Reading Practice

Sport Science in Australia

The professional career paths available to graduates from courses relating to human movement and sport science are as diverse as the graduate's imagination. However, undergraduate courses with this type of content, in Australia as well as in most other Western countries, were originally designed as preparation programmes for Physical Education (PE) teachers.

The initial programmes commenced soon after the conclusion of World War II in the mid-1940s. One of the primary motives for these initiatives was the fact that, during the war effort, so many of the men who were assessed for military duty had been declared unfit. The government saw the solution in the providing of Physical Education programmes in schools, delivered by better prepared and specifically educated PE teachers.

Later, in the 1970s and early 1980s, the surplus of Australians graduating with a PE degree obliged institutions delivering this qualification to identify new employment opportunities for their graduates, resulting in the first appearance of degrees catering for recreation professionals. In many instances, this diversity of programme delivery merely led to degrees, delivered by physical educators, as a sideline activity to the production of PE teachers.

Whilst the need to produce Physical Education teachers remains a significant social need, and most developed societies demand the availability of quality leisure programmes for their citizens, the career options of graduates within this domain are still developing. The two most evident growth domains are in the area of the professional delivery of sport, and the role of a physical lifestyle for community health.

The sports industry is developing at an unprecedented rate of growth. From a business perspective, sport is now seen as an area with the potential for high returns. It is quite significant that the businessman Rupert Murdoch broadened his business base from media to sport, having purchased an American baseball team and an Australian Rugby League competition, as well as seeking opportunities to invest in an English football club. No business person of such international stature would see fit to invest in sport unless he was satisfied that this was a sound business venture with ideal revenue-generating opportunities.

These developments have confirmed sport as a business with professional management structures, marketing processes, and development strategies in place. They have indicated new and developing career paths for graduates of human movement science, sport science, exercise science and related degrees. Graduates can now visualise career paths extending into such diverse domains as sport management, sport marketing, event and facility management, government policy development pertaining to sport, sport journalism, sport psychology, and sport or athletic coaching.

Business leaders will only continue their enthusiasm for sport if they receive returns for their money. Such returns will only be forthcoming if astute, enthusiastic and properly educated professionals are delivering the programs that earn appropriate financial returns. The successful universities of the 21st century will be those that have responded to this challenge by delivering such degrees.

A second professional growth area for this group of graduates is associated with community health. The increasing demand for government expenditure within health budgets is reaching the stage where most governments are simply unable to function in a manner that is satisfying their constituents. One of the primary reasons for this problem is the unhelpful emphasis on treatment in medical care programmes. Governments have traditionally given their senior health official the title of ‘Minister for Health’, when in fact this officer has functioned as ‘Minister for Sickness and the Construction of Hospitals’. Government focus simply has to change. If the change is not brought about for philosophical reasons, it will occur naturally, because insufficient funding will be available to address the ever-increasing costs of medical support.

Graduates of human movement, exercise science and sport science have the potential to become major players in this shift in policy focus. It is these graduates who already have the skills, knowledge and understanding to initiate community health education programmes to reduce cardio-vascular disease, to reduce medical dependency upon diabetes, to improve workplace health leading to increased productivity, to initiate and promote programmes of activity for the elderly that reduce medical dependency, and to maintain an active lifestyle for the unemployed and disadvantaged groups in society. This is the graduate that governments will be calling upon to shift the community focus from medical dependency to healthy lifestyles in the decades ahead.

The career paths of these graduates are developing at a pace that is not evident in other professions. The contribution that these graduates can make to society, and the recognition of this contribution is at an unprecedented high, and all indications are that it will continue to grow.

Questions 1-5

Complete the flow chart below.

*Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.*

The history of sports and physical science in Australia

A lot of people identified as being **1**.....

Introduction of PE to **2**.....

Special training programmes for **3**.....

4..... of PE graduates

Identification of alternative **5**.....

Diversification of course delivery

Questions 6-13

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1 ? Write

TRUE ***if the statement agrees with the information***

FALSE ***if the statement contradicts the information***

NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

6..... Sport is generally regarded as a profitable area for investment.

7..... Rupert Murdoch has a personal as well as a business interest in sport.

8..... The range of career opportunities available to sport graduates is increasing.

9..... The interests of business and the interests of universities are linked.

10..... Governments have been focusing too much attention on preventative medicine.

11..... It is inevitable that government priorities for health spending will change.

12..... Existing degree courses are unsuitable for careers in community health.

13..... Funding for sport science and related degrees has been increased considerably.

Solution:

1. unfit

2. schools

3. PE teachers

4. surplus

5. employment opportunities/careers/routes

6. TRUE

7. NOT GIVEN

8. TRUE

9. TRUE

10. FALSE

11. TRUE

12. FALSE

13. NOT GIVEN