

# Standard Differentiation Practices at the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center

Throughout the Ecology Field Program our educators differentiate instruction in a variety of ways through the use of multiple learning styles/intelligences, specific individual accommodations for students with physical and behavioral challenges, and program adjustments based upon student group preparation, background knowledge and extension or remediation needs.

## Multiple learning styles/intelligences:

- Intrapersonal – explore surroundings independently & individually
- Kinesthetic – move through their surroundings & experience the activities in a hands-on way
- Logical – reason through the concepts, seeking evidence of student observations & for conclusions; following dichotomous key procedures; considering human impacts *in light of the evidence*
- *Verbal/Linguistic – discussion is integral to the program & students share their experiences with each other, listen carefully to other students & the instructor*
- Visual/Spatial – through organizational graphics & observations, students connect with their environment and wonder how the pieces fit together
- Naturalistic – through activities and the hike, students learn how to classify different parts of the ecosystem and begin to view the ecosystem in a holistic manner
- Interpersonal – student collaborate in groups during their explorations, share their ideas with other students & instructors, and develop meaning through group work
- Musical – though limited in the EFP, students may have the opportunity to listen to the rhythms of the natural world when hearing sounds of birds, crickets, wind, etc., often during quiet time with observation

## **Accommodations for Students with physical challenges:**

- Mobility issues – we utilize our wheelchair accessible trail, often front-loading the activities so all students can participate; students who are unable to access parts of the ecosystem are encouraged to observe more closely, with more detail
- Auditory issues – staying closer to instructor; often with hearing aides connected to instructor microphones

## **Accommodations for students with behavioral considerations:**

- Students placed up front with instructor are encouraged to channel their interest by sharing their observations with others
- Students in the back of the line often are able to interact with volunteers
- Channel social kids by having them participate more through discussion, leading groups, being the show/tell person

## **Adjustment of program based upon student preparation:**

- For those students who have in depth background knowledge, we extend and deepen their experience, through more challenging activities, questioning and discussions
- For those students who have less in depth background knowledge, we simplify and provide more experiential opportunities that help students build contextual knowledge so they can make the connections to the concepts being addressed



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