



ELP: Learning Philosophies and Academic Standards

Experiential Education

The Environmental Living Program at Tomales Bay is based on principals of experiential education in which learners are encouraged to become “actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, and constructing meaning”. The hands-on learning that occurs within the context of ELP facilitates students of multiple learning styles to engage physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually with the curriculum.

Project-Based Learning

The classroom and on-site activities associated with ELP are easily incorporated into a project-based learning curricular design. Most fundamentally, students are charged with planning for their overnight excursion and accomplishing certain tasks at the park. The planning of menus, creation of maps and establishment of social norms places responsibility for learning and problem-solving on the students themselves. Learning can be extended with a variety of projects including a wax museum performance, designing a field guide, producing a newsletter or engineering an environmentally-friendly energy capture system. The real-life application of academic content challenges individuals to develop personal skills in addition to engendering authentic collaborative learning.

Academic Content Standards

Teachers have great flexibility in designing lessons to accompany the overnight ELP experience at Tomales Bay. Opportunities abound for designing lessons that are rich in crosscutting concepts - core intellectual tools that are found across disciplines: English language arts, math, social sciences, science and the visual arts. The charts on the following pages titled *ELP Academic Standards Alignment* illustrate the multi-disciplinary applications of example lessons that teachers may choose to use.