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Lecture - 74

CLASSIFICATION OF ACTIVITIES AND CRITERIA & PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The great variety of activities or events that occupy the leisure time of people is called recreation. Indeed, the ever-growing field of recreation and leisure is limitless, ranging from the low organized type to those requiring highly organized planning, from individual to group enjoyments. Some activities can be physical, others are characterized by mental or social skills and interests.

Planning is the process of arranging the various elements of a program in manner designed to obtain constructive and worthwhile result. Effective planning and organizing can help attain immediate goals and determine long-range objectives. Participants at the first National Workshop on Recreation agreed that “The objective of program planning is to provide those experiences that will bring to the participant the most satisfying values and that in addition will have desirable social effect”.

Recreation leaders must organized and conduct activities in a manner that will accomplish this major objective. In planning a successful program, the agency or individual must understand the essential elements in providing wholesome and satisfying recreation experiences. Many factors that can determine the failure of the program must be considered and thoroughly analysed.

Classification of Recreation Activities

Recreation activities can be grouped in a number of ways. The traditional approach, however, is to classify activities according to several broad areas or types of recreation interests. In an attempt to provide satisfactory coverage of the vast number of recreation activities and programs, they have classified into the following 'Big Ten in Program Area' as:

1. Arts and crafts
2. Dancing
3. Dramatics
4. Music
5. Hobbies
6. Sports and games
7. Outdoor recreation
8. Clubs
9. Social recreation
10. Special events

All types of recreation have one characteristic in common, they provide an important outlet for some basic urge or need. Recreation program cover a wide range of opportunities. Because of the varied backgrounds of the people, the difference in education and skill levels, agencies and organizations responsible for providing recreation and leisure services have had to develop programs as broad as human interest.

An active game fosters socialization, as physical exercise promotes relaxation and social ease. Games can be divided into categories of 'low-organization' and 'high-organization.' In games of low organization, the rules are simple with minimum of social interaction and cooperation required on the players. Games of high organization are more advanced than low organized games because they require greater skills, agility, kinesthetic sense, and socialization skills.

Principles of Game Leadership

- Select games with the age group, skills, and game-literacy of the participants in mind.
- Plan the program thoroughly prior to the arrival of the participants.
- From the start, teach the participants to respect the sound of the whistle or whatever means of direction is used.
- Teach the game in simple, concise language e.g. name of the game, explain the game, demonstrate where needed, and ask questions to assure participant understanding.
- Use penalties sparingly if at all needed, as they reduce the sheer enjoyment of play.
- Encourage in participants such attributes as sportsmanship and playing to the best of one's ability.

Criteria & Principles of Successful Program

In addition to correct execution of guidelines and principles such as those just listed, there are a number of special factors or ingredients that are essential to dynamic program.

1. Creativity

Creative thinking can be great asset to any recreation staff. William Penn Mott, Jr. believes that the best recreation program is one that fosters... the type of climate that encourages imaginative, positive thinking, new ideas and desire to excel. According to Mott, "we must dare to try new ideas to meet the great social changes of our time. If he is timid and afraid to accept and try new ideas, even the most imaginative person soon becomes frustrated and discouraged."

Although some educator believe "you are either born with it or you are not" Charles L. Nunnally firmly believes that "Everybody is creative. The problem is how to get it out, but you are not going to get creativity from me. You are not going to get tingle from me-neither can you search for creativity. You just have to live your life, openly and freely, with interest and vigour and excitement, and you will be creative. The whole concept of creativity is bringing things together that never existed before".

The following are some of *Mott's guidelines* that can start any department along the path of creative programming: permit free and open discussion of all problems; give department heads equal opportunity to review all plans; encourage employees and provide incentives and opportunities for them to receive continuing education. Think!; hold regular staff meeting and general meeting of all employees. Communicate!; encourage ideas and act upon them giving due credit; or, if rejected, give reason; create an atmosphere of urgency and action; allow employees to freedom of judgment and permit "calculated risk" decision and; review your operation. Are they up-to-date? Or are you just satisfied?

There is just one ingredient for a successful program that no formula can provide - imagination. The creative leader has the imagination, vision, and ingenuity to think or dream up all types of imaginative happenings and fun situation. The leader sees things through the eyes of his followers. He put himself in their shoes and help them make their dream come through. Keeping in mind what the needs and desires of the participants are, he strives to inject into his program spontaneous, fresh activities and even and occasional crazy stunt. The imaginative and creative leader is particularly popular on the playground where a child's ability to dream and imagine knows no bounds. The leader simply has to draw it out. Bringing to the playground "Captain Bloodybones" or some fictitious character will excite every child's interest and fancy.

2. Communication

Success and failure in leadership is often determined by how well leaders communicate with their followers. Basically, communication is the process by which one person influences another. The following are some important steps to better communication:

- Think clearly before you speak.
- Listen intently to your group.
- Make sure your group can see and hear you.
- Speak persuasively, with feeling and assurance.
- Know your subject, what you are talking about.
- Be brief, concise, and to the point.
- Choose your words wisely
- Use your voice to the best advantage, loud and clear when necessary.
- Have good diction, enunciate and emphasize key words.
- Use a proper pace, rather than rapid chatter.

- Speak with confidence and a positive frame of mind.
- Have an idea what you want to say, then go ahead and say it.

3. Flexibility

Program plan should be flexible enough so they may be revised to cope with changing conditions and unexpected needs. The alert leader anticipates difficulties and prepares for them. Flexibility calls for some important foresight and anticipation on the part of both the planning staff and the leaders. The necessary alternatives and resources for flexibility must be available. For example, a picnic group, in the event of rain or inclement weather, should have adequate indoor facilities with which to change from an outdoor setting to an indoor one. The leader who has a wide assortment of games, program materials, and offerings will have the flexibility to appropriate changes and adjustments when necessary.

4. Praise and Encouragement

No other tactic can achieve the result that praise and pleasure in individual's accomplishment can provide. Desire can be greatly diminished or destroyed completely by lack of response or by discouragement by leader. Leaders should give praise when their participants do something good. People respond quickly and affirmatively to praise. The leader must never let the learner get frustrated and give up. "Keep working, Jimmy!" "You can do it!" should be steadily repeated by leader.

Learning from mistakes should take place in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Participants should not be unduly embarrassed, ridiculed, or humiliated because of errors they make while learning. Therefore, by praising what they do correctly, the leader can encourage his pupils to keep trying until they master the skill.

5. Motivation

The ability to persuade people to participate is one of most important qualities of leadership. Leadership involves the ability to motivate and persuade people to take some kind of action. The leader's ability to motivate his group is often determined by his skills of communication.

6. Dedication

The dedicated leader has great pride in himself, his organization, and profession. He is never satisfied with "an adequate performance," merely getting the job done. He is continuously striving for excellence, giving 100 per cent. He is ready to give extra effort at all times. Courageous and devoted to high level of services, he will never give up, but always strive for progress and a better program. The leader who will "hang in there" even under difficult circumstances can set a great example for both his followers and fellow staff members.

Basic Principles in Recreation Program

The following are just a few of the principles which can serve as a guide to program planning. Some of the ways in which these planning principles can be used.

- 1) The program should consist of many and varied activities related to needs, interests, and abilities of people of both sexes and of all ages. The worth of an activity should be assessed in terms of its effect upon people. The program should be people centered.
- 2) The program consist of activities that develop values sought by leadership. The program should emphasize activities that relate to one another. Effective leadership is the backbone of any successful recreation program. Leader should invite participants to share responsibility for program planning. Involve the participants.
- 3) Program should be developed that are acceptable to the culture, customs, and tradition of community. An effective program must provide activities in which people are interested and strive for more satisfying and rewarding experiences. The program should provide life-time activity in which interest will continue over many years.
- 4) Equal opportunities should be extended to everyone, regardless of race, creed, social or economic status. The program should be sufficiently flexible to permit adaptation to varying situations. Grouping is a significant factor in programming.
- 5) Program development should be positive in direction but gradual in pace. Adequate financial support is necessary for the success of any activity or program. Safe and healthful conditions should be provided all recreational activities.
- 6) Continuous evaluation is major factor in program improvement. Opportunities should be provided for a family to play together. Programs should offer relaxing activities as well as active forms of recreation. The needs of ill and handicapped should be served with a well-rounded program activities.
- 7) Over-plan rather than under-plan. Have a keen eye for detail. Use a check list in most areas of planning and organizing. All recreators should have a sound knowledge and understanding of the policies, rules and regulations stated in the department's policy manual.

CONCLUSION

A program of recreation activities should be determined by the needs, interest, and desires of the people to be served. Unfortunately, many programs in the past have developed from various biases and individual interest or for the mere conveniences of the administrative staff.

Through participation in activities, a person has an opportunity to realize personal objective, as well as the objectives of the group. Although the needs of participants are foremost in determining program objective, the aims of any program should be in line with a sound and wholesome education and cultural philosophy. In addition, the overall objectives of the agency should have a direct bearing on program offering and priorities.

In planning recreation programs, it is essential to determine the needs of each neighbourhood or area within a community. In conducting such a comprehensive inventory, a detailed study of all facilities and services should be carried out by the recreation and park department. Indicating what is available and what is missing, the study should include departmental programs as well as programs offered by private, voluntary, and commercial agencies.