 27.7% of the South African (SA) population is

unemployed (Statistics South Africa, 2017a). The current unemployment rate of SA graduates is 7.3% (Statistics South Africa, 2017a), compared with 2.8% in 2008 (Statistics South Africa, 2017b), that is a 4.5% increase in the past 10 years. SA is the hardest hit by youth unemployment compared with other developing countries (Van Aardt, 2012). There are numerous reasons for this increase in unemployment, the main ones being the economic downturn and recessions experienced in SA (Statistics South Africa, 2018; Van Aardt, 2012). More important is the youth's lack of work experience and absence of the skills and competencies (also known as graduate attributes) demanded by employers (Van Aardt, 2012), reducing their suitability for employment. Employability can be seen as not only an individual's ability to gain employment but also the ability to maintain it (Van der Klink et al., 2016). To do so an individual must be equipped with the necessary graduate attributes for their chosen career field; this includes the field of recreation.

As recreation is seen as assisting individuals in having positive leisure experiences that renew and restore them (Edginton, 2004:5) recreation education focuses on the knowledge such as leisure theory, leisure behaviour, inclusive recreation, and competencies such as leadership in recreation, financial management, human resources, operational management, and recreation programming, needed by recreation professionals to successfully provide recreation opportunities for individuals. Recreation as a profession covers a broad array of highly diverse career possibilities and includes a range of job roles, from planning and presenting activities in physical education, dance, sport and recreation therapy to the management of recreation centres, camps, staff and events (Chen & Gursoy, 2008). These career opportunities are offered in a network of service delivery sectors (Stevens, 2010) globally and in SA. Recreation as a professional career had its beginning in the United States of America (USA) as early as the 1900s, with the establishment of the "National Recreation School" in 1926 (Sessoms, 1984) and the first degree programme in 1940 at Purdue University, Indiana (Fisher, 2015). Today more than 70 accredited undergraduate degree programmes in various fields of recreation, including therapeutic recreation, outdoor recreation, general recreation, community recreation and recreation management, are offered throughout the USA (Caneday & Chalkidou, 2011; NRPA, 2018, October 2), where various job possibilities are continually available. For example, on the US National Recreation and Parks

Association website, at least 120 available positions are listed for recreation graduates (NRPA, 2018, October 2).

In contrast with the USA, the first degree programme in recreation at a SA university was only started in 1983 (Meyer, 2001), more than 40 years later than the USA. Degree programmes are currently offered at only four of the 26 public universities in SA. Their main programmes are in line with those offered at US universities, except for therapeutic recreation, which is an important focus in the USA but underrepresented at SA universities. The job market for recreation graduates in SA differs considerably from that in the USA. Few or no current job listings can be found on various online employment platforms (such as indeed.co.za, careerjet.co.za and careers24.com) and available vacancies in the public sector (as indicated on the website of Sport and Recreation South Africa) are not listed, requiring SA recreation graduates to adapt a much more entrepreneurial mindset in the generation of their own employment.

This variety of possible careers but scarcity of available vacancies, and its dynamic nature as it develops and grows (Chen & Gursoy, 2008), makes the recreation profession in SA a diverse and unique career field. Students do not know what careers will be available to them on graduation as the field is susceptible to various changes (Chen & Gursoy, 2008). This diversity and the limited number and scope of available positions brings an expectation that graduates gain a wide knowledge and wide range of graduate attributes before entering the job market. This reality challenges academic institutions in the preparation of students for a career in the recreation industry (West, 2016). It does not mean that students do not have specific career expectations, but rather that the task of preparing students for the possible career options available in the recreation industry, while also training them to be entrepreneurial, is unmanageable during their 3 or 4 years at an academic institution. However, the focus of higher education institutions should be on the knowledge, skills and competencies that are essential to ensure students can enter any one of the career options they choose (Chen & Gursoy, 2008). Moreover, the focus must be on ensuring that the essential knowledge, skills and competencies, or graduate attributes, are mastered by the student during their academic preparation.

The global focus on graduate attributes at universities for all professions has heightened during the past decade, fuelled by pressure on universities to deliver students who are more employable (Barrie, 2006; Hill, Walkington & France, 2016). Graduate attributes are explained by Bowden (as quoted by Barrie, 2006) as “the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution” (p.217). It is vital to realize that these attributes include, but also exceed, the disciplinary knowledge of the degree – they cover the necessary qualities that students need to succeed professionally in an unknown future (Barrie, 2006). Different universities tend to focus on different graduate attributes, while these attributes also need to vary according to the discipline in which the students are engaged (Barrie, 2006). The development of graduate attributes shapes students on three distinct levels. On an academic level, it forms the type of student and researcher they can be; on a societal level it influences their contribution to society; and on a professional level it influences their career and their employability (Hill et al., 2016; McCabe, 2010). It is vital that academics take ownership of the graduate attributes prescribed by their institution’s teaching and learning policy and contextualize them to their specific discipline, ensuring such attributes are in line with the prerequisites of the recreation industry (Hill et al., 2016).

The global emphasis on graduate attributes has led to much research in the last decade focusing on the necessary graduate attributes of students pursuing a career in the field of recreation (Becket & Brookes, 2012; Chase & Masberg, 2008; D'Eloia & Fulthorp, 2016; Fulthorp & D'Eloia, 2015; Hurd, Elkins, & Beggs, 2014; Munge, 2009; Wells, Piatt, & Paisley, 2012). Most research has focused on specific sectors in the recreation industry and the important attributes expected in those fields. However, top-ranked attributes are largely similar across these studies, with personal attributes, previous experience, knowledge, practical skills, leadership and communication skills ranked most highly (D'Eloia & Fulthorp, 2016; Fulthorp & D'Eloia, 2015; Munge, 2009).

In contrast with most other papers published on the topic, which focus on specific sectors of the recreation industry, results published by Chase and Masberg (2008), were part of a large study that focused on the improvement of partnerships between USA universities and the profession. These authors collected data by means of an

open-ended survey, completed by participants that were experts in the field of recreation with an average of 18 years experience (Chase & Masberg, 2008). Furthermore, a much larger sample (n=98) than the other studies was used and the competencies found all seemed relevant to the SA context. There were compelling reasons to use Chase and Masberg (2008) as foundation for the study. Firstly, their study did not focus on a specific sector or programme area but investigated the recreation profession as a whole, similar to the diverse career opportunities in SA. Secondly, the emphases of their research were on the skills needed by entry-level professionals, similar to the aim of this study. The 15 identified competencies or skills needed by entry-level recreation professionals, ranked in order of importance (Table 1) provided the groundwork for this research.

Table 1: Competencies and skills required of entry-level recreation professionals. Adapted from Chase and Masberg (2008)

Rank	Graduate attribute	Clarification
1	Communication	Strong verbal and written communication skills, customer service, self-presentation.
2	Personal qualities	People orientated, enthusiastic, patient, fun, practical, common sense, good attitude, ambitious, energetic, ability to form relationships.
3	Knowledge of the profession	Knowledge of field, especially budgeting.
4	Adaptability–left brain	Adaptable, flexible, creative, multi-tasking.
5	Responsibility	Responsible, reliable, has good judgement, follows through, work ethic, integrity, accountable, mature.
6	Supervisory	Organization, time management, general management.
7	Organizational behaviour	People skills, able to form relationships, overall organizational behaviour.
8	Leadership	Leadership skills, innovative, initiative.
9	Passion for the profession	Enthusiasm, passion, dedication, commitment, interest in community.
10	Experience	Experience, job, internship.
11	Learner: trainable	Willingness to learn, able to follow directions, accuracy.
12	Education	Degree in relevant field.
13	Teamwork	Able to function successfully in a team.
14	Problem solving	Problem solving and critical analysis.
15	Technical/computer	Necessary skills.

No relevant research could be found on the graduate attributes expected of SA students wanting to follow a career in recreation locally. The only specified learning outcomes are those set by the SA Qualification Authority (SAQA), which stipulates that all SA qualifications include critical cross-field/generic skills to promote lifelong learning, as well as discipline-specialized knowledge and skills (South Africa, 2007). Critical cross-field outcomes (CCFOs) are defined by SAQA as “those generic outcomes that inform all teaching and learning” for the development of lifelong learning (SAQA, 2016, August 30). The following are the CCFOs required by SAQA: problem solving, team work, self-responsibility, research skills, communication, technological and environmental literacy, and macro-vision skills (Jonck, 2017; SAQA, 2016, August 30). The focus of these outcomes is clearly not on knowledge of specific theory, but rather on graduate attributes, that can also be addressed by recreation educators.

Evidence of the influence of recreation educators on the economic status of the country is limited, but they are in a position to enhance the employability of students, by examining which graduate attributes are in demand by employers in the field and ensuring that adequate opportunities are provided for students to develop them. These attributes vitally inform what learning is required and the way in which learning is delivered in recreation degree programmes to enhance the employability of students; therefore, the following two research questions are posed:

- 1) What is the order of importance (rank) of the graduate attributes described by Chase and Masberg (2008) in the SA context? What other attributes are needed and which of the graduate attributes found internationally are irrelevant in the SA landscape?
- 2) How does the ranking of the graduate attributes needed by recreation graduates differ between the USA and SA?

METHODS

Ethical approval was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University before commencing with the research (NWU-00365-15-A1)⁶.

⁶ Letter of ethical approval included in Appendix B.

Study design

During 2018, a ranking-type Delphi method with three iterations (rounds), spanning four months from initial recruitment to final data collection, was used. The Delphi method makes use of experts in a field to collect opinions on an issue, using a sequence of questionnaires combined with feedback in a series of iterations, with the objective of gaining the most reliable consensus (Kobus & Westner, April 2016). The ranking-type Delphi has been used extensively in previous research to develop consensus on the relative importance of issues (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004).

Participants

Purposive sampling was used to recruit experts (N=10) in the field of recreation from recreation organisations in the public, non-profit and private sectors in SA. Purposive sampling was used because participants were selected according to their understanding of the skills and competencies needed by entry-level recreation professionals (Skulmoski, Hartman & Krahn, 2007).

An internet search was conducted to find recreation organisations in the public, non-profit and private sectors. The managers/owners of 20 organisations were contacted via email to obtain written permission to include their company and employees in the research project. After receiving their goodwill to participate, the purpose of the research and the entire process were explained to them. The following inclusion criteria for participation were explained to them: they had to be full-time employed by a recreation organisation, directly involved with the hiring of recreation staff, employed in that position for at least 6 months, willing and available to participate throughout the whole Delphi process, and able to communicate effectively in English via electronic communication and the internet. Each of the managers was asked to identify all possible participants from their organisation (including themselves) who satisfied the inclusion criteria. All eligible participants were invited to participate, with each person receiving information via email. From these organisations, 15 participants agreed to take part in the research, and 10 participants completed all three Delphi rounds (67% response rate). Although 15 participants are deemed too small a sample for many research methodologies, it is satisfactory for a Delphi technique. It is recommended to rather use the minimally sufficient number of

participants (Chia-Chien & Brian, 2007; Kobus & Westner, April 2016) of between 10 and 15 people (Delbecq, Van de Ven & Gustafson, 1975).

Measuring instruments and methods

An online Delphi questionnaire was used to collect input on the graduate attributes needed by entry-level recreation professionals in SA. The first iteration⁷ of the questionnaire included the ranking of the graduate attributes reported by Chase and Masberg (2008). Furthermore, to ensure that the study truly reflected the SA context, additional qualitative data was gathered using open-ended questions to provide participants the opportunity to add additional graduate attributes needed in the SA context, and for them to comment on which of the skills identified by Chase and Masberg (2008) may be irrelevant in the SA context. The second and third iterations of the questionnaire were compiled from feedback received in the preliminary iteration. Additional qualitative data were also collected to gain a better understanding of the top-ranked attributes by asking participants to give examples that indicate in what context the top-ranked attributes would be applied. Questionnaires for each iteration were reviewed by two experts (not part of the sample) to ensure they were clear and understandable, before being sent to participants.

Procedure

The Delphi method with three iterations included data collection, data analysis and controlled feedback (Gillis et al., 2013). Questionnaires were administered online using QuestionPro online survey software (QuestionPro, 2018) from March 2019 to May 2019. Participants had three weeks to complete the questionnaire after which the next iteration started. A consent form formed part of each online questionnaire, which participants had to complete to indicate informed consent, before moving on to the questions. To commence each round, participants received an email containing a direct link to the online questionnaire. After each iteration, data were analysed and used to compile the questionnaire for the next iteration. Collection of Delphi data was concluded after three iterations when consensus, indicated by a high Kendall's W value, was reached (Kobus & Westner, April 2016).

⁷ First iteration questionnaire included in Appendix D as an example of Delphi questions.

For the first iteration, the graduate attributes reported by Chase and Masberg (2008) were provided in alphabetical order and participants were asked to rank them from 1 to 15, with 1 being the highest ranked and identifying most importance. Participants additionally had to add attributes omitted, as well as indicate which listed attributes they considered to be irrelevant for the SA context. During the second round, participants received the original fifteen attributes, ranked according to the mean values of the first round. Participants were required to re-evaluate the rankings, moving attributes up or down in rank as they deemed necessary. Participants were also asked to add the new attributes to the rankings and re-evaluate the attributes that were deemed irrelevant in the SA context on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = not necessary and 4 = very important). The last iteration provided the ranked graduate attributes (original attributes as well as the newly added ones) and gave participants another opportunity to re-rank the list as they deemed necessary. Participants were also asked to comment on ways in which their top five ranked graduate attributes are applied in their specific field of recreation.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics, specifically the mean scores, were used to determine the order (rankings) of importance of the graduate attributes, as proposed by Ghani (2013). Mean scores were used to determine the average ranking of each attribute across the range of 1–15, such that the lower the mean score, the more important the attribute. Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W) was used to determine the agreement amongst participants, with 0.1 indicating a very weak agreement, 0.5 a moderate agreement and 0.9 indicating a very strong agreement (Schmidt, 1997). Kendall's W is a well-established and regularly used measure to determine consensus in ranking-type Delphi studies (Kobus & Westner, April 2016). Answers from the open-ended questions in the first iteration were analysed and condensed into additional attributes using an inductive coding approach (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Participants' comments on ways in which they apply the graduate attributes in their specific field of recreation during the last iteration were only used as anecdotal support for the findings.

RESULTS

The Delphi results are presented in Table 2, showing mean scores, final ranking of each attribute and evolution of ranks of attributes, as well as Kendall's W value obtained for iterations one through three.

Table 2: Final data from Delphi method

Graduate attribute	Delphi 1		Delphi 2		Delphi 3	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Passion for the profession	4.62	2	2.89	1	1.2	1
Trainability and a willingness to learn	5.25	3	3.44	2	2	2
Communication skills	4.12	1	3.78	3	2.8	3
Personal qualities	5.75	4	5.22	4	4	4
Adaptability	5.75	5	7.56	5	5.1	5
Leadership skills	7.75	6	7.78	6	6.2	6
Teamwork	10.5	14	7.89	7	7	7
Responsibility	8.62	10	9.22	8	7.7	8
Experience	8.25	7	10.33	9	9.11	9
Problem-solving skills	9.88	12	10.56	10	10	10
Education in the field	9.38	11	10.67	11	11	11
Organizational behaviour skills	8.38	8	11.22	12	12	12
Knowledge of the profession	8.5	9	11.22	13	13	13
Creativity*			12.56	14	14	14
Ability to work with groups*			13.33	15	15	15
Supervisory skills	10.12	13	13.67	16	16	16
Conflict management*			14.33	17	16	17
Technical or computer skills	13.12	15	15.33	18	17	18
KENDALL'S W	0.3123		0.5134		0.9572	

*Additional attributes added after first iteration.

First iteration

Using the mean values, attributes were ranked (Table 2: Delphi 1) with “communication skills” ranked highest (1st) and “technical or computer skills” ranked

last (15th). The level of consensus was weak (Kendall W = 0.31) amongst the participants at this first iteration. Several additional attributes were received from the participants and inductive coding was used to condense them to three additional attributes: (1) creativity, (2) ability to work with groups and (3) conflict management. Reporting on which of the 15 attributes they felt were irrelevant in the SA context; education (n=1), experience (n=2) and technical or computer skills (n=1) were indicated. Participants were required to indicate the relevance of these three attributes on a Likert scale during the second iteration.

Second iteration

Using the mean scores, attributes were re-ranked with “passion for the profession” ranked as 1st, “communication skills” moving to 3rd and “technical or computer skills” still ranked last (Table 2: Delphi 2). The three added attributes were placed in the bottom half of the rankings, with “creativity” ranked 14th, “ability to work with groups” ranked 15th and “conflict management” ranked 17th. Moderate consensus was reached amongst the participants (Kendall W = 0.51) in this iteration. Assessing the relevance of “education”, “experience” and “technical or computer skills”, all three attributes were evaluated as “beneficial but not mandatory” and placed in the bottom half of the rankings (Table 3), and therefore were not removed from the list.

Table 3: Graduate attributes potentially not mandatory for the South African context

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTE	Not necessary	Beneficial but not mandatory	Mandatory	Very important	RANKED
Education	0%	44%	44%	11%	11
Experience	0%	67%	22%	11%	9
Technical or computer skills	0%	89%	0%	11%	18

Third iteration

Using the mean scores, attributes were re-ranked in the third iteration. Although the mean values changed for some of the attributes, they had no influence on the final rankings: there was no change in the overall position of any attribute (Table 2: Delphi

3). A very strong agreement score was obtained amongst the participants in this final iteration (Kendall W = 0.95), indicating that the Delphi ranking process had reached a natural conclusion.

Difference between South African and USA ranking of graduate attributes

Noticeable differences are visible between the graduate attribute rankings from a SA perspective compared with the ranking of Chase and Masberg (2008) (Figure 1).

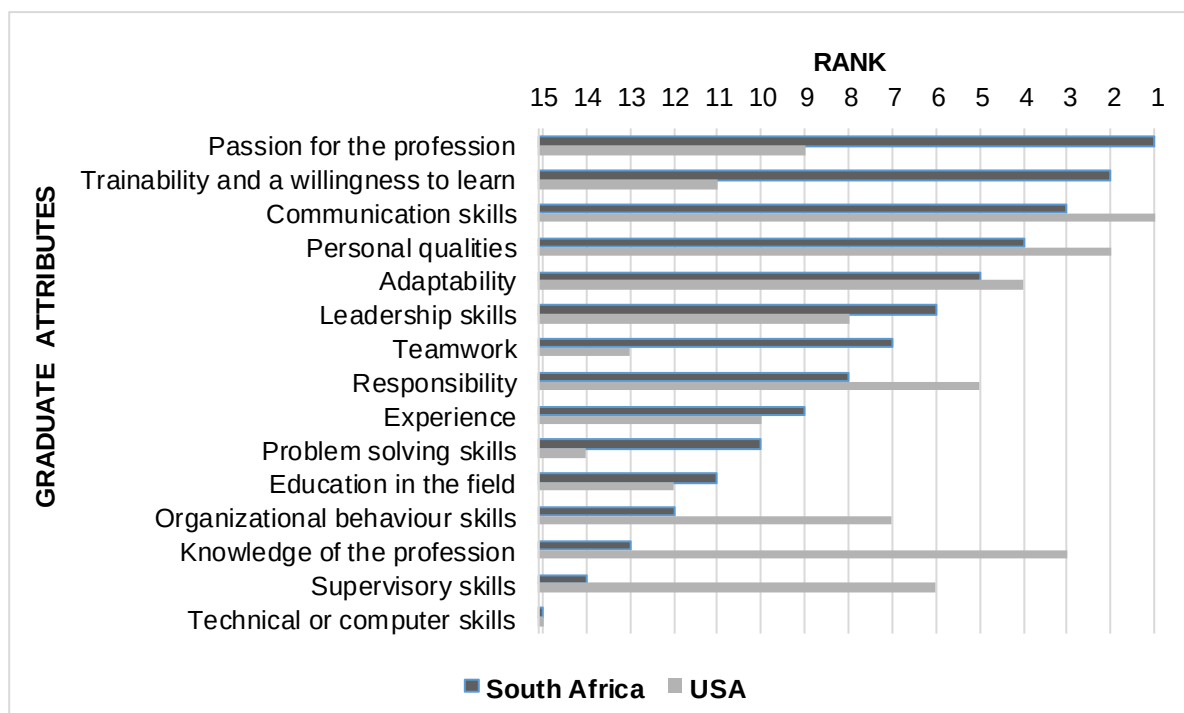


Figure 1: Comparison between ranked graduate attributes of South Africa and the United States of America (Graduate attributes added by the participants specifically for the SA context are not included)

“Passion for the profession” was ranked 1st from a SA perspective and 9th in the USA, the same for “trainability and a willingness to learn” (SA 2nd and USA 11th); “leadership skills” (SA 6th and USA 8th); “teamwork” (SA 7th and USA 13th); “experience” (SA 9th and USA 10th); “problem-solving skills” (SA 10th and USA 14th), and “education” (SA 11th and USA 12th), all ranked higher in SA than the USA. “Technical and computer skills” is the only graduate attribute that was ranked similarly (15th) from both perspectives.

DISCUSSION

Examining the top-ranked attributes, it is clear that personality and character play important roles in the hiring of recreation professionals. “Passion for the profession” (ranked 1st), “trainability and a willingness to learn” (ranked 2nd) and “personal qualities” (ranked 4th) clearly illustrate that employers are looking for certain personal qualities when hiring. This is underlined by (Stevens, 2014), who state that those working in the recreation profession have a strong passion for the field and are motivated by a sense of helping others, being outdoors, playing for life and entrepreneurship. This was also accentuated by a participant:

“Recreation work is about sharing an excitement and love for the outdoors. You need to have a passion for this if you are going to bring something meaningful to the work. This is not something you can teach people in training.”

Munge (2009) found that employers in the field of recreation similarly ranked “personal attributes” as the most important aspect when hiring. This result highlights the importance of ensuring that students in their first year already understand the profession and have the opportunity to examine themselves – their character and passions – to ensure that they are a fit for a career in recreation. Stevens (2014) state that “the key to unlocking your career path is matching your passions and personality to potential careers” (p.28).

Communication skills (ranked 3rd) were found to be one of the most important attributes in studies conducted on graduate attributes for recreation students. Hurd (2005), Chase and Masberg (2008), Fulthorp and D'Eloia (2015), D'Eloia and Fulthorp (2016), and Seaman, Bell, and Trauntvein (2017) all reported that communication is one of the most valuable skills favoured by employers in various recreation industries. Bell, Cragolini, Crebert, Patrick, and Bates (2003) focused on graduates working in the recreation field, and communication skills (oral and written) were some of the most mentioned skills needed in their careers. Communication skills not only include the traditional skills of reading, writing and speaking, but increasingly online communication and the use of social media (Chase & Masberg, 2008; Tulipane, 2015). Wells et al. (2012) accentuated the importance of writing skill,

as a part of written communication skills, as essential for recreation professionals, and that this skill must be developed over time. Irrespective of the recreation field in which recreation professionals work, communication with, listening to and dealing with customers and staff are essential communication skills for career success (D'Eloia & Fulthorp, 2016). This was also stated by a participant:

“Communication skills within a small organisation are key as you are responsible for multiple roles and interacting with various stakeholders. You need to be able to clearly articulate your needs, ideas and views as well as be able to listen.”

Although academic knowledge is not only beneficial but essential for a career in recreation, is it not ranked as extremely important for entry-level positions in SA, reflected by “education in the field” being ranked 11th and “knowledge of the profession” ranked 13th. Formal “education in the field” was also one of the attributes mentioned as potentially irrelevant in the SA context. These low rankings and perceptions suggest that the other attributes are more important when hiring entry-level professionals. This was emphasised by one of the participants, who stated:

“Our organization have an [sic] internal 3-month training programme that entry-level employees need to complete. Prior formal education in recreational work is helpful but not required.”

However, Peters (2011), as well as Mogajane (2014) more recently, clearly found a lack of adequately trained recreation professionals in SA. The lack of importance attached to knowledge and formal training might be the reason for the shortage of trained recreation professionals reported by the authors. When looking to advance to higher organisational levels, academic knowledge, education and experience become crucial (Chen & Gursoy, 2008). Having a degree at bachelor's level or higher leads to higher salaries for employees in the field (Seaman et al., 2017). Therefore, a focus on academic knowledge and the education of recreation students are critical components of developing the graduate attributes deemed essential by employers, to promote their employability.

Evaluating the recreation job market, Foley and Benest (1989) identified the need for graduates to be able to think entrepreneurial and create their own job opportunities as essential, and this is even more so for graduates in SA (Nicolaidis, 2011). Creativity is one of the cornerstones in entrepreneurship (Fillis & Rentschler, 2010) and might be why it is seen by the participants as an important attribute for addition to the list. SA has four distinct population groups, referred to as black African, coloured, Indian/Asian and white (Statistics South Africa, 2016), who function together on a daily basis, resulting in unique dynamics with the potential to develop into conflict situations easily (DuPraw & Axner, 1997; Tung, 2013). Shared use of recreation facilities by the different population groups can lead to recreation user conflict, which may explain the need to add conflict management as an attribute within the specific South African context. This was highlighted by a participant:

“Where competition and different communities are involved, conflict is a regular occurrence.”

In assessing the relevance of the given attributes, “experience” (ranked 9th) was identified as being irrelevant in SA by some participants, who recognised that SA graduates often come with little experience, as evidenced by their statements:

“Experience is built over time. Entry-level practitioners must learn from doing.”

“Within our NGO we would like our candidates to have an overall sense of communities but don't expect them to have studied it or worked in the field. Trainability, personality and willingness to learn are more important to us.”

This is in conflict with US-based research that accentuates the importance of experience for entry-level recreation professionals (Bell et al., 2003; D'Eloia & Fulthorp, 2016). D'Eloia and Fulthorp (2016) state that this experience can be through internships, employment or volunteer positions. It is expected of US students to complete an internship of no less than 400 hours or 10 weeks, to demonstrate their ability to succeed as a professional in the field of recreation before graduating (NRPA, 2018, October 2). In SA, there are no statutory requirements for working as

a recreation professional, thus students cannot be obligated to have experience. Furthermore, with recreation not perceived as a professional career, the importance of professional training and experience is not recognised. Despite a few participants suggesting that “experience” is irrelevant, it was placed in the final 10 highest-ranked attributes. However, a lack of importance attached to “experience” can be interpreted from two perspectives. Firstly, professionals in the industry do not perceive its importance, which may be the reason why there is little emphasis on internship at SA universities offering recreation degrees. Secondly, graduates may not have much experience and because organisations know this, they do not expect it from them. Therefore, SA universities need to consider placing more emphasis on compulsory internships as part of their recreation degree programmes or, alternatively, explore the use of experimental learning as a pedagogical approach, and work-integrated learning (WIL), throughout the degree programme.

When comparing the ranking of the graduate attributes from the SA perspective with the original US rankings published by Chase and Masberg (2008), prominent differences are noticeable. “Passion for the profession”, “trainability and a willingness to learn” and “teamwork” ranked considerably higher in SA than the USA. For the recreation job market in SA, a degree is often not required by companies for entry-level positions; this is in contrast with the USA, where a degree is usually a minimum requirement for employment as a recreation professional (NRPA, 2018, October 2). This might explain why it is so important to SA companies that their entry-level employees are passionate and trainable: they have yet to acquire all the relevant knowledge and therefore must want to be trained and be capable of functioning in a team. In contrast, in the USA “they want to be able to place graduates in positions of responsibility with minimal need for additional training” (Chen & Gursoy, 2008, p. 22).

The absence of a degree for some entry-level professionals in SA might be why “organisational behaviour skills”, “knowledge of the profession” and “supervisory skills” were ranked considerably lower in SA than in the USA. An entry-level recreation employee in SA is rarely responsible for management tasks such as supervision and organising, as these tasks are associated with more senior positions (Peters, 2011). Recreation graduates in SA are usually initially appointed full-time as activity instructors or sport and recreation officers, whereas in the USA these

positions would be part-time positions filled by high school or university students, where experience and university education is not required. In the USA, graduates are easily appointed to management positions at recreation centres, where entry-level positions involve organisational and supervisory tasks (Truity, 2018, October 27).

CONCLUSION

This study sought the input of experts throughout SA who employ entry-level recreation professionals, across all recreation service delivery sectors. The aim was to determine and rank the most desirable graduate attributes in students graduating and seeking first-time employment in the field of recreation in SA. After three Delphi rounds of data collection, consensus was reached on the most important graduate attributes required in recreation students entering the workforce, regardless of the sector or type of company in which they are employed.

Differences in expectations from SA graduates, compared with US graduates, were clear. However, these differences were less about the type of attributes required and more on their relative importance. “Communication skills”, “personal qualities” and “adaptability” were ranked in the top five for both countries. However, “passion for the profession” and “trainability and willingness to learn” were noticeably more important in SA. Thus it is clear what is expected of graduates entering recreation careers in SA, and therefore crucial that institutions preparing these students focus on these graduate attributes in their programmes, to enhance graduate employability. Hurd et al. (2014) found that the competencies that students lacked at the beginning of their careers were typically related to those concepts that they were exposed to in a lecture setting, with limited or no exposure to practical experiences. They stated that students need a way to put their classroom knowledge to practice, to gain self-confidence and feel prepared for their initial employment in the field (Hurd et al., 2014). It is therefore suggested that the experiential learning students are exposed to during their degree is expanded.

The greatest limitation of this study was that a US-based list of graduate attributes was used as the basis for the development of an SA-specific list. Although this manner of determining consensus is acceptable (Chia-Chien & Brian, 2007), for future research the use of information from other countries, for example, the United

Kingdom, Australia or eastern countries, should be additionally considered when developing a basic list of graduate attributes. A suggestion for further research is the evaluation of current recreation programmes, to determine the extent to which these attributes are addressed and provide guidance on how they can be incorporated within the programmes.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflicts of interest are reported by the authors.

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CHAPTER 4

Article 2

IMPROVING GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES BY IMPLEMENTING AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING TEACHING APPROACH: A CASE STUDY IN RECREATION EDUCATION

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This article was submitted for consideration for publication in the *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education (JOHLSTE)*. The article is presented here in accordance with the specific guidelines for the journal⁸. Exceptions were made for the prescribed margins, line-spacing and font to adhere to North-West University guidelines on keeping the uniformity of the thesis. Tables and figures are also included with the text to make the article easier to read and understand.

⁸ Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education instructions to authors included in Appendix A.

Improving graduate attributes by implementing an experiential learning teaching approach:

A case study in recreation education

Recreation graduates may lack some skills and competencies at the beginning of their careers. This may be related to passive learning settings with limited or no exposure to practical experiences during training. To gain the required competencies, students need to be exposed to active learning processes. The focus of this study was to establish if an experiential learning teaching approach, implemented in a recreation degree programme, could develop students' graduate attributes. A holistic, single-case case-study design employing a convergent parallel mixed method pre–post-test design was used. An adapted Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model (TCELM) was applied in a final-year recreation module at a higher education institution. The Review of Personal Effectiveness and Locus of Control (ROPELOC) questionnaire and a self-report competency assessment survey were completed by 28 students at the beginning and end of the semester. Qualitative data included student reflections and focus group interviews. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and inductive coding. The ROPELOC revealed statistically significant improvement in students' leadership skills ($p=0.04$) and their overall effectiveness ($p=0.01$). Research skills ($p=0.00$), adaptability ($p=0.00$), leadership skills ($p=0.00$), personal qualities ($p=0.02$) and knowledge of the profession ($p=0.00$) were competencies that improved significantly over the semester. From the qualitative data, several categories linked to graduate attributes required by recreation professionals emerged. Knowledge of the profession was the most mentioned category. These results support the view that an experiential learning teaching approach is beneficial in the preparation of recreation graduates, and should form the teaching foundation for recreation in higher education.

KEYWORDS: experiential learning, graduate attributes, higher education, recreation, teaching and learning.

INTRODUCTION

“Experiential learning stimulates original thinking and develops a wide range of thinking strategies and perceptual skills which are not called forth by books or lectures”

Williams (1983, p. 170).

When reflecting on 13 years of teaching experience, the author observed that many lecturers still mainly rely on books and lectures to teach students in practical fields such as recreation. This is despite a call for a more experiential approach to teaching more than three decades ago (Williams, 1983). Hurd, Elkins, and Beggs (2014) found that the competencies recreation students lacked at the beginning of their careers were typically related to those concepts that they were exposed to in a lecture setting with limited or no exposure to practical experiences, while the competencies they were more confident about were the ones they had “out-of-class” experience in. This experiential learning approach is supported by Fisher, Sharp, and Bradley (2017) who stated that not all skills needed by recreation professionals can be achieved through academic curricula in a classroom setting. Hurd et al. (2014), as well as Fisher et al. (2017), suggest that students need a way to put their classroom knowledge into practice and enhance their mastery of the curriculum, therefore improving their preparation for employment in the field. Consequently, experiential learning as a teaching approach can play a vital part in warranting just that.

Learning, viewed from an experiential perspective, is seen as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). Emphasis is placed on a transformation process in which knowledge is continuously created and recreated and not acquired or transmitted (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Schwartz (2015) explains experiential learning as learning through doing, with reflection forming a critical part in the success of the learning process. It is important for students to have the opportunity to reflect on their experience, analyse and query the current situation and think critically about the implications for future experiences (Hedin, 2010; Monk, 2013). Experiential learning mimics the real world, with varied and unpredictable outcomes, encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning (Schwartz, 2015).

Numerous studies investigating the use of experiential learning as a teaching approach in recreation education have been conducted (i.e. Delamere, 2007; Heintzman, 2005;

Kucharewski, 2002; McCormick, Holland, & Szydlo, 2010; Wolfe & Green, 2006). For example, Delamere (2007) used experiential learning in a therapeutic recreation module by having students use wheelchairs in class for a simulation of disabilities. She reported that students showed a more complex understanding of the reality of a person with disabilities and being disabled (Delamere, 2007). McCormick et al. (2010) reported on the use of videos on current or future trends in leisure, which students had to produce and share on YouTube. This developed critical thinking skills, creativity and technological knowledge and enabled students to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter (McCormick et al., 2010). Heintzman (2005) showed how different experiential learning activities in a class on spirituality and leisure encouraged students to self-explore the course content. All these studies mentioned how several competencies needed by recreation professionals were improved. However, in these studies experiential learning activities were only implemented for certain parts of a module, and none reported on the implementation of an experiential learning-teaching model throughout the entire recreation module. Wolfe and Green (2006) recommended that experiential learning should form the basis of all recreation modules to ensure that not only the necessary knowledge is taught, but that students also develop the necessary skills and competencies needed for employment, and that this needs further investigation.

The field of recreation presents a unique set of challenges for academic institutions because of its diversity (Hurd et al., 2014), which requires a wide range of knowledge and skills from graduates for them to excel in their career. Students must experience various elements to gain the required competencies and this cannot be done through theoretical classes and textbooks alone (Coetzee, Bloemhoff, & Naude, 2011). Depending on their focus within recreation, the academic knowledge required will differ, but the skills and competency (graduate attributes) needed by recreation professionals are mostly generic. Graduate attributes are defined by Bowden (as quoted by Barrie, 2006) as “the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution” (p. 217). Research done by Schreck, Weilbach, and Reitsma⁹ (2019) identified and ranked in order of importance the graduate attributes expected of South African (SA) recreation graduates (Table 1).

⁹ Chapter 3 (Article 1: Preparing recreation professionals: Graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals in a South African context) of thesis, pp 53 – 76.

**Table 1: South African graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals
(adapted from Schreck et al., 2019)**

RANK	GRADUATE ATTRIBUTE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
1	Passion for the profession	Enthusiasm, passion, dedication, commitment, interest in recreation.
2	Trainability and a willingness to learn	Eagerness to learn, able to follow directions, accuracy.
3	Communication skills	Strong verbal and written communication skills, listening skills, customer service, presentation skills.
4	Personal qualities	People orientated, enthusiastic, patient, fun, practical, common sense, good attitude, ambitious, energetic, ability to form relationships.
5	Adaptability	Adaptable, flexible, multi-tasking.
6	Leadership skills	Leadership skills, initiative, motivate.
7	Teamwork	Able to function successfully in a team.
8	Responsibility	Responsible, reliable, has good judgement, follows through, work ethic, integrity, accountable, mature.
9	Experience	Experience, job, internship.
10	Problem-solving skills	Problem solving and critical analysis.
11	Education in the field	Degree in relevant field.
12	Organisational behaviour skills	People skills, overall organisational behaviour.
13	Knowledge of the profession	Knowledge of field, including needs assessment, finances, marketing, programming, risk management, maintenance etc.
14	Creativity	Think out of the box, creative, innovative.
15	Ability to work with groups	Lead different groups in variety of activities.
16	Supervisory skills	Organisation, time management, general management.
17	Conflict management	Manage persons with different personalities and resolve conflict situations.
18	Technical or computer skills	Necessary skills.

Being prepared for an entry-level position requires having the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics, or graduate attributes, to be successful (Hurd et al., 2014). Focusing on improving these graduate attributes can improve students' employability, which is an individual's ability to gain and maintain employment (Van der Klink et al., 2016). Therefore, the focus of higher education institutions should be on developing the

essential knowledge and graduate attributes of students to ensure they can enter the career of their choice (Chen & Gursoy, 2008). Furthermore, higher education institutions should ensure that knowledge and graduate attributes are mastered by students during their academic preparation. To achieve this, higher education institutions may consider utilising a different approach to teaching, such as experiential learning, to benefit students.

Based on the above, the questions posed in this study were: Does an experiential learning teaching approach, implemented in a recreation module, improve students' graduate attributes, potentially making them more employable after graduation? If so, what graduate attributes are improved? The results of this study were intended to be used to help with determining the best pedagogical approach for lecturers in recreation education and provide insight in ways to better prepare recreation graduates for employment.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

An adapted version of the Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model (TCELM), developed by Bergsteiner and Avery (2014), was used as the pedagogical foundation for the case study. The TCELM can engage the learner both in an active as well as a passive way, while still guaranteeing learning through doing and ensuring that through its application, recreation modules are approached on an experiential learning basis. The TCELM (Figure 1) consists of two learning cycles: one for concrete, active, primary (CAP) learning (stages 1 to 4), and one for abstract, passive, secondary (APS) learning (stages i to iv).

For formal learning the learner will embark on either the CAP or APS cycle, or a combination thereof. The cycle would normally start at 1/i, common to both formal learning cycles (CAP and APS). Here the learner responds to a learning situation, making either a spontaneous decision or an initial response to a learning situation in 4/iv. During this stage, learners engage in behaviour such as observation, information gathering, assimilation of information, reflection and evaluation. This is then followed by either stages 2–3 or ii–iii. The final stage (4/iv) is “having an experience” and also the start of the next learning cycle (Bergsteiner & Avery, 2014).

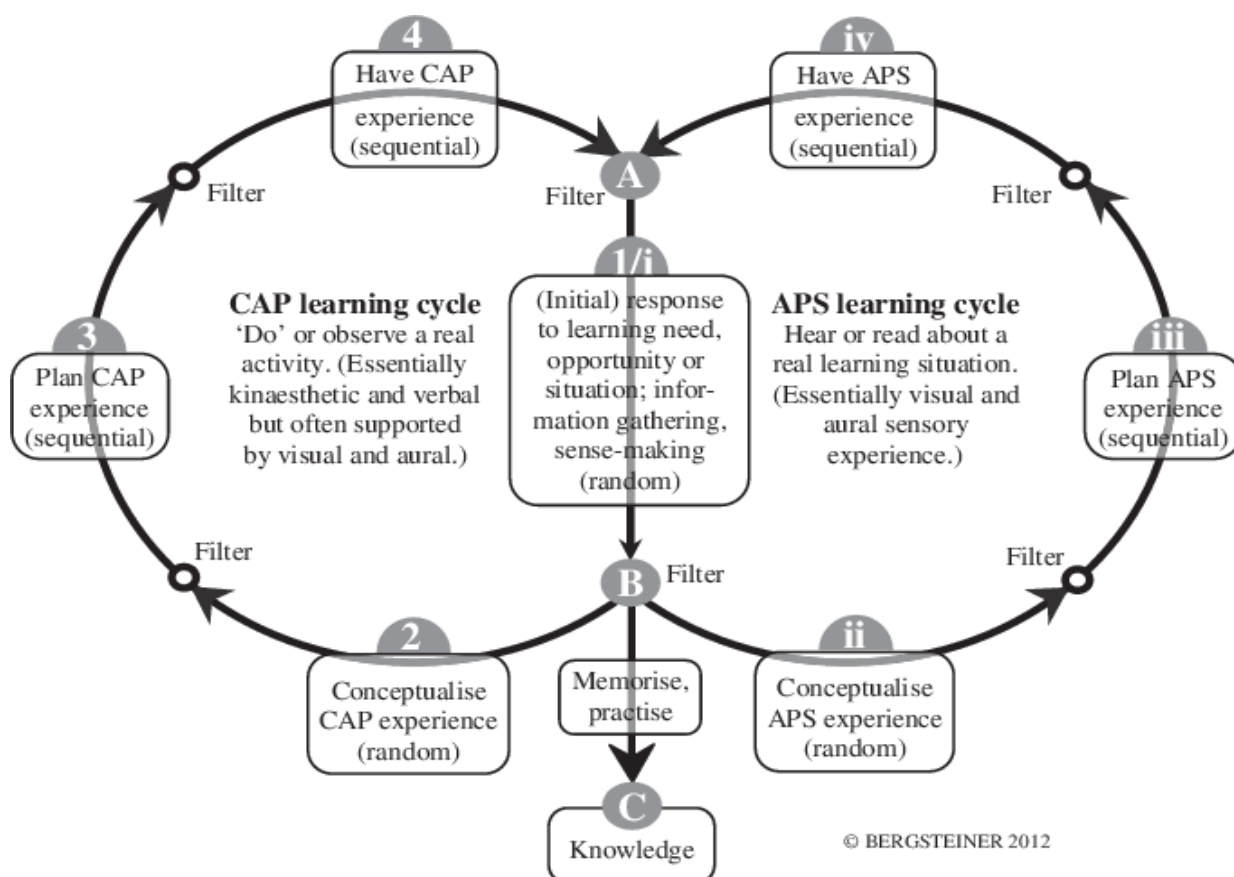


Figure 1: The Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model (TCELM) developed by Bergsteiner and Avery (2014)¹⁰

Although there are various experiential learning models available (Priest & Gass, 2005), the TCELM provides the opportunity to present class-based (using the APS cycle) as well as practical (using the CAP cycle) recreation learning activities within the same experiential learning framework and is, therefore, the model of choice.

METHODS

Study design

A holistic, single-case case-study design was used (Baxter & Jack, 2008), employing a convergent parallel mixed method, pre-post-test design as proposed by Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017), to triangulate results. Written ethical approval¹¹ was obtained from the health research ethics committee of the university where the study was conducted as well as written permission¹² from the institution to conduct the research.

¹⁰ Permission letter for use of figure included in Appendix B.

¹¹ Letter of ethical approval included in Appendix B.

¹² Institution approval letter included in Appendix B.

Participants

A teaching approach utilising experiential learning was implemented in a final-year recreation module at a higher education institution. Purposive sampling was used to select a module lectured by the researcher, to ensure implementation as planned. Participation in the teaching-learning activities was compulsory for all students forming part of normal learning opportunities and studies. All students enrolled in the module (N=36) were invited to take part in the specific data gathering activities related to the research, thus making use of an availability sample. Participation in research activities, however, was totally voluntary and students were able to withdraw from the research at any time. Thirty-three students volunteered to participate and completed all the measuring instruments during the pre-test, but only 28 of these participants also completed all the required measuring instruments for the post-test. Since comparative data between the pre- and post-test was used, only data of participants that completed both rounds of testing were included in the data analysis, resulting in an 84% response rate.

Measuring instruments and methods

The qualitative and quantitative research methods and instruments were used concurrently to collect data for the case study are further described in this section.

Review of personal effectiveness using locus of control questionnaire

The Review of Personal Effectiveness and Locus of Control (ROPELOC) questionnaire¹³, developed over a period of 17 years specifically for the field of recreation (Richards, Ellis, & Neill, 2002), was utilised. The ROPELOC is designed to be perceptive to changes in experience-based programmes and measure important psychological and behaviour fields that represent life effectiveness. The instrument consists of 45 questions in 14 subscales (Table 2), answered on an 8-point Likert scale with 1 being “false/not like me” and 8 being “true/like me”. It has a built in control scale to ensure that changes reported are as a result of the intervention and not due to retesting (Richards et al., 2002). The questionnaire had a Cronbach alpha value of between 0.66 and 0.95, with an average internal reliability of 0.85, which was similar to that reported by the developers (Richards et al., 2002). This questionnaire has been validated for the SA context and is widely used to determine personal effectiveness and locus of control (Greffrath, Meyer, Strydom, & Ellis, 2011). The factors of the ROPELOC

¹³ ROPELOC questionnaire included in Appendix D.

(as seen in Table 2) are to a certain degree similar to some of the reported graduate attributes of Schreck et al. (2019).

Table 2: ROPELOC subscales (adapted from Richards et al., 2002)

FACTOR (subscale)	DESCRIPTION
Active involvement	Use action and energy to make things happen.
Coping with change	The ability to cope with change.
Cooperative teamwork	Cooperation in team situations.
Leadership ability	Leadership capability.
Overall effectiveness	The overall effectiveness of a person in all aspects of life.
Open thinking	Openness and adaptability in thinking and ideas.
Quality seeking	Puts effort into achieving the best possible results.
Self-confidence	Confidence and belief in personal ability to be successful.
Social effectiveness	Competence and effectiveness in communicating and operating in social situations.
Self-efficacy	Ability to handle things and find solutions in difficult situations.
Stress management	Self-control and calmness in stressful situations.
Time efficiency	Efficient planning and utilisation of time.
Internal locus of control	Taking internal responsibility for actions and success.
External locus of control	Accepting that external issues control or determine success.

Competency assessment survey

A self-report competency assessment survey¹⁴, focusing on the important graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals in SA, was developed by the researcher and used in this study. The self-report survey consisted of 56 questions that were answered on a 4-point Likert scale (1: poor; 4: excellent). Students had to answer each question in terms of their practical experience in a certain competency.

As seen in Table 3, the questions were divided into 13 predetermined factors (subscales) in accordance with the graduate attributes needed by recreation graduates in SA. Some questions were included individually and did not represent part of a specific factor. Participants' practical experiences were measured for all factors and individual questions. The survey was found to have a Cronbach alpha value between 0.57 and 0.85, with an average internal reliability of 0.70. Although 0.57 is classified as

¹⁴ Self-report competency assessment survey included in Appendix D.

moderate reliability, it is still deemed acceptable with a small sample, such as in this case (Hinton, McMurray, & Brownlow, 2004).

Table 3: Competency assessment survey factors (author's compilation)

FACTOR	DESCRIPTION
Communication skills	Verbal and written communication skills, customer service, self-presentation.
Conflict management	Management of persons with different personalities and conflict resolution.
Creativity	Creative and innovative.
Knowledge of the profession	Knowledge of field, including needs assessment, finances, marketing, programming, risk management, maintenance, etc.
Leadership skills	Leadership skills, initiative, motivation, constructive criticism.
Organisational behaviour skills	People skills and overall organisational behaviour.
Passion for the profession	Enthusiasm, passion, dedication, commitment, interest in recreation.
Personal qualities	People orientated, enthusiastic, patient, fun, practical, positive attitude, compassion, ambitious, energetic.
Problem-solving skills	Problem solving, critical analysis and common sense.
Responsibility	Responsible, reliable, has good judgement, follows through, work ethic, integrity, accountable, mature.
Supervisory skills	Organisation, time management, general management, multi-tasking.
Teamwork	Able to function successfully in a team, able to form relationships, listen, follow others and be trustworthy.
Technical or computer skills	Technical and computer skills.
INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS	DESCRIPTION
Adaptable and flexible	Adaptable, flexible, creative, and able to multi-task.
Learn	Willingness to learn, able to follow directions, accuracy.
Open-mindedness	Open to other ideas and concepts.
Plan	Planning skills.
Research	Ability to do research, understand basic research concepts.

Focus group interviews and guided student reflections

Three focus group interviews (n=5; n=5; n=4) were conducted with available participants at the end of the semester and lasted between 80 and 100 minutes each. Participants completed six guided reflections (n=33; n=33; n=33; n=31; n=33; n=30) throughout the semester based on their experience of the experiential learning teaching approach used in the module and how it related to their graduate attributes.

Data gathering

The case study spanned the whole of the second semester (July–November) in the final year of a three-year recreation degree at a higher education institution in SA. The main focus of the module was on recreation service delivery, providing students with an opportunity to integrate all their previous academic work in a single project. The overall outcome of this module was for students to be able to practically apply the skills and knowledge gained of the recreation profession to a project. The focus of the module was specifically on the understanding of key recreation concepts and processes; scientific inquiry regarding leisure needs and the analysis, evaluation and synthesis of the information and the application thereof; accurate and coherent communication; and the ability to act as a group member and group leader to successfully complete a recreation project (Schreck, 2018).

The module had eight credits (80 notional hours) and continued for 14 weeks, with three contact sessions (3 hours and 45 minutes) per week. The class was divided into “project groups” with five to six members per group. Each member in the group was assigned a specific management role such as programme manager, finance manager or marketing manager, and was responsible for various tasks related to their specific role. As a group, they were in control of an entire project, from the planning to the implementation and evaluation, with each member taking responsibility for their part within the project. Nearly half of the contact sessions were spent in a classroom setting focusing on theory, its application and the planning of the projects. The other half were spent in a practical setting presenting recreation programmes to clients, i.e. the implementation of the projects.

During the first week of class, students were informed of the research project and given the opportunity to take part in research-specific activities throughout the semester. Students signed an informed consent form and were then asked to complete the ROPELOC, as well as the self-report competency assessment survey, online at the

beginning and end of the semester. The guided reflections¹⁵ were completed on paper during the semester directly after each study unit.

At the end of the semester, after classes ended, focus group interviews were conducted. The researcher facilitated the interviews and an independent researcher was present as an assistant during the interviews. The role of the assistant was to take notes and handle logistics, to enable the researcher to focus on conducting the interviews (Krueger, 1998). A confidentiality agreement was signed by the assistant. Data saturation was evident after the second interview, after which a third interview was conducted to confirm data saturation (Wong, 2008). An interview schedule¹⁶, based on expected graduate attributes for recreation professions as reported by Schreck et al. (2019), was used to provide a framework of questions and probes to increase the comprehensiveness and efficiency of data collection (Wong, 2008).

Data analysis

ROPELOC questionnaire and self-report competency assessment survey

The data were processed with SPSS, version 22. Paired sample t-test, as well as practical significance (Cohen's d values) were used to compare the pre- and post-test scores of the ROPELOC and the self-report competency assessment survey, to determine the statistical and practical significance of the results. Effect sizes were interpreted according to the scale prescribed for educational research by Cohen, Morrison and Manion (2011).

Focus group interviews and analysis of student reflections

Data collection and analysis occurs concurrently in qualitative research, in an attempt to understand the meaning people assign to their experiences (Pitney & Parker, 2009). For this study, data analysis for focus group interviews and the document analysis were conducted by adopting Yin's five-phased cycle: compiling; disassembling; reassembling and arraying; interpreting; and concluding (Yin, 2011). The focus group interviews were voice recorded; thereafter they were transcribed by the researcher. Computer assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) software ATLAS.ti 7, version 8.2.32 was used to assist the researcher in analysing the various focus group interviews and documents. The guided reflections and interview transcripts were inductively coded by the researcher, after which they were co-coded by an independent researcher. The

¹⁵ An example of the guided reflection questions is included in Appendix D.

¹⁶ Focus group interview schedule included in Appendix D.

researcher and co-coder discussed the codes and consensus was reached on the various codes. Afrikaans quotes used were translated verbatim to English.

RESULTS

The quantitative results of the sample paired t-test, as well as the effect sizes for the ROPELOC and the competency assessment survey, are presented respectively in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4: ROPELOC questionnaire results

ROPELOC factors	N	Pre-test mean ±SD	Post-test mean ±SD	p	Cohen's d
Active involvement	28	7.00 ±1.04	7.00 ±1.23	1.00	0
Coping with change	28	5.93 ±1.46	6.18 ±1.56	0.23	0.16
Cooperative teamwork	28	6.36 ±1.23	6.24 ±1.53	0.54	0.08
Leadership ability	28	6.54 ±1.40	6.90 ±1.26	0.04*	0.26 (s)
Overall effectiveness	28	6.17 ±1.19	6.64 ±1.35	0.01*	0.35 (s)
Open thinking	28	6.90 ±0.92	7.10 ±0.90	0.14	0.21 (s)
Quality seeking	28	7.26 ±0.98	7.24 ±0.98	0.86	0.02
Self-confidence	28	6.76 ±1.15	6.99 ±1.05	0.17	0.20 (s)
Social effectiveness	28	5.85 ±1.27	6.32 ±1.50	0.31	0.32 (s)
Self-efficacy	28	6.30 ±1.13	6.50 ±1.32	0.13	0.15
Stress management	28	5.76 ±1.49	6.07 ±1.34	0.19	0.21 (s)
Time efficiency	28	5.76 ±1.50	5.93 ±1.55	0.46	0.12
Internal locus of control	28	7.17 ±0.79	7.39 ±0.76	0.06	0.29 (s)
External locus of control	28	3.19 ±1.21	2.85 ±1.45	0.12	0.24 (s)
* = statistical significance ($p \leq 0.05$) s = small practical significance ($d = 0.21 - 0.5$)					

ROPELOC, Review of Personal Effectiveness and Locus of Control; SD, standard deviation.

Statistically significant improvement occurred in the students' leadership skills ($p = 0.04$) as well as their overall effectiveness ($p = 0.01$). Small practically significant results were reported for some of the ROPELOC factors (open thinking, self-confidence, social

effectiveness, stress management, internal as well as external locus of control) and these were deemed imperceptible in practice.

Table 5: Competency assessment survey results

Competency assessment factors	N	Pre-test mean $\pm$ SD	Post-test mean $\pm$ SD	p	Cohen's d
Communication skills	28	2.95 $\pm$ 0.70	3.23 $\pm$ 0.60	0.03*	0.40 (s)
Conflict management	28	2.93 $\pm$ 0.77	3.23 $\pm$ 0.78	0.06	0.40 (s)
Creativity	28	3.07 $\pm$ 0.81	3.27 $\pm$ 0.62	0.13	0.24 (s)
Knowledge of the profession	28	2.52 $\pm$ 0.65	3.11 $\pm$ 0.54	0.00*	0.90 (l)
Leadership skills	28	2.88 $\pm$ 0.59	3.24 $\pm$ 0.58	0.00*	0.62 (m)
Organisational behaviour skills	28	2.79 $\pm$ 0.77	3.05 $\pm$ 0.89	0.10	0.30 (s)
Passion for the profession	28	3.18 $\pm$ 0.64	3.45 $\pm$ 0.61	0.01*	0.42 (s)
Personal qualities	28	3.01 $\pm$ 0.60	3.29 $\pm$ 0.50	0.02*	0.46 (s)
Problem-solving skills	28	3.06 $\pm$ 0.51	3.44 $\pm$ 0.49	0.00*	0.74 (m)
Responsibility	28	3.32 $\pm$ 0.48	3.52 $\pm$ 0.43	0.08	0.41 (s)
Supervisory skills	28	2.83 $\pm$ 0.68	3.26 $\pm$ 0.53	0.00*	0.63 (m)
Teamwork	28	3.14 $\pm$ 0.58	3.41 $\pm$ 0.62	0.01*	0.44 (s)
Technical or computer skills	28	3.02 $\pm$ 0.73	3.36 $\pm$ 0.59	0.00*	0.47 (s)
Adaptable and flexible	28	3.00 $\pm$ 0.67	3.50 $\pm$ 0.58	0.00*	0.75 (m)
Learn	28	3.25 $\pm$ 0.70	3.57 $\pm$ 0.63	0.07	0.46 (s)
Open-mindedness	28	3.18 $\pm$ 0.61	3.43 $\pm$ 0.69	0.17	0.36 (s)
Plan	28	3.00 $\pm$ 0.86	3.43 $\pm$ 0.69	0.00*	0.50 (s)
Research	28	2.46 $\pm$ 1.00	3.29 $\pm$ 0.81	0.00*	0.83 (l)
* = statistical significance ($p \leq 0.05$) s = small practical significance ($d=0.2-0.5$) m = medium practical significance ($d=0.51-0.8$) l = large practical significance ($d=0.81-1.0$)					

SD, standard deviation.

In terms of the competency assessment data, medium to large practically significant results were found for knowledge of the profession ($p=0.90$), leadership skills ($p=0.62$), problem-solving skills ($p=0.74$), supervisory skills ($p=0.63$), adaptability ($p=0.75$) and research (0.83). Statistically significant results were found for research skills ($p=0.00$),

adaptability and flexibility ($p=0.0$), technical and computer skills ($p=0.04$; $p=0.0$), problem-solving (0.0), knowledge of the profession ($p=0.0$), planning ($p=0.0$), teamwork ($p=0.01$), supervisory skills ($p=0.0$), personal qualities ($p=0.02$), passion for the profession ($p=0.01$), leadership skills ($p=0.0$) and communication skills ($p=0.03$).

Analysis of the qualitative data from the focus group interviews and the student reflections focused on what the students gained in terms of new or improved learning. Several categories linked in some way to the needed graduate attributes for recreation professionals in SA (Table 1) emerged. These categories were condensed into two broad themes (Table 6). Theme 1 is *graduate attributes that were directly identified*, and theme 2 *graduate attributes that were related, but not directly mentioned, thus implied*. The categories were ordered according to the number of times the category was mentioned by the participants. Specific knowledge or its application was mentioned the most and taking responsibility was mentioned the least by the participants. Theme 1 and theme 2 are connected (indicated by the arrow in Table 6), with the subthemes identified in theme 2 relating to the subthemes identified in theme 1.

Table 6: Qualitative results: Themes emergent from qualitative data analysis with samples of supportive quotes (author's own compilation) *continue*

THEME 1 Graduate attributes directly identified (with sample quotes)	 THEME 2 Graduate attributes implied (with sample quotes)
Knowledge of the profession "Also the advancement of recreation. So, not a lot of people that study with me, actually know what recreation is. People, who do recreation, but don't know what recreation is. This [the module] is a good learning point to teach them what recreation is about, this is what you are doing in recreation."	Application of knowledge "I have learned how to apply all the knowledge I have gained over the years."
Organisational behaviour skills "I think organising too. For me this is a very big thing because I'm very disorganised with my paperwork and so on. So, to be organised required a lot from me and I improved ... it is much better than it used to be."	Planning skills "I never actually planned. And with this I had to plan, otherwise you would fall behind and your stuff will not work out as it should. So that's what I've learned." Administrative skills "So for me I enjoyed it and I learned a lot, administration-wise." Prioritising "I saw I will have to prioritise better." Professionalism "I learned how to behave professionally, not emotionally – rational." Goal setting "I learned how to set goals, because I struggled with all the work and my other subjects."

continued

Table 6: Qualitative results: Themes emergent from qualitative data analysis with samples of supportive quotes (author's own compilation) (*continued*)

THEME 1 Graduate attributes directly identified (with sample quotes)	 THEME 2 Graduate attributes implied (with sample quotes)
Personal qualities "I also agree with the self-confidence; I also was a quiet person. And suddenly I have to talk to people with whom I would not normally speak, and I have to explain to them..."	Self-knowledge "...and I could tell where I lack and the things I was good at. And it helped me build on the things that I sucked at." Stress management "...how to work under stress, how to think on your feet, even those little things too."
Communication skills "And I feel it is something you learn very quickly, you learn it very quickly and you also learn communication. So if you can't work with the person, you have to communicate in another way, by demonstrating something. If you don't demonstrate it, how are you going to do it?"	
Supervisory skills "I learned how to make sure that everyone was doing their job."	Time management "I learned extra time management by having to coordinate a team through meetings."
Teamwork "For group work, remember you couldn't pick your friends, you had to work with someone you might not like. But you had to adjust so that you, as a group, function better. As I was with people with whom I have never worked with in a group. We did very well; at the end I think we fit together. We blended very well, so group work stands out for me in the module."	
Ability to work with groups "I will say I also learned how to handle difficult participants..."	Instructor skills "How to be an instructor, and make adjustments."
Adaptability "Like to be able to adjust quickly if something goes wrong in that moment or on that day, you have to think of something so fast to replace it, without anyone realising something went wrong."	
Problem-solving skills "We experienced problems during our first programme and it was good to see how it improved."	
Trainability "If you like something you will be positive and look forward to learn[ing] something."	
Leadership skills "In some situations it was necessary to take the lead."	
Conflict management "... and it was half because we had conflict ... we had to sort it out. For example, we fought a lot in the group, but it was sorted out that night because we knew, okay, there could be conflict and we can now be annoyed with each other but it has to be sorted out because we have to present this programme and we need good marks. So I feel it has improved my conflict management skills."	

continued

Table 6: Qualitative results: Themes emergent from qualitative data analysis with samples of supportive quotes (author’s own compilation) (*continued*)

THEME 1 Graduate attributes directly identified (with sample quotes)  THEME 2 Graduate attributes implied (with sample quotes)	
Creativity “... and the practical part is of course just again you have to learn to be creative, now you can not only duplicate the theoretical scenario you have to do it in another way.”	
Passion of the profession “I have developed an even greater love for recreation because everything makes sense...”	
Technical skills “I used new [computer] programmes to get the work done.”	Mathematical skills “My technical and mathematical skills [improved].”
Experience “The presentation of our programme improved my experience.”	
Responsibility “Each manager had certain responsibilities.”	

DISCUSSION

This article reported on the graduate attributes relevant to the recreation profession developed by third-year students during an experiential learning module. The graduate attributes that showed significant improvement within the overall quantitative data and were highlighted numerous times by the participants in the qualitative data and are discussed in accordance with the list of graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals as reported by Schreck et al. (2019). These include “knowledge of the profession”, “personal qualities”, “leadership skills” and “communication skills”.

Knowledge of the profession

In terms of the graduate attribute “knowledge of the profession”, it is clear from the qualitative and quantitative data that significant improvements occurred, as underlined by this participant stating: *“This [the module] is a good learning point to teach them what recreation is about, this is what you are doing in recreation.”* The context of these improvements were highlighted by the guided reflections of students when asked to describe what they learned in the past week: *“...how to develop questions of importance [for a needs assessment], how to develop a budget, and how to apply a marketing mix”*. Additionally, a comment from the focus groups showed how students were introduced to the reality of the profession and realised the importance of being able to apply their

knowledge: *“I have learned that you can work something out theoretically but it is not the same when you present it.”* From the above, it is clear that not only knowledge but also experience in terms of the specific graduate attribute were improved. These improvements were evidently supported by the competency assessment survey that showed significant improvement in the practical experience of students’ “knowledge of the profession”. This is supported by Fisher et al. (2017) who found that an experiential learning component as part of a recreation degree “helps connect the information and skills learned in the classroom to professional issues, scenarios, and tasks” (p. 195). The authors further reported that it helped students to gain a better understanding of the theory of the course (Fisher et al., 2017). Rosier et al. (2016) motivated for the value of experiential learning by stating that it provides students with the opportunity to apply academic skills and knowledge that enable them to see the relevance of their career field. This notion was also express by one participant: *“Yes and they asked me in my marketing presentation ‘what is recreation?’; then I told them ... ‘that’s what you do in your leisure time’ and such things, but actually I still didn’t know. But now I know what it’s all about. I think this subject opens your door to know what’s going on.”*

Personal qualities

A great deal has been written about which personal qualities are needed by recreation professionals (i.e. Chase & Masberg, 2008; Fulthorp & D'Eloia, 2015; Hurd et al., 2014; Munge, 2009). Mostly similar qualities were reported, including a positive attitude, enthusiasm, patience, people skills, adaptability and self-confidence, among others. Authors reporting on the benefits of experiential learning in higher education repeatedly refer to personal qualities being improved (Coetzee et al., 2011; Fisher et al., 2017; Lin, Kim, Qiu, & Ren, 2017; Spanjaard, Hall, & Stegemann, 2018) and the data from this study supported their findings. The quantitative measurements showed statistically significant improvement in the participants’ personal qualities and ability to adapt and be flexible (competency assessment) and their overall effectiveness (ROPELOC), and this can be seen as an umbrella measurement for personal qualities.

Reflections written by the students gave more insight into what these improvements were: *“optimism”, “enthusiasm”, “positivity”, “patience”, “dedication”, “working under pressure”, “endurance”, “self-confidence”, “adaptability”, “consideration for others”, and “self-discipline”*. The participants also realised what personal qualities they had and still needed, as mentioned during the interviews: *“We learned more about ourselves, what*

we can and cannot do...". When asked what resulted in these improvements, the practical component (experiential learning) of the module was underscored, as explained by participant A, who stated that: "You have to talk to people, like strangers arrive there. You don't know those people coming in and then you have to talk to them. So it is bad, you have to be very confident ... as there has been a shy girl in our group and she was confident and she spoke, and she went on." Similarly, participant B highlighted the importance of the practical experience: *"I think with the implementation you also get to know your group members better ... you can see more what kind of personalities they actually have, and how they react in situations and so, how to get along in a later stage."*

Leadership skills

A recreation professional cannot operate in isolation, as effective coordination of a number of people, including staff and participants is constantly needed (Coetzee et al., 2011), making leadership skills indispensable. This was also echoed by the participants, who clearly demonstrated the need for motivation: *"...here I also learned a lot about how to work together and how to motivate people"*, and sacrifice *"I learned how to make sacrifices and to take everyone's opinions into consideration"*, statements that both demonstrate essential leadership skills.

Leadership skills showed substantial development in both quantitative measures, with significant changes to p and d values. In contrast to this, Coetzee et al. (2011) found in their research that leadership skills was one of the few needed competencies of recreation professionals that did not improve after involvement in an experiential learning module. The authors reasoned that a module need to be specifically designed to address these skills (Coetzee et al., 2011). In terms of the current study, the fact that the students were assigned specific management roles and were required to take lead during specific parts of the module might explain why leadership skills measurably improved. When asked why the participants thought their leadership skills had improved, their answers were clear, making statements such as *"we all had an opportunity to take the lead"* and *"each manager had certain responsibilities"*. These results highlighted the importance of structuring an experiential learning approach in a way that gives students practical experience in the needed graduate attributes.

Communication skills

For the past 20 years, communication skills, including speaking, presenting, listening and writing skills, has been identified as one of the most important graduate attributes needed by campus recreation professionals (Beggs, Butts, Hurd, & Elkins, 2018), municipal recreation professionals (Fulthorp & D'Eloia, 2015), therapeutic recreation professionals (Austin & Lee, 2013) and commercial recreation professionals (Hammersley & Tynon, 1998). Recent research in SA has also found communication skills to be one of the top three graduate attributes needed by students starting a career in recreation (Schreck et al., 2019).

The study results indicate significant improvement in communication skills, with students referring to improved writing, listening and presentation skills. However, participants not only improved their communication skills, but also realised the importance of them in a practical setting, as is evident in the words of participant C: *“So consideration and patience definitely go together with that [learning] and then communication, but the way you communicate”* and participant D: *“...communication is important between members in the group”*. These findings are variously supported by research across disciplines that has reported on an improvement in communication skills as a result of experiential learning activities (i.e. Lefevre, 2017; Murphy, Wilson, & Greenberg, 2017; Wolden, Anderson, & Ray, 2019), accentuating the importance of experiential learning as part of a recreation degree to enable students to gain the needed practical experience for successful employment.

CONCLUSION

The TCELM developed by Bergsteiner and Avery (2014) was applied in a recreation module where students had to work in teams during a practical project. The module focused on integrating theory with practice through experiential learning. The intention of the study was to determine if an experiential learning teaching approach implemented in a recreation module improved students' graduate attributes, thus making them more employable after graduation, and if so, to identify which graduate attributes were improved.

An analysis of the qualitative as well as quantitative data revealed that all the measured graduate attributes showed some form of improvement after the students participated in the experiential learning module. However, the students reported most on how

“application of knowledge”, various “organisational behaviours”, “communication” and specific “personal qualities” improved for them as a result of the module. These reports were supported by the quantitative data, similarly highlighting that “knowledge of the profession”, “personal qualities” and “communication skills” improved significantly. Additionally, significant improvements in leadership, supervisory and research skills were achieved. Noteworthy is how the module also fostered a passion for the profession, as shown in this statement made during the interviews: *“I developed a love for recreation and it just increased my passion.”*

These results support claims made in the literature that an experiential learning approach to teaching improves much-needed graduate attributes of recreation students, making them more employable. However, experiential learning cannot haphazardly be implemented, as found in the study by Coetzee et al. (2011). Experiential learning as part of a degree programme needs to be planned according to set outcomes and implemented using a concrete model. This study presents evidence that the TCELM can be used as a foundation when structuring such a learning approach. Subjecting students to a learning environment that is specifically structured to provide them with an opportunity to apply their knowledge and compel them to utilise various skills and competencies, seems to be the answer to equipping recreation graduates better.

The implementation of such a model must be further investigated to determine best practices within the recreation field. Additional exploration of the core of the TCELM – the two cycles for CAP and APS learning – is needed in relation to students’ various learning styles, as it is clear that from this statement that some students still prefer the APS learning style: *“I think if we didn’t like have the planning phase, as I say it was preparation, so ... it would just as well be someone throwing me in the deep end of the pool and I have never swum before.”* Since no control group was used to determine if the improvements were solely as a result of using the experiential learning approach, additional research is still needed.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

All authors have approved the final article and no potential conflict of interest was reported by them. There are no declarations of interest.

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CHAPTER 5

Article 3

AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING-TEACHING MODEL IN RECREATION STUDIES: REFLECTIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION

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This article was submitted for consideration in *Active Learning in Higher Education*. The article included is presented in accordance with the specific guidelines for the journal¹⁷. Exceptions were made for the prescribed margins, line-spacing and font which adhere to the NWU guidelines in order to keep the uniformity of the theses. Tables and figures will also be included with the text to make the article easier to read and understand.

¹⁷ Active Learning in Higher Education instructions to authors included in Appendix A.

An experiential learning-teaching model in recreation studies: reflections on implementation

The recreation profession is a fast-growing, diverse career field, creating unique challenges for academic institutions in preparing students. Not all the skills and competencies (graduate attributes) needed by entry-level recreation professionals can be achieved through academic curricula in a classroom setting alone. An experiential learning pedagogical approach may address these challenges for recreation education. The Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning model (TCELM) can incorporate both field-based and classroom-based experiential learning into degree programmes. The purpose of this article is to investigate the workability of the adapted TCELM in an undergraduate recreation module. A holistic single-case, case-study design with a qualitative approach was used. Qualitative data included student reflections, lecturer reflections and focus group interviews and were analysed using inductive coding. The study proved the importance of both cycles of the TCELM in student learning. Group work and time management were two factors identified that may challenge the implementation of experiential learning; however, both these factors contribute to the development of essential skills for the work place. It was concluded that the adapted TCELM is practically implementable within a recreation module at a higher education institution; however, attention should be given to student expectations, active learning opportunities and the time spent on experiential learning activities.

Keywords: Experiential learning, graduate attributes, higher education, recreation, recreation education

INTRODUCTION

Job opportunities in the recreation sector are expected to grow by over 10% by 2024, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the United States of America (USA) (Seaman et al., 2017: 28). In addition to this growth, the recreation profession is a diverse career field, making it a desirable career choice for young professionals. This

diversity creates a unique set of challenges for academic institutions in the preparation of students for a career in the recreation industry (West, 2016: 44). The skills needed by recreation professionals cannot be achieved through academic curricula in a classroom setting alone (Fisher et al., 2017: 191; Hurd et al., 2014: 57). Therefore, there is a need to investigate whether the application of an experiential learning-teaching approach is practically viable and beneficial for students and lecturers alike.

RECREATION AS UNIQUE STUDY FIELD

To understand the concept of recreation, and the career field, one must first understand the broad term “leisure”. Leisure is defined by McLean et al. (2008: 39) as “that portion of an individual's time that is not directly devoted to work or work-connected responsibilities or to other obligated forms of maintenance or self-care. Leisure implies freedom and choice and is customarily used in a variety of ways, but chiefly to meet one's personal needs for reflection, self-enrichment, relaxation, or pleasure. While it usually involves some form of participation in a voluntarily chosen activity, it may also be regarded as a holistic state of being or even a spiritual experience”. Recreation, which is commonly associated with the term leisure, can be seen as “assisting individuals to have positive leisure experiences that help renew their spirit, restore their energy, and rejuvenate them as individuals” (Edginton et al., 2004: 11).

Recreation as a profession offers an extensive selection of career opportunities that incorporate a range of job descriptions (Chen and Gursoy, 2008: 25), available in an array of recreation programme areas, including the arts, outdoors, adventure, sport and tourism. The main focus of recreation professionals is the management of the population's leisure time, and offering recreation programmes and activities to the benefit of participants as well as the community at large (Goslin, 1983: 37). Preparing students for all of the possible career options available in the recreation industry is a challenging task. Therefore, to ensure students can enter the career of their choice, it is essential for higher education institutions to not only focus on fundamental knowledge but also needed skills and competencies (graduate attributes) when preparing recreation professionals (Chen and Gursoy, 2008: 22).

Graduate attributes are explained by Bowden (as quoted by Barrie, 2006: 217) as “the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution”. It is vital to realise that, apart from the disciplinary knowledge of the degree, graduate attributes additionally include the

qualities necessary for students to succeed professionally in an unknown future (Barrie, 2006: 217). Research done by Schreck et al. (2019: 7)¹⁸ identified passion for the profession, trainability, communication skills, leadership skills, teamwork and certain personal qualities, including adaptability, as the top-ranked graduate attributes needed by South African (SA) entry-level recreation professionals. Hurd et al. (2014: 56) found that the competencies that recreation graduates lacked at the beginning of their careers were typically related to those concepts that they were exposed to in a lecture setting with limited or no exposure to practical experiences. These authors advocate for a way that students can put their classroom knowledge into practice, to gain self-confidence and feel prepared for their first employment in the field (Hurd et al., 2014: 57). Consequently, from a pedagogical viewpoint, the approach to recreation education must be re-assessed.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AS TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Learning philosophies are categorised into three prominent learning theories: behaviourist, cognitivist and constructivist, each of which has its own associated learning methodologies and strategies (Said et al., 2012: 1; Kay and Kibble, 2016: 23). However, in recent years learning theories have moved into a digital age, with the development of connectivism as learning theory (Siemans, 2005:1). These learning theories are labelled as either a traditional or modern paradigm (Viviers, 2016: 37). Constructivism as well as connectivism are considered the modern paradigm of teaching and learning. Jean Piaget (the pioneer of constructivism) stated that learning “is in the eye of the beholder, knowledge is subjective and actively constructed as learners engage with, and make meaning of their experiences” (as stated in Kay and Kibble, 2016: 21). Whereas previous learning theories focused on behaviour change and how information is processed, Piaget and fellow constructivists were more motivated by what people do with information to develop new knowledge, thus how people learn (Jordan et al., 2008: 55). Whereas with connectivism the focus is on providing insight into learning skills and tasks needed to excel in a digital era (Siemans, 2005:1).

Experiential learning as a teaching methodology is associated with constructivism principles (Viviers, 2016: 37). Piaget believed that knowledge arises from actions and the way we reflect on these actions (Von Glasersfeld, 2005: 4), the same underpinnings

¹⁸ Chapter 3 (Article 1: Preparing recreation professionals: Graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals in a South African context) of thesis, pp 53 – 76.

that define experiential learning in its most basic form – learning by doing, with reflection (Priest and Gass, 2005: 16). Experiential learning is seen as “learning through doing”, which mimics the real world with mostly unpredictable outcomes, where students need to take responsibility and manage their own learning (Schwartz, 2015: 1). Reflection forms a critical part in the success of this experiential learning process (Schwartz, 2015: 11); it is important that students have the opportunity to reflect on their experience, analyse and challenge the current situation and think critically about the implication on future experiences (Monk, 2013: 64; Hedin, 2010: 109). David Kolb’s experiential learning cycle is the most prominent model used in higher education for implementing experiential learning (Hedin, 2010: 111), with numerous studies reporting on its application in the last 35 years (Almeida and Mendes, 2010; Bethell and Morgan, 2011; Bower, 2013; Cant and Cooper, 2011; Erickson and James, 2005; Sukavejworakit et al., 2018; Svinicki and Dixon, 1987). Kolb’s experiential learning model contains a single cycle involving four stages; concrete experience, abstract conceptualisation, reflective observation and active experimentation (Kolb, 2014:50). However, recent research questions the validity and reliability of Kolb’s experiential learning cycle (Bergsteiner et al., 2010; Bergsteiner and Avery, 2014; Schenck and Cruickshank, 2015). Bergsteiner and Avery (2014: 257) suggest that most of the criticism of Kolb’s model can be resolved by re-conceptualising the single cycle to a twin-cycle model. Schwartz (2015: 3) explains that experiential learning can be integrated into higher education in two distinct ways: firstly, through field-based experiential learning, which includes internships, practicums and service learning; and secondly, through classroom-based experiential learning that involves activities such as case studies, role playing, and simulations. Kolb’s single-cycle model provides a framework for just one cycle and not both.

Bergsteiner and Avery (2014) developed the Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model (TCELM), which can incorporate both field-based and classroom-based experiential learning. The TCELM is developed with a scale for learning potency, based on six learning modes. These six learning modes are: 1) concrete – involving concrete matters that may have real consequences, 2) abstract – not involving concrete or real matters with no consequences, 3) active – the learner actively participates in the learning, 4) passive – the learner is an observer/listener while learning, 5) primary – the learning is a first-hand experience with respect to the matter being learned and 6) secondary – the learning is a second-hand experience with respect to the matter being learned.

Furthermore, it identifies six learning-activity types; hear, read, hear and see, observe, write about and engage in, in which students participate. The TCELM consists of two learning cycles, one for concrete, active, primary learning (CAP) and one for abstract, passive, secondary (APS) learning. Both cycles encompass the four learning stages identified by Kolb (Bergsteiner and Avery, 2014: 258, 266-268). The model provides the opportunity to present class-based as well as practical recreation modules (or part of modules) within an experiential learning framework.

However, no publications on the execution of the theoretical TCELM, whether it is practically implementable, nor how it can be adapted for various academic fields, could be found. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the workability of the adapted TCELM, by answering the following questions:

- 1) What were the expectations of students enrolled in the experiential learning module, and were these expectations met?
- 2) How did the students experience the mostly abstract, passive, secondary learning cycle (planning phase)?
- 3) How did the students experience the concrete, active, primary learning cycle (implementation phase)?
- 4) What additional factors had an influence on the workability of the model?

This article presents the results from this investigation on the implementation of the experiential learning model, how it was adopted for recreation education and how it was aligned with student expectations. The findings may provide valuable information on experiential learning, not only in recreation degree programmes, but for other disciplines as well. Furthermore, the study builds on the work of Knee and Thomas (2018) on how to practically implement the field of recreation's active signature pedagogy – “out of the stands and onto the court”.

METHODS

Context

The TCELM was used as the foundation for the development of an experiential learning-teaching model that integrates both classroom-based and field-based learning opportunities for recreation students. The adapted TCELM was implemented in a second semester (July–November 2018), final-year module of a 3-year recreation degree at an SA higher education institution. The main focus of the module was on

recreation service delivery, providing students with an opportunity to integrate all their prior academic learning in a single project. The overall outcome of this module was for students to apply their skills gained and knowledge of the recreation profession in a practical project. The module focused specifically on the understanding of key recreation concepts and processes; scientific inquiry into leisure needs and the analysis, evaluation and synthesis of the information and its application; accurate and coherent communication; and the ability to act as a group member and group leader to successfully complete a recreation project (Schreck, 2018: 3).

The module was an eight-credit module (80 notional hours) that continued for 14 weeks, with three contact sessions (total of 3 hours and 45 minutes) per week. Thirty-six full-time contact students were enrolled in the module. The class was divided into seven 'project groups' with five to six members per group. Each member in the group was assigned a specific management role: programme manager, finance manager, marketing manager, administrative manager or customer service manager, responsible for various tasks related to their specific role. As a group, they were in control of an entire project, from the planning to the implementation and evaluation, with each member taking responsibility for their part within the project. Nearly half of the contact sessions were spent in a classroom setting focusing on theory, its application and the planning of their projects. The other half were spent in a practical setting presenting recreation programmes to clients, i.e. the implementation of their projects.

Contextualisation of the Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model

The TCELM, developed by Bergsteiner and Avery (2014), together with their classification of the learning modes and learning-activity types provided the foundation for the development of the experiential learning-teaching model (Figure 1) applied in this case study. The model consists of two cycles; one for mostly APS learning activities, and one for CAP learning activities. However, some overlapping can occur within the two cycles.

During the first contact session of the semester, the students were introduced to the module and a learning need was created (at "1" in Figure 1), and the students had to plan and implement a recreation programme from start to finish. The semester started off with the planning phase of the student projects. During this phase, various sequences of the first cycle (2/ii, 3, 4) of the model were completed. During each sequence, students spent time conceptualising the learning activity (2/ii), planning what

to do (3), and then carrying it out as an experience (4). Various learning activities that were abstract, passive and secondary, such as the structured lectures, class tests and class preparation, were completed, and followed the sequence 2, 3, 4 in the model. However, a number of the learning activities completed were either concrete, or active or primary, such as exploring case studies, observing other students' presentations and completing assignments directly related to their projects. These learning activities followed the sequence ii, 3, 4 of the first cycle of the model.

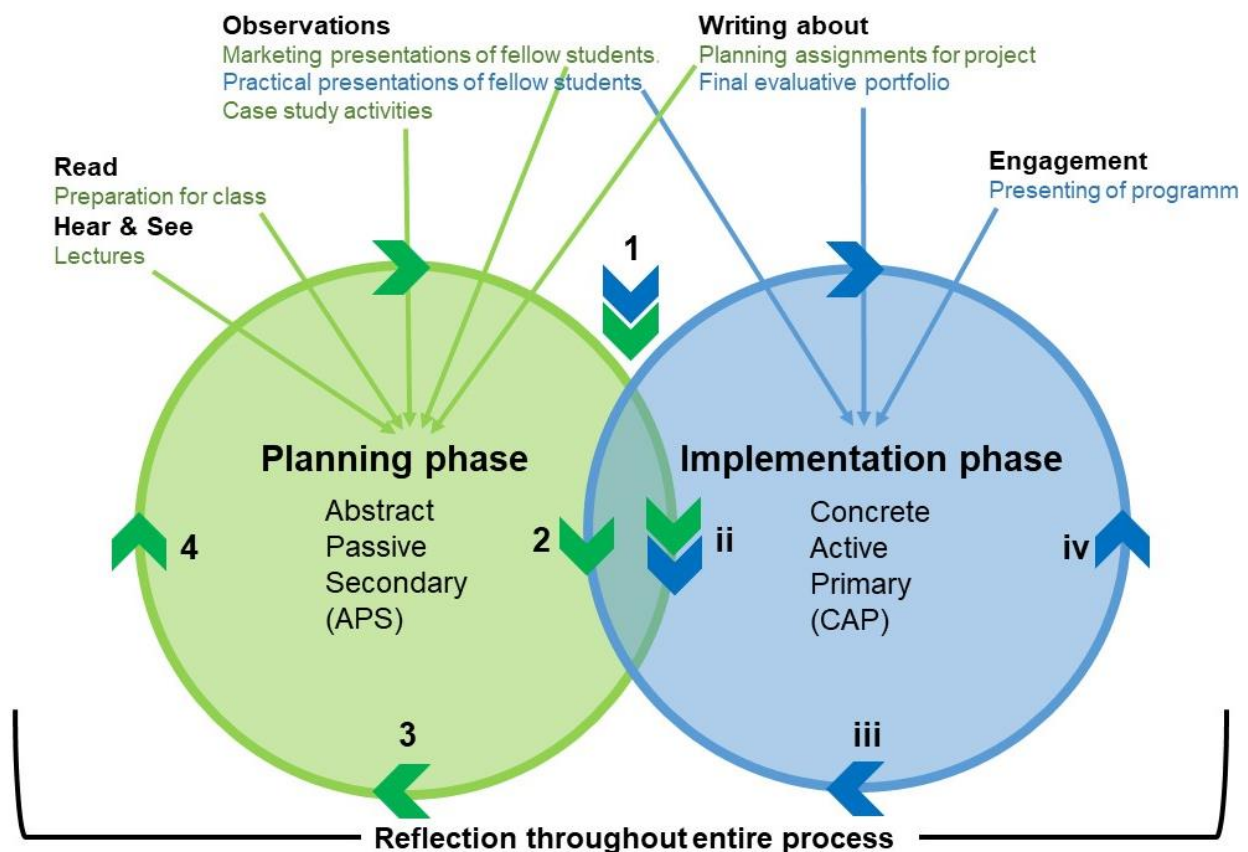


Figure 1: Adapted Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model (author's own illustration)

During the second part of the semester, the students presented and evaluated their recreation programmes. These learning activities formed the second cycle of the model, and followed the sequence ii, iii, iv, also conceptualising (ii), planning (iii) and experiencing (iv). Reflection was incorporated throughout the entire semester with various reflection activities, such as the guided reflections and a reflective portfolio.

Study design and procedure

Before commencing with the research, ethical approval¹⁹ was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the university where the research was conducted, and written permission²⁰ from the institution. A holistic single-case, case-study design with a qualitative approach was used (Baxter and Jack, 2008: 549). Students were informed of the research project during the first week of class and invited to partake in research-specific activities throughout the semester. Interested students signed an informed consent form. Participation in the teaching-learning activities was compulsory for all students, as it formed part of the normal learning opportunities and studies. Participation in research activities, however, was voluntary and students were able to withdraw from the research at any time.

Participants completed six guided reflections²¹ throughout the semester, based on their experience of the experiential learning-teaching approach used. The first five weekly reflections (n=33; n=33; n=33; n=31; n=33) were completed during the planning phase. The questions focused on their expectations of the module and feedback on the teaching and learning activities used during the contact sessions. The last reflection (n=30) was completed at the end of the semester after the implementation phase. The purpose of the last reflection was to gather information on how the students experienced the entire module and provided opportunity to compare the planning and implementation phases.

Three focus group interviews (n=5; n=5; n=4) were conducted with available participants at the end of the semester and lasted between 80 and 100 minutes. The researcher facilitated the interviews, and an independent researcher was present as assistant during the interviews. The role of the assistant was to take notes and handle the logistics, enabling the researcher to focus on conducting the interviews (Krueger, 1998: 70). A confidentiality agreement was signed by the assistant. Focus group interviews were conducted until data saturation was reached, which means that no new information was shared (Wong, 2008: 257). The purpose of the focus group interviews was to explore students' experience of the manner in which the module was presented and to determine how workable the presentation of the module was. An interview

¹⁹ Ethical approval letter included in Appendix B.

²⁰ Institutional approval letter included in Appendix B.

²¹ An example of the guided reflection questions is included in Appendix D.

schedule²² was used to provide a framework of questions and probes to increase the comprehensiveness and efficiency of data collection (Wong, 2008: 257). The interview schedule included questions on topics such as the difference between the planning and implementation phase, the execution of the planning and implementation phases, and the workability of the module, according to the students. All interviews were voice recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

The researcher, who was also the lecturer of the module, kept a reflective journal throughout the semester. During the planning phase, the researcher reflected directly after each contact session on her personal experience of the session. This reflection included a summary of what happened during the session, her feelings, an evaluation and analysis of the session, a conclusion and an action plan for improvement. She additionally reflected on the teaching and learning approach used in the session, focusing on the learning-activity types described by Bergsteiner and Avery (2014: 258), as well as the specific teaching activities used in that session. During the implementation phase, she wrote reflections during the presentations of the groups, focusing on how the programmes were implemented.

Data analysis

For this study, data analysis for the focus group interviews and the reflections was conducted by adopting Yin's five-phased cycle: compiling; disassembling; reassembling and arraying; interpreting; and concluding (Yin, 2011: 177). The CAQDAS software, ATLAS.ti 7 (version 8.2.32), was used to assist the researcher in analysing the various focus group interviews and documents. The student reflections, lecturer reflections and focus group interview transcripts were inductively coded by the researcher, after which they were co-coded by an independent researcher. The researcher and co-coder discussed the codes and consensus was reached on the various codes. Thereafter, the codes for the various documents were concurrently analysed for categories and subthemes. The emerging subthemes were grouped in themes to answer the research questions. All Afrikaans quotes used were translated verbatim to English.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the discussion of the results of the guided reflections and focus group interviews, the students' expectations of the experiential learning module are firstly highlighted, and

²² Focus group interview schedule included in Appendix D.

evidence is presented that indicates the way in which these expectations were met, or how they changed over time. Thereafter, the experiences of the students during the planning and implementation phase are presented. Lastly, two additional factors that emerged from the data that may influence the effective implementation of an experiential learning-teaching model are explained, and the central reasons why the students perceived the module as valuable are shared.

Student expectations and final experiences

Sander et al. (2000: 310), as well as Beenen and Arbaugh (2018: 18414), emphasised the importance of addressing student expectations in order to improve student outcomes, specifically retention and performance. This is highlighted by Nicholson et al. (2013: 295) who found that students who knew that they were expected to take responsibility for their own learning performed better than students who expected the lecturers to be responsible for learning. As learning within an experiential learning context is the responsibility of the learner, it was important from the outset of the module to ensure that students had realistic expectations regarding teaching and learning in the specific module. After orientation to the execution of the experiential learning module in the first week of class, students were asked to reflect on their feelings and expectations of the module. At the end of the semester, the students were again asked to reflect on their experiences.

The students had mostly positive or mixed feelings about the module at the beginning of the semester, as is evident in the reply of a student stating that she was *“very excited as it prepares me for the real work environment”* and another who was *“extremely excited and proud about the module. A little nervous because it is new, but definitely looking forward to gain[ing] the practical experience.”* Some students experienced negative feelings due to uncertainty about what exactly the module will entail, outlined by one student saying *“I feel anxious because I don’t know what to expect, but also excited because of the practical”,* and another voicing his uncertainty about the content of the module: *“I am unsure, it feels if we are only going to revise the work we did the last two years”*. Negative feelings were also experienced by students about what their part in the module would be, as indicated by another student stating, *“[I am] a bit anxious, because I’m still trying to find my way around it [the module].”*

During the final guided reflection at the end of the semester, the students were again asked how they felt about the module now that it was almost completed. The response

was largely positive, with students describing the experience as “*enjoyable, fun, irreplaceable...*” and stating, “*I feel excited about moving forward with the knowledge I have learned*”. One participant expressed his need for more experiential learning-based modules as part of his recreation degree: “*I am very excited about the module, it was very nice and I wish more of our modules can be like this*”. There were three main reasons for students continuing to experience negative feelings at the end of the semester. Firstly, there was a final portfolio that students still had to complete as summative assessment, with negative feelings demonstrated by one student’s response, who felt “*frustrated about all the information that needs to be filled in now, it is very repetitive*.” Secondly, concerns about the workload of the module elicited negative feelings and, lastly, students being unsure throughout the module what were expected of them, as explained by participant A: “*[I feel] frustrated, it was a very short semester, so there was limited time to complete everything. We received information piece by piece, that resulted in a lot of uncertainty*”.

The majority of students felt positive from start to finish about participating in an experiential learning module, and they expressed the need to have experiential learning implemented in more of their modules. However, the time needed to plan and implement the projects and compiling a portfolio of evidence were challenges, especially as the students had other academic responsibilities in a full timetable. This was emphasised by this student: “*I am relieved. The module took a lot of time and it was difficult to get time for all my other modules*.” These challenges led to students developing essential skills in “time management”, an indispensable skill needed to succeed in an experiential learning environment, as highlighted by this participant: “*It [the module] helped me to develop a timeline of what must be done, and when it must be finished*.”

Although the module was presented in a manner in which students had to take responsibility for applying their learning, the students still needed structure, and for the module to be well-planned and executed. The current students can be categorised as “millennials”, i.e. those born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s (Main, 2013: 1), who prefer structure in learning (Oblinger, 2004: 3). Similarly, Stinnett and Oregon (2018: 465) reported the need for structure, stating that “well-designed course assignments and assessments are imperative for maximizing student learning”. Consequently, even though the TCELM provides structure for implementing experiential learning activities and it was noticeably required by the students, it was clear from

student feedback that lecturers should provide well-defined guidelines and structure on what is expected of the students during the application of the model. Henceforth, helping students develop realistic expectations of the nature of teaching and learning and the experiential learning approach, and to take responsibility for their own learning, are important to improving their performance (Nicholson et al., 2013: 295).

At the start of the semester, students were asked if they believed they had enough theoretical knowledge to plan and present their recreation programmes. It was evident that students believed that they had all the needed knowledge to present successful recreation programmes, as this participant underlined: *“Yes, I have already learned enough”*, implying that they perceived that additional theory classes would be redundant. However, during the focus group interviews, students were asked, in hindsight, if they think they would have been able to present successful programmes without the planning phase (theory). The students all agreed that they needed the class-based theory sessions in order to present successful programmes, as clearly stated by this student: *“I think if we didn't...have the planning phase, as I say it was preparation, so...it would just as well be someone throwing me in the deep end of the pool and I have never swum before”*. This notion is explained by research focused on students' ability to predict their academic performance, clearly indicating that students tend to be overconfident in their academic abilities (Hacker et al., 2000: 168; Miller and Geraci, 2011: 311). It is therefore important to incorporate theory into the experiential learning-teaching module used, to ensure that students receive adequate guidance to master the learning outcomes.

During the first guided reflections, students were asked what they looked forward to the most and least in the module (Figure 2). Referring to what the students were most excited about, the majority of students focused on the practical presentations, in which they get to work with real clients and prepare for work life, as evidently stated by this student: *“Practically offering programmes to real clients, so that I can precisely apply what I have been studying and also learn from mistakes”*. When asked what they were not looking forward to, they mentioned specific theory, such as planning, finances, marketing and administration. When asked to back up these statements, they reported a lack of knowledge and experience in these fields: *“...the marketing part. Marketing is not my strong point”*. Group work was also highlighted as one of the main concerns, with the fear that everyone in the group might not do their part, as reported by the

following: *“The meetings and working [in a group]. I fear that not everyone will give their 100%”.*

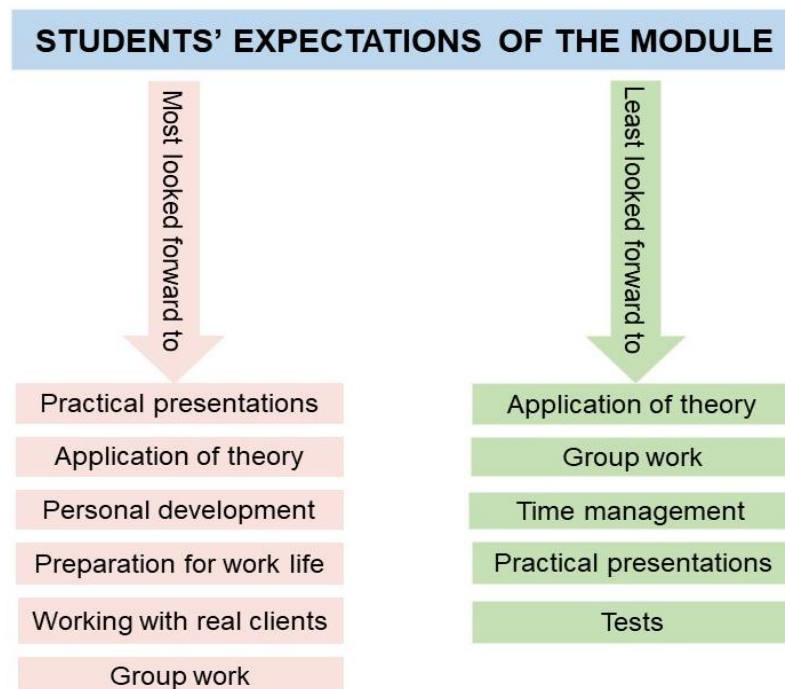


Figure 2: Student expectations compiled from guided reflections (author's own illustration)

From their responses, it became evident that students, even though studying for the same profession, have varied expectations. The students mentioned the practical application of theory, practical presentations and group work as activities that some were, and some were not, looking forward to. This variety in responses could be ascribed to a number of reasons, including being unfamiliar with the type of activities, negative previous experiences, or a diversity in learning styles and preferences. Therefore, to ensure the successful implementation of an experiential learning-teaching model, it is essential that lecturers acknowledge the diversity of students in a degree programme. Even if the content requiring mastery by the students is the same for all, different opportunities that resonate with diverse student groups must be created to master this content. Lecturers must adopt “an appropriate pedagogical response that accommodates a wider range of both learning styles and preferences and a wider range of language, cultural and educational backgrounds” (Devlin and Samarawickrema, 2010: 119) to accommodate all students. The adapted TCELM does just that, providing two cycles for different student preferences, but still grounded within experiential learning principles.

Student experiences of the planning phase

The planning phase spanned the first 6 weeks of the semester and encompassed the first cycle of the adapted TCELM (Figure 1). Most of the contact sessions were classroom-based and consisted of traditional teaching activities, such as lectures and class tests on relevant theory, as well as case-study assignments not directly related to the projects that focused on the theory the students had to master. Furthermore, after the theory was revised in the contact sessions, students had to complete group assignments based on their projects. Students were asked which of the theoretical class sessions during the planning phase were of most value and of least value and why. Various themes emerged on the reasons why a contact session was deemed most or least valuable, displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Themes of reasons for value of class sessions, with sample quotes

Reasons class session was most valuable, with sample quotes.	Reasons class session was least valuable, with sample quotes.
Informative “It was very interesting, to learn how to ask questions effectively and get the information you need with the most simple and least amount of questions.”	Nothing new “I have done it a lot, it is nothing new.”
Practical / active “I enjoy classed that are more practical. I enjoyed seeing and understanding the facility.”	Not practical / active “It just required static work, such as typing.”
Personal interest “It is what I am interested in, and what I like the most.”	No interest “I don’t like marketing a lot, I am not really interested in that.”
Challenging “[I had to] think out of the box, it challenged me.”	Not challenging “The information is self-explanatory. Our group understood the concepts.”
Group work “I enjoyed it to analyse the data with my group.”	Group work “Our team was unorganised and not properly prepared.”
Application “It gave us the opportunity to use our theory.”	
	Did not meet expectations “Because it was not what I expected.”
	Boring “It was kind of boring.”
	Difficult “It is not difficult and I know what to do.”

Students had different opinions and there was no consensus about the value of the different contact sessions, or the reasons for them. The only class session that was just mentioned as “most valuable” focused on project finances and included various applications of theory directly related to the students’ own projects. The class session that focused on the administrative processes of the project was the only session just mentioned as “least valuable”. It also included various applications to the students’ projects but no theory was introduced or revised. The students regarded the class sessions as valuable if they provided additional information, explained by this student: *“Factors were mentioned that we have not thought of”*, and if they provided new insight, as underlined in the following: *“I got better insight into all the work connected with marketing.”* However, class sessions were regarded as least valuable when students felt that they already knew the theory and nothing new was learned, as explained by this participant about the class on inclusiveness: *“We already know the necessary theory to ensure the programme is inclusive”*, and the marketing class: *“Marketing, the session dragged. I feel like we knew the information already, we had the class not so long ago”*.

Engaging in the practical work was one of the main reasons students experienced a class session as valuable: *“We could physically do the work, have a look ourselves and apply it. We could move around. If you see it yourself, you learn more”*, or not valuable: *“It was more theoretical than practical, so I didn’t gain much knowledge”*. Engaging in practical work provided students with active learning experiences. Active learning is more beneficial to learning, as supported by various authors. Lujan and DiCarlo (2006: 15) found that the majority of first-year medical students received the greatest benefit from active learning strategies, and Adib-Hajbaghery and Aghajani (2011: 4) concluded that active teaching methods resulted in more effective learning than traditional lectures for second-year nursing students. It was also recommended in an SA context that “lecturers should adopt pragmatic teaching methods that aim to empower their students through active participation” (Govender, 2015: 25). It is evident from the students’ feedback that they perceived the teaching activities that were more “active” and/or “primary” as more valuable, as they learned more. The adapted TCELM provides opportunities, with the two cycles (APS and CAP) that overlap, to present theory from a more primary, active and concrete standpoint, but still grounded in an experiential learning framework.

Traditional teaching activities such as lectures and class tests formed part of the planning phase, i.e. the first cycle of the adapted TCELM. Diversity was also evident in

students' preference of teaching activity. Students were asked if they deem these traditional teaching activities as important and beneficial. The results were conflicting. Several students considered these traditional teaching activities essential, as explained by this student when asked if the theory needs to be repeated in class by the lecturer: *"Yes, there is stuff that I just understand better if the lecturer explains it"*. The same was true of class tests: *"I think having structured class tests help[s] you gauge your progress and having semester tests help[s] you gauge where you are. So a lot of time I felt I might have failed the first test and the second test I did really good [sic]. The one was bad and the one was good, so you don't really actually know how you are doing. And normally in classes I will know I am doing well because of tests. So I think [a] proper standardised test would actually be nice for the subject."* However, several other students thought that lectures and tests were *"a waste of time"*, and that they just wanted to apply the theory during class, as explained by this student: *"I don't need the theory, since I prepare for class and have done this before. So I prefer applying it, because that is how I best learn and remember it"*. The notion of preferring teacher-led teaching and learning but with active participation by the students is supported by the research done by Sander et al. (2000: 326) on students' preferred teaching and learning methods. Govender (2015: 26) likewise confirmed that lectures remain one of the most popular teaching methods, especially since they can effectively be used to teach factual information to large classes in short time frames. However, lecturers are advised to use more innovative methods of teaching for the new generation of students. Similarly, Sander et al. (2000: 321) suggest that a "lecture can have many forms", such as an interactive lecture, making it more 'active'.

The same conflicting results were found when students were asked about their preference regarding assignments. Numerous students preferred to hand in written assignments, and several others preferred to do presentations on the work during class. Further contrasting results were found about class preparation, with some students indicating that they preferred to prepare in groups and others rather on their own. However, many students preferred to prepare before the contact sessions, out of class, and rather spend time in class improving their prepared work, as explained by this student: *"I would say the first one [preparation in a group before class], because then you already have a type of outline and you can just change here and there if something is wrong. Where if you have nothing, and have to start from the beginning [in class], then you have less time to complete the work."* The students' preference for preparing

before class so that they can actively engage with and reflect on theoretical concepts underlines the importance of experiential learning as a pedagogical approach.

Student experiences of the implementation phase

The implementation phase (CAP cycle of the adapted TCELM) took place during the second part of the semester. Students, in their groups, had to implement the recreation programmes that they had planned during the first part of the semester, with real clients. Furthermore, each group was required to observe and assess, according to given criteria, the programmes presented by fellow students. During the focus group interviews, students were asked to reflect on their experience of the implementation phase of the module. The students were unanimous in their response on the value of this part of the module, stating that *“if it was not for the practical part, there would not have been a module. Because in the beginning [planning phase], you learned all the theory..., but where you actually started learning physically in this module was when you applied it practically”*. Students saw the practical implementation as essential, as elucidated by this student: *“I feel it [implementation] was very necessary. We could see how everything we’ve planned are [sic] put into motion, and that our planning was successful. And that we could get more learning experience out of it, than if it were only the planning. I feel if we just did the planning and stopped, we would not have learned much, really. Because then it would not have showed us how to apply it in a practical manner and we would not have been able to improve on what we have done”*.

However, that said, the students emphasised the importance of the first phase as well: *“One thing that I can say in general when looking at the classwork, that I also liked a lot. It was like a framework for you that you are not that lost... And truly, if we did not do it, I would have still been busy with the assignment. Because there are [sic] a lot of stuff that you don’t think about, like the admin and the finances you have to do...”*. The concern of keeping a balance between traditional and new approaches to teaching, such as experiential learning methodologies, has been raised by Govender (2015: 27) and, consequently, supports the adapted TCELM that makes provision for a more traditional approach through class-based teaching activities, as well as a “new” approach, through field-based teaching activities within a module.

Additional influencing factors

Two additional factors that may influence effective implementation of the model emerged from the data, namely group work and time management. The biggest

challenges mentioned by the students were working in groups: *“My biggest challenge was working with people who think differently than I do”*, and conflict management as a result of the group work: *“because everyone’s personalities clashed with each other, that is just conflict because everyone tried to follow their own vision and didn’t want to give in, and listen to the vision of the other people”*. In the lecturer reflections, the challenges of group work were a prominent theme, with the main reasons being students in a group not contributing equally and the diversity of the groups, with students from different cultures and languages forming groups. Similar challenges in group work in higher education have also been reported by various other researchers (i.e. Maja and Daniela, 2018: 142; Poort et al., 2018: 225; Turner, 2009: 248). Soetanto and MacDonald (2017: 110) reported on the same obstacles experienced by groups, but found that self-selected groups experience even more obstacles than groups assigned by the lecturer, as in the case study.

Students being assigned to groups might be part of the reason why, in contrast, group work was also mentioned as the biggest reward when students were able to work productively in a group. For example, one student mentioned, *“To understand more people, on a different level, to get to know them better and understand them in depth, who they are and where they are coming from”*. Poort et al., (2018: 224) also reported that “culturally diverse groups led to better, broader and more applicable end products” and participants made lifelong friends with students they normally would not have had connected with (Poort et al., 2018: 225). Maja and Daniela (2018: 142) likewise reported on the social benefits of groupwork, including meeting and knowing people, insights on different viewpoints and mutual support between group members. The forming of relationships was also mentioned by this participant: *“...and I think what I liked the most, a high, was to work each day with the group. We created a nice bond, that I enjoyed the most”*. Oblinger (2004: 3) stated that millennials prefer teamwork in their learning environments. The way that group work was used continuously throughout the entire project built trust between the group members, as underlined by one participant: *“Having a team to trust on in tough times”*, and another stating that *“for the first time I enjoyed group work, and I learned a lot from other people”*. These insights underlined group work as an indispensable part of the learning experience, even more so when implementing an experiential learning approach.

However, group work exaggerated the other challenges the students highlighted: *“it is difficult for a group to get together, because everyone’s programmes are different”*,

“having to meet all the time and doing extra planning”. Thus, managing their time successfully to balance the experiential learning module with the students’ other modules and their personal life was highlighted. This challenge of the workload associated with the module was mentioned by numerous students, pointing out *“the challenge is doing this project of good quality in time with other modules, and preparing for unprepared class tests”*. Beenen and Arbaugh (2018: 18415) found that students enrolled in modules that utilize a “flipped” approach, where students have to prepare before class and apply the preparation in class, experienced the modules as more demanding and challenging than those with a traditional lecture approach. It is therefore essential that further planning is needed in the way that group work is structured in the experiential learning-teaching model.

That said, this did not prevent students from successfully completing the academic module and recognising the greater value it presented, as reflected in Figure 3. Feedback on the value of the module can be categorised into three main themes. Firstly, providing students with a big picture of what recreation as a profession entails; secondly, affording students the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge gained over the previous three years; and, lastly, affording them the chance to expand their experience in the recreation field. These three main benefits were reflectively summarised by one participant, who stated, *“Thank you for getting us out of our comfort zone”*

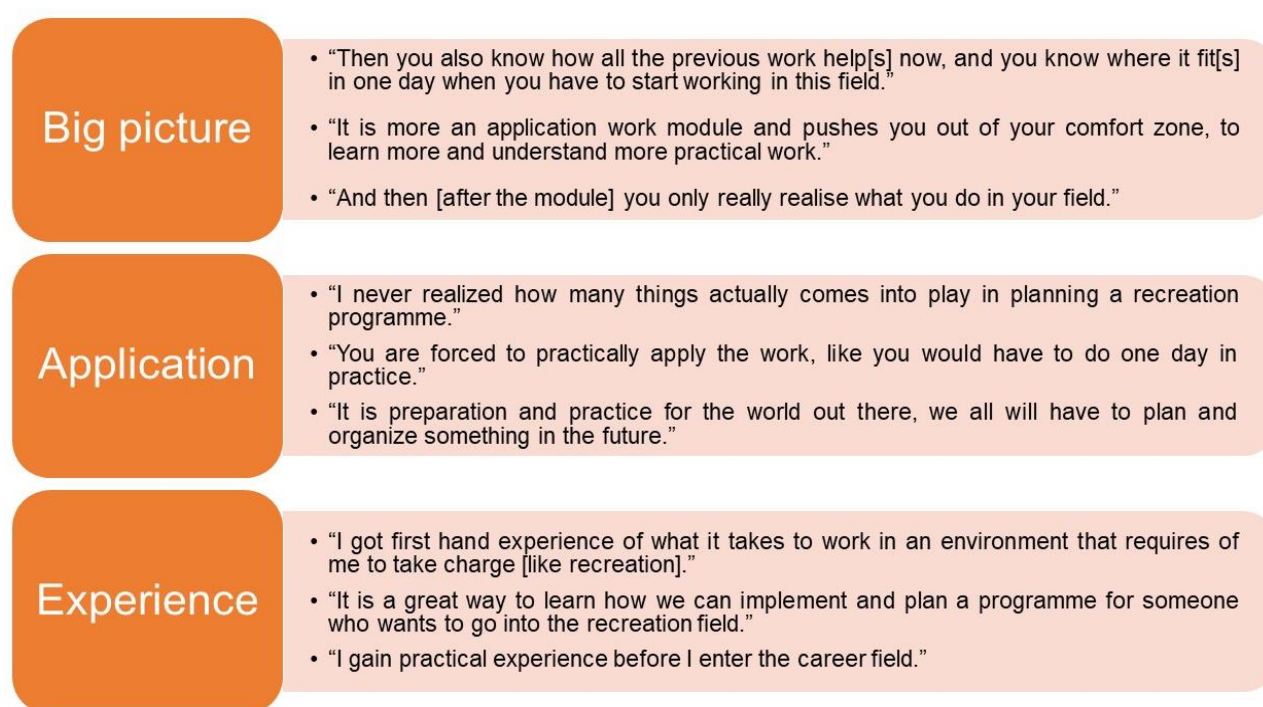


Figure 3: Value of the experiential learning module, compiled from guided reflections and focus group interviews (author’s own illustration)

CONCLUSION

Govender (2015: 25) stated that “quality teaching initiatives depend strongly upon lecturers considering their actions and their roles in the light of students’ experiences, as these offer understanding of, and insights into, how to teach better, more effectively and more efficiently”. The study aim was to ensure that the student voice and their experience of the module was heard, as suggested by the above author, with the results leading to a better and more effective teaching approach in recreation studies. Furthermore, this study has built on the work of Knee and Thomas (2018) on how to practically implement the field of recreation’s active signature pedagogy – “out of the stands and onto the court”, through the adapted TCELM, implemented in a recreation module. Both the cycles were valuable in providing students the opportunity to learn, through both theory and practical application. This model is suitable for recreation education, as students were able to apply previous and new knowledge in a practical “real life” environment where they continued learning through experience.

However, certain concerns must be addressed to ensure the model meets the need to incorporate experiential learning into a classroom-based setting, as well as practical settings. Firstly, it must be ensured that students have realistic expectations of what the teaching and learning (the application of the model) will entail. These expectations must be carefully considered, adjusting the teaching and learning where appropriate, and the students’ expectations where unrealistic, but ensuring these expectations do not become the sole driving force in planning the module (Sander et al., 2000: 311). Secondly, the teaching and learning activities in the APS cycle must include the needed theory, but must still be presented in ways that demand active student involvement yet be well structured. Thirdly, the experiential learning-teaching model needs to be used as the foundation for an entire module, and not just random teaching and learning activities within a module. This is supported by the research of Coker et al. (2017: 19), stating that “more experiential learning is better” – either the amount of time spent per experience or the number of experiences engaged in. Lastly, as reflection forms an essential part of experiential learning (Priest and Gass, 2005: 146), lecturers must either provide structured opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences, or provide guidance on how to reflect on experiences, to ensure that experiential learning does not occur “accidentally” but rather because of deliberate and well thought out reflection.

A new generation of students is entering higher education institutions, and even though it was found that the adapted TCELM can be successfully implemented with current

students, further research into the new generation of students is recommended regarding their teaching and learning preference, to ensure the experiential learning-teaching model stays relevant to the changing student corps. Additional research on cooperative learning theory would potentially lessen the challenges the students faced with regards to group work during the semester. Furthermore, although the adapted TCELM was implemented and evaluated in a recreation module at a higher education institution, future research should determine its applicability in other practically orientated academic degrees.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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CHAPTER 6

Summary, conclusion, recommendations and limitations

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was, firstly, to determine relevant graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals in South Africa (SA), as identified by experts in the field of recreation and, secondly, to contextualise and use the Twin-Cycle Experiential Learning Model (TCELM) to create a suitable experiential learning-teaching model for recreation modules at North-West University (NWU). The adjusted model was applied to a recreation module to evaluate its effectiveness and workability, after the required graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals in SA were investigated. Therefore, the question answered by this research is: Can an effective and workable TCELM, focusing on graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals in SA, be contextualised and implemented by lecturers in a recreation module in a higher education setting?

Based on the above research question, the objectives of this study were 1) to determine the main graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals by recreation experts in a SA context; 2) to evaluate the effectiveness and workability of an experiential learning-teaching model implemented in a recreation module in a higher education setting; and 3) to contextualise the TCELM, focused on graduate attributes, for use by lecturers in a recreation module in a higher education setting. In this final chapter, a brief summary and conclusions of the previous chapters are given, followed by the contribution this study made to the field of recreation. Attention is given to the limitations and recommendations of the study. Finally, future research on which to build is highlighted.

6.2 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 highlighted the importance of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), and benefit to academics and students alike. SoTL promotes professional growth and the development and improvement of academic programmes at higher education institutions. It was further stated that SoTL research within the field of recreation education and even more so in SA is still very limited, providing motivation for this study. The problem of recreation graduates not being employable because of a lack of necessary skills and competencies was emphasised, and an experiential learning-teaching approach was introduced as a possible solution to the problem.

Chapter 2 provided a narrative overview of current literature related to the study outcomes. From the literature, it was concluded that the implementation of the TCELM in recreation studies and its influence on the improvement of graduate attributes needed further investigation. This conclusion was derived firstly by examining recreation as a study field in higher education from both an international and an SA viewpoint. Recreation education started in the early 1900s in the United States of America (USA), which is seen as the frontrunner in the field, and from there grew to more than 70 accredited academic programmes, with numerous career opportunities for recreation graduates. This is in contrast with SA, where currently only four universities offer recreation as an undergraduate degree, and students have to adopt a much more entrepreneurial mindset after graduation. Communication skills, personal qualities, knowledge of the profession, adaptability and responsibility were identified as the top five essential graduate attributes expected of US recreation graduates, underlining the need for further investigation into how these graduate attributes fit into the SA context.

Secondly, behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism were dissected, concluding that constructivism should form the teaching and learning foundation of academic programmes preparing recreation professionals. Experiential learning, as a pedagogical approach, was identified as a possible answer to the problem recreation educators face of graduates lacking important skills and competencies. Experiential learning was then reviewed in detail, concluding that the TCELM is a suitable model to adapt and implement in a recreation degree programme, to ensure the module is presented from an experiential learning basis and thus improve students' graduate attributes.

Chapters 3 to 5 addressed the specific study objectives through research articles. In the first article *Preparing recreation professionals: graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals in a South African context*, the field of recreation, with the challenges it poses to higher education institutions in SA, was further explored. These challenges include the diversity of the career field, the lack of essential skills and competencies in recreation graduates and the need for recreation graduates to be more entrepreneurial. A ranking-type Delphi study design was used to compile a list of 18 graduate attributes essential for entry-level recreation professionals in SA. Passion for the profession, trainability and a willingness to learn, communication skills, certain personal qualities, and adaptability were the top five attributes expected of recreation graduates entering first-time employment in SA. Significant differences, with the most prominent “passion for the profession” ranked much higher in the SA context, were found between the SA rankings and US rankings as reported by Chase and Masberg (2008:84).

The second article: *Improving graduate attributes by implementing an experiential learning-teaching approach: a case study in recreation education*, explored the effectiveness of the contextualised TCELM by determining if, and what, graduate attributes could be improved through a module based on the adapted TCELM. Using a holistic single-case, case-study design, employing a convergent parallel mixed method pre–post-test design, it was determined that most of the measured graduate attributes improved significantly after students participated in an experiential learning-based recreation module. Knowledge of the profession, personal qualities, leadership skills and communication skills were the graduate attributes that improved statistically significantly and were mentioned the most by the participants as improved.

The final article, *An experiential learning-teaching model in recreation studies: reflections on implementation*, focused on the implementation of the adapted TCELM, examining the practical workability of the model using feedback received from the students who participated in the case study. Data were gathered through guided reflections throughout the semester and focus group interviews at the end of the semester. It was concluded that the adapted TCELM is practically implementable within the field of recreation. However, it became evident that students’ preferences regarding teaching and learning were varied and that with the implementation of the adapted TCELM, these preferences can be accommodated. It was suggested that when making

use of an experiential learning-teaching model, attention should be given to the workload expected of the students and how group work is structured.

6.3 CONCLUSION

The three related studies (articles 1–3) set out to determine if an experiential learning-teaching model for recreation modules in higher education could be developed. To do so, three research objectives were formulated to delineate the focus of this study.

The **first research objective** aimed at setting a foundation on which to build the experiential learning-teaching model. For this objective, the main graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals in SA were determined and ranked in order of importance. It became clear that there were differences in what was expected of SA graduates compared with US graduates; these differences were not associated with the graduate attributes required but more on the relative importance of the graduate attributes. **These results answered the first objective and indicated what are expected of graduates that are entering recreation careers in SA.** Therefore, these graduate attributes formed the criteria that were used to determine if the adapted TCELM was effective (Objective 2).

The **second objective** was addressed in two parts, firstly by measuring the found graduate attributes before and after students completed a recreation module, which was presented using the experiential learning-teaching model. The experiential learning-teaching model was effective in the improvement of required graduate attributes. Secondly, feedback from the students on the workability of the model was analysed to determine if its implementation is practically viable within a higher education setting. Although concerns with group work, the amount of work the module entailed and students' ability to manage their time efficiently were reported, these are all issues that can be managed during the implementation of such a model. **It can therefore be concluded that it is possible to practically implement an experiential learning-teaching model in a recreation module in a higher education setting, and effectively improve important knowledge, skills and competencies of students, thus fulfilling the second objective.**

The contextualisation of the TCELM, in order to address the needed graduate attributes, formed the **third objective**. The TCELM was contextualised for lecturers in a recreation module by providing an opportunity for the two cycles to overlap. Furthermore, the six teaching activities described by Bergsteiner and Avery (2014:262) were incorporated into the model. Reflection, which forms a central part of any experiential learning, was incorporated throughout the application of the model and not assigned to a certain stage in the model. This reflection included short, guided reflections the students completed each week, self-evaluation and reflection thereof, after the practical implementation and an in-depth reflection of the whole module at the end of the semester. **This adapted TCELM was used as the experiential learning-teaching model applied in the case study throughout the research, which proved successful, therefore meeting the last objective.**

Consequently, it is evident that each of the separate objectives were met; however, it is essential to draw some overall conclusions of the study in general. Foremost, although a list of essential graduate attributes was compiled, it is important that these graduate attributes are “the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution” (Bowen cited in Barrie, 2006:217), and therefore needs to be implemented with the NWU’s current teaching and learning strategy as a guideline.

Graduate attributes form a key component of the NWU Teaching and Learning Strategy: 2016–2020 (NWU, 2017), and it is clearly stated in the strategy that these attributes should be tailored for each academic programme, relevant to the specific field (NWU, 2017:28). Therefore, it is essential that the graduate attributes found as essential for entry-level recreation professionals in SA should be aligned with the six domains of desired attributes (NWU, 2017:12) ascribed to NWU, as seen in Table 6.1. It can therefore be concluded that the essential graduate attributes used as criteria to measure the effectiveness of the experiential learning-teaching model are aligned with the graduate attributes set by the institution at which the model was implemented. Although the list of graduate attributes was specifically developed for recreation professionals in SA, the attributes should be linked to those set by other individual higher education institutions, before implementation.

Table 6.1: Alignment between North-West University domains of desired attributes and necessary graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals in South Africa

NWU desired attributes	Graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals in SA
Responsible and engaged member of society	Personal qualities Responsibility
Knowledgeable, highly educated individuals and professionals	Education in the field Knowledge of the profession Passion for the profession Trainability and a willingness to learn Experience Technical or computer skills
Innovative, critical thinkers	Problem-solving skills Creativity
Principled leaders	Leadership skills Adaptability Organisational behaviour skills Supervisory skills
Effective communicators	Communication skills
Skilled collaborators and team members	Teamwork Conflict management Ability to work with groups

NWU, North-West University; SA, South African.

Henceforth, **by successfully fulfilling the three objectives, the research question is conclusively answered: an effective and workable adapted TCELM, focusing on graduate attributes for entry-level recreation professionals in SA, can be contextualised and implemented by lecturers in a recreation module in a higher education setting.** It was concluded that students had contrasting preferences on specific elements of the adapted TCELM, such as the way in which to prepare for class and complete assignments, even though they were preparing for the same profession. However, clear evidence was presented that students prefer active learning, but that traditional teaching activities still need to be included, in a way that is directly related to their future career as recreation professionals. This was achieved through the recreation projects they had to complete. These findings underscore the notion that an experiential learning-teaching model must form the basis of all recreation degrees in order to develop and improve the much-needed graduate attributes of future recreation

professionals, in a way that accommodates student diversity. Therefore, the proposed signature pedagogy, “out of the stands and onto the court”, for the recreation field from Knee and Thomas (2018:81) is supported: “professional education is not for understanding alone; it is preparation for accomplished and responsible practice in the service of others”.

6.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The overall conclusions have led to the following contributions of the study, which are divided into three subsections: contribution to theory, contribution to methodology and contribution to practice.

The theoretical contribution of the study is grounded in the knowledge gained from the empirical study findings that contributes to an understanding of recreation pedagogy. Firstly, the study examined recreation as a study field in higher education. The situation in recreation education in SA was put into context in relation to USA, the international leader in recreation education. Literature on graduate attributes, specifically within the SA context, for the recreation profession was expanded. A ranked list of expected graduate attributes was developed, a first for the SA context. This ranked list provides the opportunity for educators to ensure they are preparing students in line with the expectations of entry-level recreation professionals from employers. Secondly, a practically viable experiential learning-teaching model was adapted and contextualised, contributing to teaching and learning theory within the field. The model was adapted from the TCELM developed by Bergsteiner and Avery (2014) and is one of the first studies practically applying the model in recreation education, measuring the workability and effectiveness. Thirdly, results indicated that the expected graduate attributes can be significantly improved by implementing an experiential learning-teaching model. Furthermore, the study expanded the existing knowledge on SoTL, especially in the field of recreation and even more in an SA context. This study aimed, therefore, to contribute to the literature in the field of recreation education by incorporating the needed graduate attributes of entry-level recreation professionals into recreation education by means of an experiential learning-teaching model.

The main methodological contribution of the study has been the contextualisation and application of theoretical concepts and theories to the SA setting. The majority of research conducted and applied so far had not been in SA, or even Africa, and its applicability is questionable considering the unique social and cultural environment in SA. The study has also offered a distinctive methodology by investigating the improvement of graduate attributes, particularly those relevant in the SA context, using a self-report competency assessment scale developed by the researcher. Although the self-report competency assessment scale is based on the graduate attributes specifically required by recreation graduates, it is based on general attributes and can also be used to measure the improvement of graduate attributes in other academic disciplines.

In terms of practical value, the study findings are significant, firstly for students enrolled in recreation degrees, secondly for lecturers and higher education institutions offering recreation degrees in the field of recreation, and lastly for the recreation profession in SA. Current recreation curricula focus on the knowledge needed by recreation professionals, and mostly prepare students for the world of work through traditional teaching methodologies. When students start working, they may have the knowledge needed to do the work, but lack important skills and competencies – the graduate attributes – needed to function effectively in real life. The results of this study, indicating these skills and competencies specifically, may lead the way in creating awareness of the importance of focusing on these graduate attributes concurrently with gaining academic knowledge, better preparing students for employment after graduation.

Regardless of the importance of gaining essential graduate attributes from current academic recreation programmes, additional outcomes resulting in more credits (hours) being added to an already fully packed curriculum is not feasible. Graduate attributes need to be developed through the teaching methodology used to teach academic knowledge. Crucially, this should not be done haphazardly by random experiential learning activities, but in a structured manner. Results of this study, supported by other research (Oblinger, 2004:3; Stinnett & Oregon 2018:465) have indicated that students need structure when exposed to experiential learning as a teaching methodology. The experiential learning-teaching model, as used during this research, provides the opportunity for lecturers within recreation degree programmes to develop and present their modules in a way that still provides theory (academic knowledge) but also provides students with experiences that develop the required graduate attributes. Use of the

experiential learning-teaching model was confirmed to improved essential graduate attributes. If adapted according to the given guidelines on group work and work load, it could potentially be implemented in other academic programmes. By implementing this experiential learning-teaching model in recreation degree programmes, students with greater experience, skills and competencies are delivered by higher education institutions, putting these institutions at the forefront of student employability and ensuring better equipped recreation professionals are employed, thus improving the profession.

6.5 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study had some limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, the list of graduate attributes developed used existing research on the essential graduate attributes expected of US graduates, as a departure point. Information from other countries where recreation degrees are also offered was not considered. It is recommended that the expected graduate attributes of these countries are further explored and compared with the SA list. Such comparison could provide valuable insight into the recreation profession globally, and open the door to international collaboration and research.

A second limitation is that it was the first study in SA that focused on experiential learning within a degree programme and, therefore, made use of a case-study design. The sample population used for the implementation of the experiential learning-teaching model was students at a single university, in a single academic module, thus the results presented were specific and not generalisable. Furthermore, the experiential learning-teaching model was implemented in a final-year module, thus more-mature students participated. It is therefore suggested that additional qualitative research within a larger context is conducted to gather more data on the use of an experiential learning-teaching model and develop a custom model that can be tested with a larger, more diverse sample population.

Lastly, since the experiential learning-teaching model was implemented in a current curriculum, it was not possible to expose only part of the group to the model, and thus the use of a control group was not possible. Consequently, any improvement in the students' graduate attributes cannot solely be attributed to the students' exposure to the

new pedagogical approach, since the students concurrently attended other academic modules. It is recommended that improvement in the set graduate attributes of students is measured longitudinally for the duration of their academic career.

6.6 FUTURE RESEARCH

The study provided a platform from which to further develop experiential learning as signature pedagogy within the field of recreation, focusing on developing the graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals. To do so, a few suggestions are offered for future research.

To begin with, the graduate attributes required by entry-level recreation professionals must be incorporated into the learning outcomes of academic recreation programmes at higher education institutions. How to incorporate these graduate attributes on programme/curriculum level, rather than module level, should be investigated. From there, a capability framework for recreation degrees can be developed, which would pave the way for the development of assessment criteria of these graduate attributes. Whether the assessment of graduate attributes, as part of a summative assessment, would motivate students to focus on improving these attributes, together with mastering their academic knowledge, should also be investigated. Moreover, it is suggested that current academic recreation programmes at all higher education institutions in SA that offer recreation as a study field are evaluated, to determine to what extent the listed graduate attributes are addressed at each of these institutions in the various recreation subjects. This will aid in the development of a capability framework for nationwide implementation.

In addition to further research on the graduate attributes, the impact of experiential learning within recreation education should be explored. Consideration should be given to the impact experiential learning opportunities by the type, length and amount that students are exposed to during their academic career, determining the most significant impact on the improvement of graduate attributes. Finally, the application and implementation of the experiential learning-teaching model in other academic disciplines, with similar practical foundations, should be further studied. Findings can help in the development of an experiential learning pedagogy in which students are

provided ample opportunities to develop and improve the much-needed graduate attributes to excel in their careers.

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Tel: +27 18 299 4849

Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF STUDY

Based on approval by **Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC)** on **19/01/2017** after being reviewed at the meeting held on **19/11/2015**, the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Committee (NWU-IRERC) hereby **approves** your study **with conditions** indicated below. This implies that the NWU-IRERC grants its permission that provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: An experiential learning-teaching model for recreation modules in higher education.

Study Leader/Supervisor: Dr JT Weilbach

Student: CM Schreck

Ethics number:

N W U - 0 0 3 6 5 - 1 5 - A 1

Institution Study Number Year Status
Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: Single study

Commencement date: 2017-01-19

Risk:

Medium

Continuation of the study is dependent on receipt of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation up to a maximum period of three years.

Special conditions of the approval (if applicable):

- Submit a sample copy of the confidentiality agreement to be signed with the co-coders and field workers.
- Submit copies of the signed letters from the gatekeepers once they have been obtained.
- Submit the interview schedule or questions to be used for each of the different phases of the project before they are implemented for evaluation.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The study leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-IRERC via HREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, and upon completion of the study
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
- Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader must apply for approval of these amendments at the HREC, prior to implementation. Would there be deviation from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-IRERC and HREC retains the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected,
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the HREC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
 - the required amendments, annual (or otherwise stipulated) report and reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately,
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- HREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via Ethics-HRECApply@nwu.ac.za or 018 299 1206.

The IRERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRERC or HREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

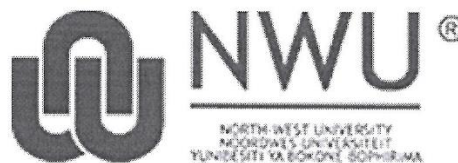
Prof LA
Du Plessis

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Prof LA Du Plessis
Date: 2017.02.10
09:28:14 +02'00'

Prof Linda du Plessis

Chair NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC)

INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL LETTER



17Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: (018) 299-4900
Faks: (018) 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

NWU RDGC PERMISSION GRANTED / DENIED LETTER

Based on the documentation provided by the researcher specified below, on **22/05/2018** the **NWU Research Data Gatekeeper Committee (NWU-RDGC)** hereby grants permission for the specific project (as indicated below) to be conducted at the North-West University (NWU):

Project title: An experiential learning-teaching model for recreation modules in higher education.

Project leader: Dr T Weilbach & G Reitsma

Student: C Schreck

NWU Ethics reference no: NWU-00365-15-A1

NWU RDGC reference no: NWU-GK-2018-26

Specific Conditions:

- The researcher should be provided with anonymised data from the independent researcher.
- The focus group session of the research study should be conducted post the grading of the final project of the designated participants.

Approval date: 22/05/2018

Expiry date: 21/05/2019

General Conditions of Approval:

- The NWU-RDGC will not take the responsibility to recruit research participants or to gather data on behalf of the researcher. This committee can therefore not guarantee the participation of our relevant stakeholders.
- Any changes to the research protocol within the permission period (for a maximum of 1 year) must be communicated to the NWU-RDGC. Failure to do so will lead to withdrawal of the permission.
- The NWU-RDGC should be provided with a report or document in which the results of said project are disseminated.

Please note that under no circumstances will any personal information of possible research subjects be provided to the researcher by the NWU RDGC. The NWU complies with the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA) as well as the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPI). For an application to access such information please contact Ms Amanda van der Merwe (018 299 4942) for the relevant enquiry form or more information on how the NWU complies with PAIA and POPI.

The NWU RDGC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the NWU RDGC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Marlene Verhoef
Chair: NWU-RDGC

APPENDIX C

Acceptance letter: World Leisure Journal

4-Apr-2019

Dear Mrs Schreck,

Ref: Preparing recreation professionals:
Graduate attributes expected of entry-level recreation professionals in a South African context

Our reviewers have now considered your paper and have recommended publication in World Leisure Journal. We are very pleased to accept your paper in its current form which will now be copyedited and forwarded to the publisher for typesetting.

IMPORTANT

The reviewer comments are included at the bottom of this letter. Prior to processing for publication, could you, as suggested by the reviewer, go through one last round of edit to check for grammatical mistakes? Please send your paper to us by email (to eugene@hkbu.edu.hk) in about a weeks' time (by about 21.4.2019).

You will receive proofs for checking, and instructions for transfer of copyright in about two weeks' time (after we receive your final small revision).

The publisher also requests that proofs be checked through the publisher's tracking system and returned within 48 hours of receipt.

Thank you for your contribution to World Leisure Journal. We look forward to receiving further submissions from you.

Best regards,
Professor Atara Sivan
Editor-in-Chief, World Leisure Journal
atarasiv@hkbu.edu.hk

APPENDIX D

Measure instruments

DELPHI PROCESS: FIRST ITERATION QUESTIONNAIRE

An experiential learning-teaching model for recreation modules in a higher education setting.

You are being invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my PhD studies. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. It is very important that you are fully satisfied, that you clearly understand what this research entails and how you will be involved. Also, your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you, or your organisation negatively in any way whatsoever.

You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you initially agree to take part. This study has been approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU-00365-15-A1) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records.

What is this research study all about?

This study will be conducted at recreation organisations in the private, public and non-profit sector in South Africa. Experts in the field of recreation at these organisations will be recruited to give input by means of three online questionnaires

on the skills and competencies needed by entry-level recreation professionals. The data will be analysed by experienced researchers in the field of recreation and statistics. All employees at the identified organisations that comply with the inclusion criteria will be included in the study. The main objective of this part of the study is to collect input on the skills and competencies (graduate attributes) needed by entry-level recreation professionals in South Africa. Data from this part of the study will be used to contextualise a teaching-model and implement it.

Why have you been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate because you are a manager/employee at one of the identified recreation organisations. You have also complied with the following inclusion criteria: You are a fulltime employee of one of the selected organisations.

You are directly involved in the hiring of staff.

You have been employed in this position for at least 6 months.

What will your responsibilities be?

- You will need to complete the informed consent form when completing the first online questionnaire.
- You will be asked to complete an online questionnaire on three separate occasions on the skills and competencies needed by entry-level recreation professionals in South Africa.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

The indirect benefit will be that the data collected from the group of experts (you) during the Delphi process (processing the questionnaire data) will be used to adapt the experiential learning-teaching model that will result in the improvement of teaching in recreation modules at higher education institutions and therefore deliver better recreation professionals entering the workforce, needing less training and supervision from the start.

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?

As a participant you will have to use your personal time to answer the questionnaires. The questionnaire won't take more than 15 minutes to complete, and ample time will be given for the return of the questionnaires. Permission will be

obtained from your organisation before the commencing of the research to ensure you are permitted to partake in the research. All forms of identification will be removed before the data is published to ensure confidentiality. The benefits outweigh the risk. We consider the benefits of becoming involved in this research, to outweigh the risks, which is minimal, such as the use of personal time, which justifies the research project. There are no direct benefits to the participant. The indirect benefits of this research are that it will provide researchers with knowledge to develop strategies to improve the way in which recreation is taught in a higher education setting and therefore better prepare students for the workforce.

What will happen in the unlikely event of some form of discomfort occurring as a direct result of your taking part in this research study?

No risks or harm are anticipated as a result of this research. However, if you feel any form of discomfort you can withdraw from the study at any time. Should you have the need for further discussions an opportunity will be arranged for you to speak to me about the research or to contact me in person at cornelia.schreck@nwu.ac.za or (018) 299 1896.

Who will have access to the data?

We assure you that only the researchers will have access to the information, and we assure you of the confidentiality of all the information that are obtained. You will only be identified by a subject number. Data will be kept safe and secure by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher's office and electronic data it will be password protected. Data will be stored five years.

What will happen with the data?

The collected data will be transferred and stored on a computer at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University from where it will be analysed by the researchers. The results will be published in the form of a post graduate study and in scientific articles. The hard copies of the data will be destroyed after five years by means of a paper shredder.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You can contact Mrs. Cornelia Schreck at (018) 299 1896; cornelia.schreck@nwu.ac.za if you have any further queries or encounter any problems. You can contact the Health Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Carolien van Zyl at 018 299 2089; carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.

How will you know about the findings?

A report with a summary of the results will be made available via email or hardcopy at the end of the research project (June 2019) for the participants that are interested.

INFORMED CONSENT:

By clicking "agree" below I agree to take part in a research study entitled: "An experiential learning-teaching model for recreation modules in a higher education setting."

Furthermore, I declare that:

- I have read this information and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part. I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

1. I AGREE to participate in the research
2. I DISAGREE to participate in the research

Ranking of skills and competencies needed by entry-level recreation professionals.

The following 15 skills and competencies (graduate attributes) were identified by Chase and Masberg (2008) as important for entry-level recreation professionals. Number them from one (most important) to fifteen (least important) according to your personal opinion.

- Adaptability _____
- Communication skills _____
- Education in the field _____
- Experience _____
- Knowledge of the profession _____
- Leadership skills _____
- Organizational behaviour skills _____
- Passion for the profession _____
- Personal qualities (such as fun, patience, practical, ambitious and energetic) _____
- Problem solving skills _____
- Responsibility _____
- Supervisory skills (that include time and general management) _____
- Teamwork _____
- Technical or Computer skills _____
- Trainability and a willingness to learn _____

Provide a short motivation for the attribute you ranked as 1

Provide a short motivation for the attribute you ranked as 2

Provide a short motivation for the attribute you ranked as 3

What other additional (not mention above) graduate attributes do you believe are needed by entry-level recreation professionals, especially in a South African context. Please elaborate on your answer.

Which of these attributes (the 15 mentioned) do you believe are not relevant in the South African context? Please motivate your answer.

1. Adaptability
2. Communication skills
3. Education in the field
4. Experience
5. Knowledge of the profession
6. Leadership skills
7. Organizational behaviour skills
8. Passion for the profession
9. Personal qualities (such as fun, patience, practical, ambitious and energetic)
10. Problem solving skills
11. Responsibility
12. Supervisory skills (that include time and general management)
13. Teamwork
14. Technical or Computer skills
15. Trainability and a willingness to learn

ROPELOC QUESTIONNAIRE

AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING-TEACHING MODEL FOR RECREATION MODULES IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This is not a test - there are no right or wrong answers.

This is a chance for you to look at how you think and feel about yourself. It is important that you:

- are honest;
- give your own views about yourself, without talking to others;
- report how you feel NOW (not how you felt at another time in your life, or how you might feel tomorrow).

Your answers are confidential and will only be used for research. Your answers will not be used in any way to refer to you as an individual.

Use the eight-point scale to indicate how true (like you) or how false (unlike you), each statement over the page is as a description of you. **Please do not leave any statements blank.**

**FALSE NOT
LIKE ME**

1

This statement
doesn't describe
me at all; it isn't
like me at all

2

More
false
than true

3

4

5

6

More
true than
false

7

**TRUE LIKE
ME**

8

This statement
describes me very
well; it is very
much like me.

SOME EXAMPLES:

A. *I am a creative person.*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

(The 6 has been circled because the person answering believes the statement “I am a creative person” is sometimes true. That is, the statement is sometimes like him/her.)

B. *I am good at writing poetry.* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

(The 2 has been circled because the person answering believes that the statement is mostly false as far as he/she is concerned. That is, he/she feels he/she does not write good poetry.)

C. *I enjoy playing with pets.* 1 2 3 4 5 ~~6~~ 7 8

(The 6 has been circled because at first the person thought that the statement was mostly true but then the person corrected it to 7 to show that the statement was very true about him/her.)

If still unsure about what to do, ASK FOR HELP

STATEMENT

	(1) FALSE not like me								(8) TRUE like me							
01. When I have spare time I always use it to paint.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
02. I like cooperating in a team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
03. No matter what the situation is I can handle it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
04. I can be a good leader.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
05. My own efforts and actions are what will determine my future.																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
06. I prefer to be actively involved in things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
07. I am open to different thinking if there is a better idea.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
08. In everything I do I try my best to get the details right.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
09. Luck, other people and events control most of my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
10. I am confident that I have the ability to succeed in anything I want to do.																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
11. I am effective in social situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
12. I am calm in stressful situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								

13. My overall effectiveness in life is very high. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

14. I plan and use my time efficiently. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

15. I cope well with changing situations. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

16. I cooperate well when working in a team. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

17. I prefer things that taste sweet instead of bitter. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

18. No matter what happens I can handle it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

19. I am capable of being a good leader. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

20. I like being active and energetic. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

21. What I do and how I do it will determine my successes in life.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

22. I am open to new thoughts and ideas. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

23. I try to get the best possible results when I do things. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

24. When I apply myself to something I am confident I will succeed.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

25. My future is mostly in the hands of other people. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

26. I am competent and effective in social situations. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

27. I can stay calm and overcome anxiety in almost all situations.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

28. I am efficient and do not waste time. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

29. Overall, in all things in life, I am effective. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

30. When things around me change I cope well. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

31. I am good at cooperating with team members. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

32. I can handle things no matter what happens. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

33. I solve all mathematics problems easily. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

34. I am seen as a capable leader. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

35. I like to get into things and take action. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

36. I can adapt my thinking and ideas. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

37. If I succeed in life it will be because of my efforts. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

38. I try to get the very best results in everything I do. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

39. I am confident in my ability to be successful. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

40. I communicate effectively in social situations. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

41. My life is mostly controlled by external things. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

42. I am calm when things go wrong. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

43. I am efficient in the way I use my time. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

44. I cope well when things change. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

45. Overall, in my life I am a very effective person. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Thank you very much for your time and honest answers!

SELF-REPORT COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT SURVEY

PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST
This is not a test - there are no right or wrong answers.

This is a chance for you to look at what you have learned in the last two and a half years and your experience in these fields. It is important that you:

- are honest,
- give your own views about yourself, without talking to others,
- report what you know / can do **NOW** and have experience in **NOW**.

Your answers are confidential and will only be used for research or programme development. Your answers will not be used in any way to refer to you as an individual, as it will be analysed and reported as part of a larger set of data.

Below you will find a list of concepts related to different competencies needed in the field of recreation. For each concept you have to rate your practical experience* of that specific concept.

*PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE = direct participation in events or in a particular activity that required that specific concept. Ask yourself “have I?”

Use the four-point scale to indicate how poor (1) or excellent (4), your own practical experience for each statement are. Please do not leave any statements blank.

Remember, this is **NOT A TEST**. There are no right or wrong answers.

CONCEPT	PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE “have I done it before?”			
1. Adaptable and flexible.	1	2	3	4
2. Open-mindedness.	1	2	3	4

3. Prioritise and manage multiple-tasks.	1	2	3	4
4. Communicate clearly with co-workers, customers and the public.	1	2	3	4
5. Listen to co-workers and customers.	1	2	3	4
6. Write effectively.	1	2	3	4
7. Talk effectively.	1	2	3	4
8. The needs assessment process.	1	2	3	4
9. Concepts of accessibility and inclusion.	1	2	3	4
10. Financial processes (budgeting, pricing etc.)	1	2	3	4
11. Marketing techniques.	1	2	3	4
12. Customer service practices.	1	2	3	4
13. Programme evaluation processes.	1	2	3	4
14. Programming recreation activities (programme plan, scheduling, etc.)	1	2	3	4
15. Risks management.	1	2	3	4
16. Constructive criticism.	1	2	3	4
17. Initiative.	1	2	3	4
18. Motivation of other.	1	2	3	4
19. Leadership.	1	2	3	4
20. Dealing with the public.	1	2	3	4
21. Organise and plan.	1	2	3	4
22. Work with other departments.	1	2	3	4
23. Passion and interest in recreation.	1	2	3	4
24. Dedication to a task.	1	2	3	4
25. Commitment to a task.	1	2	3	4
26. Empathy / Compassion.	1	2	3	4
27. Patience.	1	2	3	4
28. Enthusiasm.	1	2	3	4
29. Positive attitude.	1	2	3	4
30. People orientated	1	2	3	4
31. Form relationships.	1	2	3	4
32. Common sense.	1	2	3	4
33. Effective problem-solving.	1	2	3	4
34. Critical analysis.	1	2	3	4
35. Responsible and reliable.	1	2	3	4
36. Good judgement.	1	2	3	4

37. Integrity.	1	2	3	4
38. Ethical decision making.	1	2	3	4
39. Management principals.	1	2	3	4
40. Supervision of co-workers.	1	2	3	4
41. Discipline of co-workers.	1	2	3	4
42. Evaluation of co-workers.	1	2	3	4
43. Effective time management.	1	2	3	4
44. Work in a team.	1	2	3	4
45. Applicable technology.	1	2	3	4
46. Basic computer programmes.	1	2	3	4
47. Basic maintenance of equipment and facilities.	1	2	3	4
48. Accept constructive criticism.	1	2	3	4
49. Research.	1	2	3	4
50. Learn.	1	2	3	4
51. Follow others.	1	2	3	4
52. Trustworthiness.	1	2	3	4
53. Management of persons with different personalities.	1	2	3	4
54. Effective conflict resolution.	1	2	3	4
55. Creative	1	2	3	4
56. Innovative.	1	2	3	4

SAMPLE OF REFLECTION QUESTIONS

REFLEKSIE / REFLECTION

Week 1: 17 – 20 Julie / July 2018

Neem asseblief 'n paar minute en dink weer oor die week se kontakssessies en opdragte vir RKKX 328. Die doel van hierdie refleksies is om konstruktiewe terugvoer te lewer op jou onderrig en leerervaring van die module. Gee dus asseblief eerlike, persoonlike terugvoer. Hierdie gaan oor jou ervaring! Baie dankie vir jou bydrae.

Please take a few minutes and think about this week's contact sessions and assignments for RKKX 328. The purpose of these reflections is to give constructive feedback on your teaching and learning experience in this module. Thus please give honest, personal feedback. This is about your experience! Thank you very much for your input.

Vrae / Questions:

Hoe voel jy oor die module (projek) nou dat jy weet waaroor dit gaan? Byvoorbeeld opgewonde, angstig, onseker, gefrustreerd? / How do you feel about the module (project) now that you know what it is about? For example excited, anxious, unsure, frustrated?

Opgewonde want ek veel et gaan die werke
leer in die praktiese wyse.

Na watter gedeelte van die module sien jy die meeste uit? Hoekom? / Which part of the module are you most looking forward? Why?

Ek sien uit om te sien hoe als wat ons
leer, daar gaan, byvoorbeeld kom in die opdrag
val toe.

Na watter gedeelte van die module sien jy die minste uit? Hoekom? / Which part of the module are you least excited about? Why?

Op die oomblik is ek positief oor die hele
leerling en het my als meer as dit
uit sien uit.

Dink jy dat jy oor die nodige kennis / vaardighede beskik om die module (projek) suksesvol te voltooi? Hoekom? / Do you think you have the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully complete the module (project)? Why?

Ek dink wel dat onderstuning van die groep
sal ons altesaam as individuele geleerdes
van volbreng.

Watter onderdwingende aktiwiteit was vir jou die waardevolste? Waarom? / What teaching-activity was the most valuable to you? Why?

Ek dink die leerling aktiwiteit was die
waardevolste was omdat dit als wat ons
al geleer het by mekaar bring.

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING-TEACHING MODEL FOR RECREATION MODULES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:

Introduction:

- Good morning/afternoon, welcome and once again thank you very much for your time and willingness to be part of today's discussion.
- I hope you all know I am Cornelia (your lecturer) and I will facilitate today's discussion. This is Yolanda (I believe you all know her as well), she is here as my 'note-taker' and will be taking notes to make sure I don't miss any important information.
- Just in short, the aim of the research is to improve the way in which recreation is presented at higher education institutions, by keeping important skills and competencies needed by recreation professionals in mind.
- The purpose of today's discussion is twofold:
 1. To look at the way in which RKKX 328 was presented (a new approach).
 2. To determine how effective the presentation of RKK 328 was.
- Just some important ground rules:
 1. Everyone must please participate.
 2. Single speaking
 3. Partial confidentiality are given. Your name and individual responses you make during the discussion will not be linked to your identity when reporting the research findings and that all information you share will be dealt with in a confidential manner.
 4. Keep all information shared today confidential, do not disclose responses of other participants to outside parties.
- The discussion will last between 60-90 minutes.
- For the purpose of transcription of the data the discussion will be recorded with 2 devices, to ensure clarity. May I please have your permission to record the interview?
- Lastly, I would just like to confirm that you provided informed consent on the questionnaire?

Categories of questions	Questions - including follow-ups and - possible probes	Question function/aim
Opening	Can everyone please state their name, and the number in front of you, and tell us in short either your plans for next year, or what you enjoyed most at university the last 3 years.	Factual short response from participant to get the conversation going. (everyone answer)
Introductory	To what extent do you believe this module (RKKX 328) was “experiential learning”? Probe: Why do you say so? Probe: What was, and what not?	Introducing the topic and starting to elicit clues on participants’ views/opinions. (everyone answer)
Transition statement / question	For the first part of the discussion, I would like to focus on the different activities that we did in the module. In what ways did the way in which the module was structured differ from other recreation modules that you previously had?	To move the participants toward the first specific focus of the interview
Specific/Key	When thinking about the more traditional teaching activities such as lecturers using power point, class test etc. How did this traditional approach contribute to your learning? Probe: Why do you say so?	This questions aims at exploring the difference between the <u>ABS and CAP cycle</u> .
Specific/Key	When thinking about the other class activities you did that did not relate to the project, such as other case studies etc. How did those activities contribute to your learning? Probe: Why do you say so?	This questions aims at exploring the difference between the <u>ABS and CAP cycle</u> .
Specific/Key	Lastly, when thinking about the class activities that did relate directly to the project. How did those activities contribute to your learning? Probe: Why do you say so?	This questions aims at exploring the difference between the <u>ABS and CAP cycle</u> .
Transition question	Of the 3 types of activities that you did in class (lectures, general applications, project applications), what value did each one have for your learning. Probe: Why? Probe: Which one do you think is not so important that we leave out during the semester?	To move towards next key topic / To make the link between the topic and the participants.

Transition statement	In the next questions, I want you to think about how the RKKX328 module was presented.	To move the participants toward the second specific focus of the interview
Specific/Key	Tell me about your experience of RKKX328. • Probe: What was challenges? • Probe: What was high points / low points?	This questions aims at exploring the <u>effectiveness and workability</u> of the module.
Specific/Key	When reflecting specifically on the planning phase, how do you feel about this part of the module? • Probe: What about the use of eFundi? • Probe: The structure of the classes what did you prefer? (prepare and improve in class or do all in class)	This questions aims at exploring the <u>planning phase</u> of the module (class-based)
Specific/Key	For you, what learning took place during the practical part (implementation phase) of the module? • Probe: How did the practical part support your learning? • Probe: When did you learn the most? • Probe: What new learning occurred here?	This questions aims at exploring the <u>implementation phase</u> of the module (practical)
Specific/Key	How did the module contribute to the skills you need to start working in the field of recreation? • Probe: What additional skills/knowledge did you gain? • Probe: How did you gain it?	This questions aims at exploring the <u>graduate attributes</u> before and after the module.
Transition statement	Just to summarise our discussion thus far: • ABS vs CAP... • Class-based activities... • Practical activities... • Graduate attributes... <i>(Give a short summary of each key topic as discussed)</i>	To move the participants toward the end of the discussion.
Ending question	Do you agree that is an accurate summary of our discussion? • Probe: If no – Help me correct the mistake • Probe: Sure I did not leave out any important information?	To bring to a closure.
Ending question	Any advice you can give me for RKKX 328, 2019?	

End:

- Is there anything you would like to add?
- Do you have any questions or uncertainties?
- Advise for the next focus group interview?
- Who would be willing to read through the transcription of the interview to check for accuracy?
- Thank you so much for your willingness to take part in this study, it is really appreciated. Please let me know if you are interested in the results and I will email them to you when the study are done, April 2019.