

FHSU Sport & Recreation Day

A pilot program integrating cross-disciplinary experiential learning practices to enhance content knowledge and professional competencies in recreation and leisure programming

Introduction & Background

In the spring of 2023, FHSU Sport and Recreation Day was established to bridge the gap between curricular and co-curricular learning and assessment. The Spring 2024 class of HHP 371 Leisure Administration and Programming, in partnership with FHSU Student Engagement, FHSU Athletics, and USD 489 Lincoln Elementary, successfully implemented a program that combined both types of activities. The objective was to improve student professionalism and retention of programming principles related to recreation and leisure activities. Thanks to the participation of experts from various fields utilizing the philosophical framework of stewards of place; students, participants, and staff were able to integrate new learning and life experiences for youth and adult participants within the University and Hays Communities.

Experiential Learning Practices

Experiential learning practice is an educational approach oriented toward cultivating student involvement, inspiring content interest, and enhancing dynamic participation (Kong, 2021). Experiential learning itself can be described as the facilitation of learning through real-world experiences, where the learner must interact and critically evaluate course material through real-life situations (Boggu & Sundarsingh, 2019).

As the academic preferences and expectations of today's college students continue to change, a push toward enhancing experiential learning practices has evolved (Hassel & Ridout, 2018). Traditional methods of instruction (lecture-based) are effective in developing the knowledge dimension of learning, but without practical application, the transference of knowledge to real-world scenarios may be limited (Singh, 2017). The opportunities to enhance one's innovation and adaptability skills through cross-discipline experiential learning practices are plentiful, allowing students to take their content knowledge and apply it in practical real-world situations.

Students will inevitably encounter a variety of problems, ethical dilemmas, and complex situations as future professionals within the field of health and human performance. To enable students to deal with these issues, we must enhance the student's ability to attain, retain, and apply content knowledge of programming principles by adapting various inductive learning methods into the curriculum (Prince & Felder, 2007). Exposing students to experiential learning in authentic environments provides them with integral skills necessary for future practice and professional growth.

Boggu, A.T., and Sundarsingh, J. (2019). An experiential learning approach to fostering learner autonomy among Omani students. *J. Lang. Teach Res.* 10, 204-214. Doi: 10.17507/jltr.1001.23.

Hassel, S., & Ridout, N. (2018). An Investigation of First-Year Students' and Lecturers' Expectations of University Education. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 2218. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.02218>

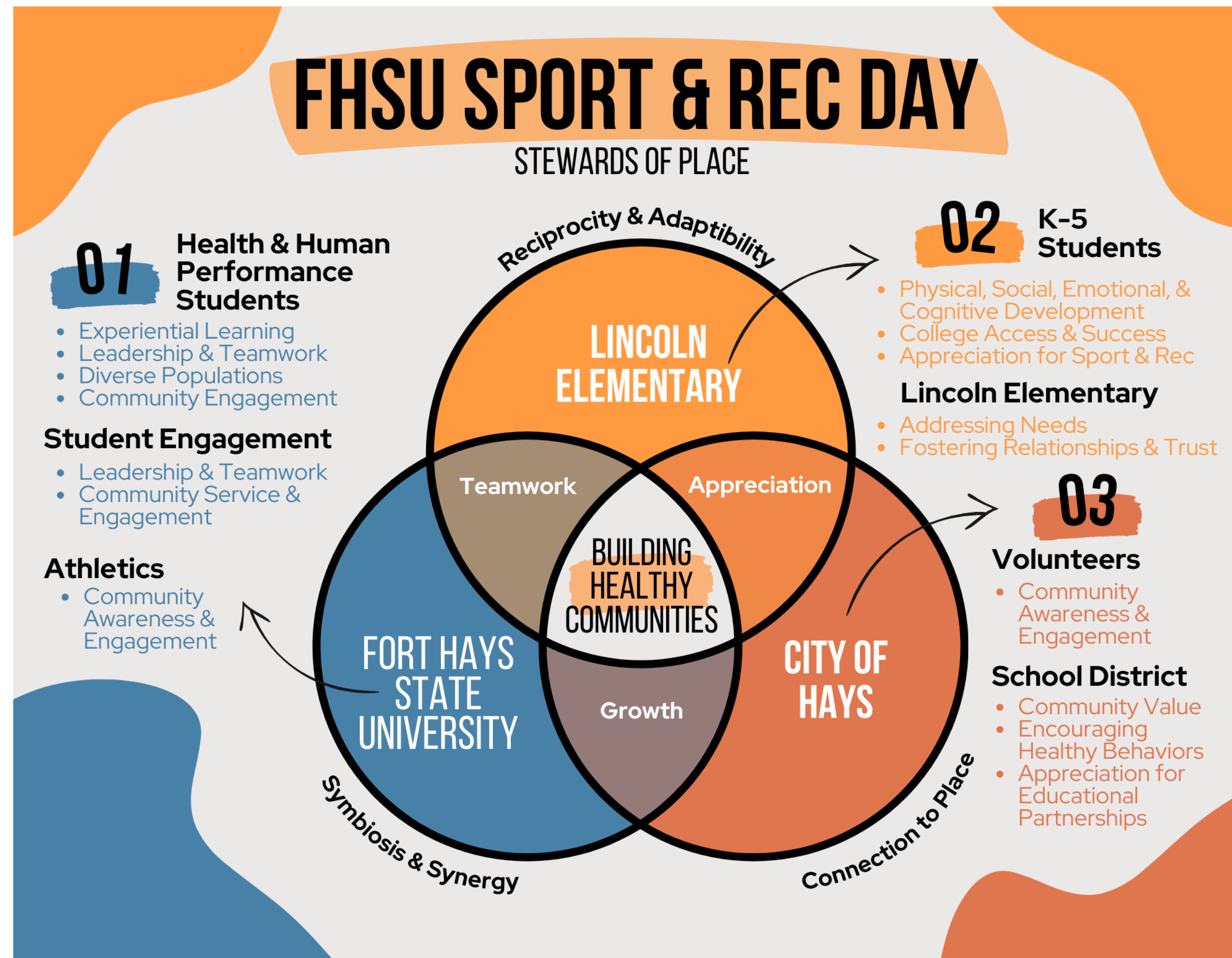
Kong Y. (2021). The Role of Experiential Learning on Students' Motivation and Classroom Engagement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 771272. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.771272>

Prince, M., & Felder R. (2007). The many faces of inductive teaching and learning. *Journal of College Science Teaching*, 36(5), 14-20.

Singh, A. (2017). A new approach to teaching biomechanics through active, adaptive, and experiential learning. *Journal of Biomechanical Engineering*, 139(7), 0710011-0710017. <https://doi.org/10.1115/1.4036604>

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Stewards of Place

Being stewards of place encompasses both a philosophy and practice adopted by universities to fulfill their institutional purpose and positively impact the regions they serve. This involves actively engaging with the local community, understanding its needs, and responding to them to enhance the well-being of students and families within the community.

- **Sharing Power:** FHSU shares power with the City of Hays and the School District. The initial stage of cultivating the principles of stewardship.
- **Understanding Stakeholders:** The design of this program aimed to not only understand the impact of stakeholders but also intentionally engage a variety of people across the campus and the community.
- **Building Reciprocal Relationships:** The program required purposeful and continuous collaboration to build relationships across stakeholder groups.

This program aims to continue to spark curiosity in Stewards of Place concepts and practices. More specifically, each stakeholder shared in the successful implementation of the program.

- **Symbiosis & Synergy:** Recognizing that the well-being of the community and the campus are intertwined, efforts should be made to foster reciprocal relationships that promote mutual benefit and support collaborative metrics.
- **Connection to Place:** Fostering profound connections to appreciate and share the value and impact of the local landscape and people where institutions are located.
- **Reciprocity:** Sharing the focus and recognizing the value of the community investment through partnerships and responsiveness to community voices, particularly those voices within communities that have less access and opportunity.
- **Adaptability:** Willing to adapt and respond to changing community needs, actively embracing and refining practices to meet those needs and foster relationships across stakeholders.

Overall, stewardship of place represents a holistic approach to community engagement and responsibility, where universities actively contribute to the betterment of their regions by leveraging their resources, expertise, and influence to address local needs and promote upward mobility and economic growth.

McClure, K. R., & Orphan, C. M. (2023). A Call to Action: Translating the Spirit of Stewardship of Place into Practice. *American Association of State Colleges and Universities*.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Define programming concepts used in the field of recreation & leisure.
- Be aware of the role of recreation and leisure in society.
- Gain an understanding of the key elements of programming for different occasions, populations, and situations.
- Recognize the major stages of program development in recreation & leisure programs.
- Understanding the importance of the mission statement and how the statement guides the agency's programming.
- Learn methods of identifying recreational and leisure needs for a given population.
- Understanding how to design and develop creative, quality recreational & leisure programs.
- Learn basic marketing strategies to encourage participation.
- Identifying the importance of program evaluation and the tools used for program evaluation.
- Understanding various aspects of financing and operational needs of recreational & leisure programs.



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