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Curriculum Connections of HeLa Ventures Programs

HeLa Ventures' programs have been designed to meet or enhance the curriculum objectives of three main programs: Physical Education (grades 9 – 12); Environmental and Outdoor Education (grades 7 – 9); and specific CTS modules primarily within the Wildlife, Forestry, Career Transitions and Community Health Strands. Through our programs are also able to provide experiences to enhance or apply learned concepts in the Career and Lifestyle Management program.

HeLa Ventures' foundational goals and objectives are consistent with the general learner outcomes outlined in the Alberta Learning program of studies (Alberta Education, *Curriculum by Subject*, 2008). These objectives which form the basis to all of our programs include: the development of safety knowledge and basic skills in a variety of outdoor pursuits activities; promoting care and concern for the environment; and the development of strong communication and group dynamic skills. While the degree of focus on specific outcomes changes with each program based on teachers' objectives, these core elements exist in all of the programs.

The following outlines the curriculum connections for each program in more detail. The main activities provided are similar in most the programs, but the focus placed on specific outcomes is custom designed for each school group based on the teacher's goals for the program.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION GRADES 9 – 12

For Physical Education classes, the goals and objectives of the programs are designed to meet curriculum objectives in both the General and Specific Outcome Categories (Alberta Education. *Physical Education (K-12)*. 2008). The degree to which skills and specific objectives are taught, is dependent on the learning objectives supplied by the teacher, and the prior experience, knowledge and skill level of the group.

The programs have been developed from an Experiential Education Framework. While basic skills and safety skills are taught through a direct or guided discovery method (General Outcome A), the culmination of the training in an experience where individuals utilize the skills they have learned to participate in a challenging "trip", provides a medium for students to achieve General Outcomes B, C and D through the experience. The following outlines the means by which the general and specific outcomes are met by HeLa's programs.

- ❖ **Safety Skills and Concepts** (General guideline for all activities): Safety and rescue skills and concepts are taught in all activities provided by HeLa. Students leave the program understanding equipment requirements, safe levels of participation, use of certified guides for participation in many activities and basic understanding of safety and rescue skills.
- ❖ **Basic Skills in Alternative Environments:** HeLa's outdoor pursuits programs provide quality instruction to assist students to acquire basic skills in alternative environments. The specific activities provided depend on the teacher's objectives. The most popular program provides skill development in lake and river canoeing, backcountry biking, top roped climbing, and interpretive hiking. Winter activities involve cross-country skiing, winter survival skills, cold weather camping, and ice climbing (for schools where the activity is approved). (Alberta Education, *Physical Education (K-12)*. 2005; Curriculum Objectives A7, 8 and 9 – 7; A10, 20 and 30-7, 2005, p. 13).
- ❖ **Basic Skills In Specialized Individual Sport And Recreational Activities:** When requested, access to specialized programs to promote individualized recreational activities may be provided. Examples include cycle touring, wilderness living skills, back country running and adventure racing, back packing, canoe tripping, and cross-country skiing. The goals are to develop safety, physical, navigational and leadership skills and knowledge that students may incorporate into their present and future lifestyles (Curriculum Objectives A7 – 9-13 and 10 – 30-13. 2005, p. 16, 17)
- ❖ **Benefits; Functional Fitness; and Well-Being** (General Outcome B): All of the programs focus on promoting outdoor recreational and sport activities as a component of a healthy lifestyle. The staff act as role models, and purposely lead formal and informal discussions on the process in which students may make outdoor activities a part of their present and future lives. The importance of maintaining fitness and using outdoor pursuits activities as a fun way to achieve fitness is integrated into the core objectives. Students are provided with information on becoming involved in the activities as a means of advancing skills, obtaining certifications and developing careers in the outdoor recreation and/or tourism areas. While the programs do not highlight specific curriculum objectives, the objectives C7-9(1 through 8 and 10 – 30 (1 through 8) are integrated into the general objectives (Alberta Education, *Physical Education (K-12)*. 2005. p, 20 – 21).
- ❖ **Positive Interactions with Others** (General and Specific Outcomes C): HeLa's program philosophy includes the statement: "Our purpose is to provide programs within an atmosphere that cultivates attitudes of co-operation and attitudes of caring for and protecting our relationships with others and the environment". Programs are designed to ensure this statement is promoted. Specific curriculum objectives within the category are met as follows:
 - *Communication:* Communication, encouragement and support between group members is a large component of success in many outdoor pursuits challenges. Developing partner communication is a key objective in the skill progressions of activities such as canoeing, camping, hiking, and climbing.

Communication skills are taught and modeled (C7 – 9 (1,2); C10 – 30(1,2), p. 24 – 45).

- *Fair Play:* As students participate in the activities, they are taught rules and responsibilities to ensure all participants are able to have the most rewarding experience possible. Being cognizant of others needs and of environmental stewardship to conserve the environment in a state which will allow future participation in the activities, are both taught and modeled in the programs (C7 – 9(3); C10 – 30(3), p. 24, 25).
- *Leadership:* Programs are lead by highly qualified outdoor leaders and guides. Students are provided with the opportunity to see strong leadership skills in action. Subsequent programs that focus on the development of leadership skills are available to classes or individual students who are keen and wish to pursue the activities on their own (C7 – 9(4); C10 – 30(4), p. 24, 25).
- *Team Work:* Most outdoor activities are pursued in a group setting. Groups must work as a team in order to successfully complete a trip (single or multi-day). Teamwork, communication and leadership skills are all a part of group dynamics. These skills may be formally presented, or may occur informally through experience. A debrief of the experience helps students to internalize the learning and find application of the concept to their daily life (C7 – 9(6); C10 – 30(6), p. 24,25).

❖ **Do it for Daily Life** (General and Specific Outcomes D): A primary goal for all of HeLa’s programs is to “Encourage an active, healthy lifestyle through the introduction to and/or training in a variety of exciting outdoor recreational/educational activities”. This goal is integrated into all of the program objectives. The following outlines connections to specific outcomes in this category:

- *Safety* is the foundational goal of all of the activities. Students are formally taught safety skills and standards. Students are also provided with opportunity to observe attention to these standards at all times during their experience (D7-9(3-5); D10-30(3-5), p. 28, 29).
- *Effort/ Personal Challenge and Active Living Within The Community:* Components of these specific outcomes are met both through the students experience and through their observations of staff. The guides demonstrate how their lifestyles revolve around the activities, both as a career and for personal pleasure. The excitement of being involved in these sports and recreational activities is contagious when surrounded by positive, fit and happy individuals.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION (GRADE 7 – 9)

The programs provided for Environmental and Outdoor Education classes are custom designed to meet specific objectives outlined by the teacher. While the foundational philosophy, goals and objectives are consistent with the general learner expectations outlined in the curriculum guide (Alberta Education, Environmental and Outdoor

Education (Junior High). 1990), the means by which provided programs meet specific expectations is dependent on the past learning experiences of the students, the teachers focus for the program and the specific activity choices.

Most of the outdoor pursuits activity programs focus on the **outdoor strand** (Alberta Education, 1990, p. 5), establishing basic skills, safety skills and knowledge, and attitudes in the particular activity. Because many pursuits activities require learning in a variety of areas in order to prepare for a culminating “expedition”, the programs generally provide a very rounded first experience to develop these basic skills. Following this introduction, an opportunity for an expedition in which students are able to apply the skills they have learned is provided. An example would be the preparation for and participation in a river-canoeing trip. Students are initially taught basic paddling skills, safety skills, equipment requirements, and are provided with basic wilderness living skills and concepts. They would then be ready to plan and participate in a multi-day river trip.

Should a teacher be more interested in meeting objectives from the **environmental strand** (Alberta Education, 1990, p. 5), specific activities are planned. This may involve a field study, a reclamation activity, or a hike to a clear-cut, mine site or dam site (many more options are available depending on objectives). All activities culminate with follow up discussion and debrief.

Personal and group development objectives (Alberta Education, 1990, p. 5) are integrated into programs with either an outdoor or environmental focus. The group works as a team to accomplish the tasks and debriefs assist in gaining an understanding of growth, learning and dynamics both individually and within the group.

CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY STUDIES

HeLa has designed programs that meet curriculum objectives for FOR 1010 and WLD 1130 from an experiential framework. Outdoor activities and debriefs are utilized to connect the experience to the learning objective. For both the Wildlife and Forestry Modules, a local professional is invited to meet with the students to provide a session where students may ask questions, determine career opportunities and gain an understanding of the field from an individual immersed in the field.

HeLa may also offer programs to assist teachers in meeting curriculum objectives in the Career Transitions and Community Health strands by offering certification programs in Emergency or Standard First Aid, Wilderness First Aid and CPR. We are also able to provide experiences to work towards credits in the leadership modules in the Career Transitions strand. These programs require work prior to and following the experience with us, but provide experiences for application towards meeting these objectives.

CAREER AND LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT

There are a variety of schools that utilize the experiences in outdoor pursuits as a means of applying specific concepts learned through the CALM curriculum. These programs are managed by the teacher with constant communication with staff to provide experiences appropriate for application of specific concepts. Staff take part in the debriefs to assist students in internalizing the learning with support and encouragement from others.

In summary, HeLa offers both standard and custom designed programs. In all cases, teachers' objectives are key in the specific plans for each program. The staff are all University Graduates, and are required to demonstrate understanding of curriculum connections. Program plans for all of the above programs may be provided upon request. The programs are all lead with safety as the number one goal.

Should there be further questions regarding the curriculum connections provided through HeLa Ventures programs, please contact Lana Ohler-Madsen, Director, HeLa Ventures.

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