CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO KINESIOLOGY

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Chapter Objectives

• Help you appreciate the pervasiveness and diversity of physical activity in human life.

• Introduce you to ways of defining and thinking about physical activity.

• Discuss discipline of kinesiology and its relationship to physical activity.

(continued)
Chapter Objectives (continued)

• Familiarize you with the types of knowledge about physical activity that are acquired through physical activity experience, scholarly study, and professional experience.

• Help you gain a preliminary understanding of the nature of a profession and of career possibilities centering on physical activity.
Interest in the Discipline of Kinesiology

• The number of undergraduates majoring in kinesiology increased by 50 percent, 2003-2008 (Wojciechowska, 2010).

• It’s one of the fastest-growing majors in higher education.
  • Career opportunities expanded for college-trained professionals with in-depth knowledge of scientific and humanistic bases of physical activity.
  • No longer just physical education departments for teachers and coaches; it is an academic base for an assortment of careers.
  • Increasing realization that physical activity deserves to be studied as seriously and systematically as other disciplines in higher education.
Figure 1.1
Physical Activity: The Focus of Kinesiology

• Although debates continue about the focus of kinesiology, it is now generally regarded as the discipline that focuses on human physical activity.

• People learn kinesiology in three different but related ways:
  1. Physical activity experience (direct personal experience of watching or performing physical activity)
  2. Scholarship of physical activity (learning about physical activity)
  3. Professional experience in physical activity (learning by implementing or designing physical activity programs)

• These three sources of knowledge about kinesiology provide the organizational structure for this book.
Figure 1.2

Physical activity experience

Scholarship of physical activity

Professional experience in physical activity
What is Physical Activity?

• Technical definition does NOT include human movements that are
  • involuntary or
  • performed aimlessly and without a specific purpose.

• Technical definition is activity that is
  • intentional,
  • voluntary, and
  • directed toward achieving an identifiable goal.

(continued)
What is Physical Activity? (continued)

Not all movement is physical activity, but all physical activity is movement.
Some Focuses of Physical Activity in Kinesiology

• Dance
• Exercise (training, health-related, cosmetic)
• Fundamental movements (carrying, catching, jumping, kicking, running, throwing, and walking, etc.)
• Sport
• Therapy
Preliminary Thinking About Your Career

• An undergraduate degree in kinesiology can be the starting point for many different physical activity careers.

• What areas of study and careers seem most interesting to you right now?

• Ask yourself how prepared you are at this point for a career as a physical activity professional.

• What steps do you still need to take to make sure you are prepared to be successful?
Why *Kinesiology*?

• Best term for the young discipline is still debated.

• We believe kinesiology is best and use it in this book (However, not all scholars believe that kinesiology is the best name for the discipline).

• Most common traditional term, *physical education*, no longer captures the breadth of the field.

• American Kinesiology Association identifies more than 170 departments of kinesiology.
Why *Kinesiology?* (continued)

- Other Department labels include the following:
  - Exercise and sport science
  - Human performance
  - Health and human performance
  - Health and kinesiology
  - Human movement science
  - Sport studies
  - Exercise science
  - Physical education
  - Nutrition
Potential Confusion About *Kinesiology*

• One could argue that the best term for our field is *academic kinesiology*.

• It is distinguished from *clinical kinesiology*, which refers to functional anatomy courses in medical and physical therapy programs.

• Some forms of alternative medicine have begun to use the term *kinesiology* in their titles (e.g., applied kinesiology, dental kinesiology, behavioral kinesiology, spiritual kinesiology).

• These uses do not have the primary academic meaning that is older and more widely recognized by the world.
Academic Kinesiology, Defined

American Kinesiology Association (AKA) (2017) statement:

The academic discipline of kinesiology is taught and researched in colleges and universities and is to be differentiated from Applied Kinesiology and other fields that use the term *kinesiology* (dental, spiritual, holistic, bio-spiritual), some of which lack grounding in the scientific study of physical activity. The AKA supports the academic discipline of kinesiology.
Allied Fields

- Kinesiology has historical bonds with disciplines such as
  - health education,
  - dance, and
  - recreation.

- These fields have become their own specializations.
  - AAHPERD changed to SHAPE America (2013).
  - CAHPERD changed to PHE Canada (2008).

- These organizations now focus more on professional health and physical education.
Holistic Nature of Kinesiology

• Human beings are holistic creatures with interrelated cognitions, emotions, bodies, and souls.
• One must go beyond the physical aspects of physical activity and include the cognitive, emotional, and spiritual aspects of physical activity.
Figure 1.2

- Physical activity experience
- Scholarship of physical activity
- Professional experience in physical activity

The diagram illustrates a cyclical relationship between physical activity experience, scholarship of physical activity, and professional experience in physical activity.
Professional Issues in Kinesiology

• Equality, Evidence-Based Practice, Expertise, and Overload
  • These are the four common issues that kinesiology professionals address.
  • Each chapter illustrates how kinesiology knowledge can be applied to make professional decisions in these issues. All three sources of knowledge are illustrated, and key references are cited.

• “Professional Issues in Kinesiology” sidebars provide examples of different formats and styles for scholarly citations and references (e.g., APA vs. AMA format).
Wrap-Up

• Kinesiology is the study of physical activity

• That for kinesiologists the term physical activity has a technical definition

• That the expressions of physical activity studied by kinesiologists vary widely, as do the professional careers related to the field

• Something about how the field of kinesiology is organized