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VOLUME 2

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# GAHPERD *Journal*



## Mission Statement

GAHPERD, Inc. is a non-profit organization for professionals and students in related fields of health, physical education, recreation and dance. GAHPERD, Inc. is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all Georgians by supporting and promoting effective educational practices, quality curriculum, instruction and assessment in the areas of health, physical education, recreation, dance and related fields.



### Message from the Editor:

In this issue of the GAHPERD Journal, you will find specific content to help you grow as a professional. The issue includes one peer reviewed manuscript and one case study. I hope you enjoy reading both professional articles, with the first related to the field of exercise science and the second on a study abroad program.

In addition to the scholarly work in this current issue, you will also find information pertaining to Georgia AHERD and our profession, with various highlights throughout—specifically, the upcoming Georgia AHPERD annual convention scheduled for October 8-10 in Athens, Georgia.

Finally, on this page you will find the latest additions to the Georgia AHPERD Executive Board and numerous program advertisements and upcoming events throughout the issue. Elections for 2017-2018 will be held at the annual convention. If you have comments, please contact me at [bheidorn@westga.edu](mailto:bheidorn@westga.edu).

**Editor**  
Dr. Brent Heidorn  
University of West Georgia

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*If you fail to prepare,  
you're prepared to  
fail.*



Mark Spitz

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The Georgia Association  
for Health, Physical  
Education, Recreation  
and Dance

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## Journal Submission: How do I submit an article to the GAHPERD Journal?

### Publication Guidelines

The GAHPERD Journal is a peer-reviewed professional journal intended to meet the needs of health, physical education, recreation, and dance professionals in Georgia. It is also intended to be a forum for the discussion of new ideas and pertinent issues facing the profession. Before submitting a manuscript to *The GAHPERD Journal*, please be mindful of the following:

- Manuscripts submitted to The GAHPERD Journal must not be submitted to other publications simultaneously.
- Manuscripts with practical implications for educators at all levels are given priority.
- Acceptance is based on originality of material, significance to the profession, validity, and adherence to the prescribed submission requirements.

### Manuscript Preparation

Manuscripts should be double-spaced, including all references and quotations, formatted for 8-1/2" x 11" pages, using Times New Roman 12-point font. Manuscripts should be word processed in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Prepare the manuscript in Microsoft Word and submit it as an e-mail attachment.
- Number all pages and lines throughout.
- Submit all tables, photographs and figures as separate documents, not within the body of the manuscript.
- Limit the manuscript to approximately 8 to 12 pages.
- Include a cover page with the title of the manuscript, full name(s) of the author(s), academic degrees, positions, and institutional affiliations. List the corresponding author's address, telephone number, and email address.
- The writing should be simple, straightforward with clear, concise, and logically presented concepts. Use examples, capture the readers' interest, and stimulate the audience's thinking.
- Keep paragraphs short.
- Have a colleague review the manuscript prior to submission.
- Review all references as the authors are responsible for accuracy. For reference style, follow the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA-6<sup>th</sup> edition).
- Submit graphs, charts, and tables separately. Clearly label and title all illustrations according to APA guidelines.
- Photographs are encouraged. When submitting photographs, be sure they are digital and at least 300 DPI in a jpg format.

### Manuscript Submission

Send all manuscripts to Dr. Brent Heidorn at [bheidorn@westga.edu](mailto:bheidorn@westga.edu). Manuscripts will be acknowledged by email when received.

### The Review Process

The Publications Editor will distribute all manuscripts to three members of the Editorial Board for peer-review.

### Publication

Copyright: Accepted manuscripts become the property of the Georgia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. Upon request, authors receive permission to reprint their own articles. The GAHPERD Journal is listed in the Physical Education Index.

### Manuscript Tracking Policy

Manuscripts undergo a blind review using criteria of accuracy and applicability to the practical concerns of the target audience. Authors will receive manuscript acceptance, revision or rejection letters via email in about six weeks. Authors asked to revise their manuscripts will be informed how much time they have for resubmission, always given at least two weeks. Upon acceptance, the Publications Editor will send a formal acceptance email to all corresponding authors whose manuscripts have been accepted for publication. The Publications Editor will select publication dates for all manuscripts based on an established editorial calendar. Authors will be notified in advance, and edited manuscripts will be submitted to authors for comments prior to publication.



Georgia  
AHPERD  
Fall  
Convention

SOMEHOW WE'VE COME TO BELIEVE THAT GREATNESS IS ONLY FOR THE CHOSEN FEW, FOR THE SUPERSTARS. THE TRUTH IS, GREATNESS IS FOR US ALL. THIS IS NOT ABOUT LOWERING EXPECTATIONS; IT'S ABOUT RAISING THEM FOR EVERY LAST ONE OF US. GREATNESS IS NOT IN ONE SPECIAL PLACE, AND IT'S NOT IN ONE SPECIAL PERSON. GREATNESS IS WHEREVER SOMEBODY IS TRYING TO FIND IT.

FIND YOUR GREATNESS.

• OCT 8-10, 2017 •



**It's almost time to "Find Your Greatness!"**

**GAHPERD Convention  
October 8-10, 2017  
Athens, GA**

The 2017 GAHPERD Convention, "Find Your Greatness", is about one month away! Online registration is open until September 15 on our website. Nearby hotels with special rates are available. Special guest presenters like Mark Banasiak (PE), Joanna Faerber (PE), Jiji Jonas (PE), Mary McCarley (Health), J.D. Hughes (Dance), and Dave Senecal (Dance) will be there. In addition, great Georgia presenters like former Teachers of the Year Emily Adams and Pete Charrette will be sharing their teaching methods. A tentative Convention schedule has been posted on the website so you can start planning your days! Need more reasons to attend?

2017 Convention

Hotel Information

There is not an "official" hotel for the 2017 Convention. Each of the hotels is reserving a block of rooms at a special rate for our attendees. Be sure to mention the GAHPERD Convention to receive the preferred rate. Deadlines apply for receiving the preferred rate.



**Courtyard Athens Downtown**  
**Graduate Athens**  
**Hilton Garden Inn**  
**Hotel Indigo**



# The Value of Exercise Science Graduates in Georgia

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Melanie Poudevigne<sup>5</sup>, Valdosta State University<sup>1</sup>, Georgia Southwestern State  
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Clayton State University<sup>5</sup>

## Introduction

The Kinesiology Regents Academic Advisory Committee (KRAAC) recently submitted a document, to the Board of Regents for the University System of Georgia, summarizing the value of Exercise Science programs in Georgia. The purpose of KRAAC is to review program and curricula matters including, but not limited to, physical education, sport and fitness management, exercise science, athletic training, and health education. Kinesiology programs have evolved over the last few years to include more courses or curricula beyond traditional physical education. Kinesiology, as an umbrella term, has become one of the most popular undergraduate majors across the country due to the relevance of preparing students to help combat the obesity epidemic and other hypokinetic diseases nationwide (Wojciechowska, 2010). This article mirrors the KRAAC value document on Exercise Science programs in Georgia.

## Background

The Exercise is Medicine® initiative is a collaboration between the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the American Medical Association (AMA). In short, the goal of this initiative is to encourage physicians and other healthcare providers to prescribe exercise during each patient visit as indicated (ACSM, 2016). The focus of the platform is to promote physical activity as a healthy behavioral modification to improve the overall health of our nation (ACSM, 2016).

The American Medical Association (AMA) recently classified obesity as a disease (AMA, 2013). The deleterious impact of obesity and other comorbidities can be linked to a sedentary lifestyle and are often classified as hypokinetic diseases. For example, metabolic syndrome has become an epidemic in many states across the country (Kereiakes & Willerson, 2003). In 2015, the obesity rate in Georgia ranked 19th in the country, 15th for diabetes mellitus and a sedentary lifestyle and ninth overall due to the increased incidence of high blood pressure (Segal, Rayburn & Martin, 2016). Obesity is one of the largest contributors to preventable chronic diseases and increased healthcare costs in the nation with employers spending \$506 annually for each obese employee (Segal et al., 2016).



Cawley and Meyerhoefer (2012) note the economic impact of obesity is much higher than reported in the existing literature resulting in reduced government funding and intervention to combat obesity and comorbidities. To the contrary, an increase of one metabolic equivalent (1 MET) in cardiorespiratory fitness equates to a 10 to 25 percent decrease in overall mortality risk compared to the more conventional risk factors (Myers et al., 2015). Physical fitness is a powerful predictor of overall health outcomes (Myers et al., 2015; Myers & Fonda, 2016).



### Healthcare

Physical inactivity or a sedentary lifestyle is a major epidemiological problem and is now considered to be the greatest health problem of the current century (Troost, Blair & Khahn, 2014). Most clinicians are hesitant to incorporate or prescribe exercise into the plan of care for patients because they receive very little, if any, formal training in exercise physiology while in medical school (Cardinal, Park, Moosong & Cardinal, 2015). An integrative medical curriculum based on tenets of the

Exercise is Medicine® global initiative has been proposed for medical schools and residency programs (Hill, Nichols, Wing, Waalen & Friedman, 2015) to hopefully address this predicament. In this context, exercise or physical activity is now being heralded as the new vital sign in the clinical setting (Sallis, Baggish, Franklin & Whitehead, 2016). This new vital sign is imperative to instill in patients the positive correlation between exercise and positive health outcomes. The therapeutic benefits of exercise dosing in the treatment of hypertension, obesity, diabetes, hyperlipidemia and overall mortality have been quantified for physicians (Wafsy & Baggish, 2016). Clinical algorithms exist for practitioners to effectively screen patients before they become physically active, which also includes the recommended exercise prescription for various conditions and morbidities (Wafsy & Baggish, 2016). Physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants should also refer to qualified and credentialed exercise professionals to provide a continuum of care for their patients (Sallis, 2011). Primary care providers often find it difficult to locate credentialed exercise professionals. This necessitates the need for more collaboration between the healthcare community and fitness experts (Sallis, 2011). After all, if a physician can refer a morbidly obese patient to a bariatric surgeon, it is only logical that physicians should refer to an exercise professional as well (Sallis, 2011).

**“Obesity is one of the largest contributors to preventable chronic diseases and increased healthcare costs in the nation with employers spending \$506 annually for each obese employee (Segal et al., 2016).”**

Exercise Science entails a broad spectrum of disciplines such as, but not limited to: Exercise Physiology, Motor learning, Psychology of Sport, Biomechanics, and Sports Nutrition. The academic preparation of exercise science professionals includes the integration of such disciplines culminating into a baccalaureate degree (CAAHEP, 2016). Physical education, and ultimately exercise science, is the product of modern medicine in the early twentieth century (Verville, Ditunno, Tuakli-Wosornu, Sandel, & Ditunno, 2015). Physicians were the original physical educators and pioneered the therapeutic benefits of exercise and physical activity in the United States (Verville et al., 2015). Technological advances in medicine have gradually shifted medicine from a primary or preventive focus to a secondary and tertiary construct. However, there is compelling evidence that the medicinal benefits of exercise are once again coming to the scientific and medical forefront. In 2017, the National Institute of Health has committed an unprecedented \$170 million to fund a six-year comprehensive study to examine the biomedical impact of structured exercise on approximately 3,000 pediatric, adult, and geriatric subjects. The study will also incorporate animals as experimental and control subjects (Oaklander, 2016).

### **Business and Industry**

The necessity of an undergraduate degree in Exercise Science is also pertinent to the non-clinical setting. Corporate fitness and wellness programs are

projected to undergo significant financial growth due to an increase in the domestic product over the next three years (Halvorson, 2015). Based on healthcare reform changes, employers are paying more in healthcare premiums and corporate fitness programming is an avenue to reduce healthcare costs and insurance premiums (Archer, 2011). There also seems to be a positive correlation between employee fitness programs and employee health (Karanja, 2015). Hospitals and healthcare networks, as corporate entities, are also rapidly expanding into the medical fitness market as a means to increase branding, increase market share revenue and decrease health care spending (Sloane, 2015). The number of medical fitness centers nationwide has increased by sixty-two percent over the last decade (Sloane, 2015). For instance, a recent article in the Atlanta Journal Constitution highlighted five hospitals in metro Atlanta that have fitness centers managed by highly credentialed exercise professionals (Caldwell, 2016).





A baccalaureate degree in exercise science and a certification by the National Strength and Conditioning Association or the American College of Sports Medicine serve as a strong predictor of personal trainer knowledge and competency (Malek, Nalbone, Berger & Coburn, 2002). These aforementioned trends necessitate that health and fitness facilities employ exercise professionals with a college degree in exercise science, or a related area, and are certificated by a respected professional organization (Williford & Olson, 2011) accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (Riebe, 2012).

### Higher Education

Students matriculating from exercise science programs become credentialed health and wellness professionals often employed by hospitals, corporations, private industry or become entrepreneurs in the fitness industry (CAAHEP, 2016). Therefore, they become a valuable resource to help curtail the epidemic of diseases



and disabilities associated with a sedentary lifestyle within Georgia. It is only prudent that Exercise Science curricula, within the University System of Georgia, focus on evidence based standards and guidelines established by the American College of Sports Medicine (Pescatello, 2013) as recommended by the Committee on the Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences (CoAES) in collaboration with the Committee on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (Riebe, 2011). Exercise Science, as a profession, must adopt a standardized curriculum for university programs, recognize an organization that is an advocate for the profession and endorse a national certification examination as a capstone credential for the exercise professional (Riebe, 2011). Warburton et al. (2011) conducted a review of the scientific literature to determine the required competencies to educate and train qualified clinical exercise professionals. The authors surmised the minimum standards to become a clinical exercise professional to be (a) an undergraduate degree in exercise science coupled with a passing score on a relevant national certification exam (b) the ability to deliver evidence based patient care (c) an understanding of chronic disease as it pertains to patient education and exercise prescription (d) the demonstrable ability to conduct an exercise stress test and (e) the successful completion of a student internship with a minimum of 400 documented hours of clinical experience with special populations (Warburton, Breden, Charlesworth, Foulds & McKenzie, 2011).

## Summary

Exercise professionals, with specialized credentialing, provide a cost-effective resource for hospitals, physician offices, and specialty clinics particularly in a managed care environment (Franklin, Fern, Fowler, Spring & Dejong, 2009). The role of the exercise physiologist encompasses primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions in the realm of rehabilitation, community health, wellness coaching, and corporate health and wellness programming for essentially all chronic diseases (Franklin et al., 2009). The current Exercise Science curricula in the state of Georgia prepare students for many different occupations such as an exercise physiologist/specialist, advanced personal trainer, strength and conditioning coach, pharmaceutical sales, medical equipment sales, public health educator, wellness coach and a host of related allied health related fields. It also serves as a strong foundation to enter graduate level training in exercise physiology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, chiropractic medicine, physician assistant, allopathic, and osteopathic medicine (CAAHEP, 2016). Students matriculating from exercise science programs are poised to meet the growing demands of the healthcare, corporate, academic, and private sector within the state of Georgia. Faculty and administrators should routinely assess student and employer satisfaction pertaining to the academic preparation of future exercise professionals (Ekkekakis, Albee, & Zenko, 2016).

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**“It is only prudent that Exercise Science curricula, within the University System of Georgia, focus on evidence based standards and guidelines established by the American College of Sports Medicine” (Pescatello, 2013).**

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# Program Highlight: Health and Physical Education at the University of West Georgia



The fully accredited health and physical education program at UWG teaches all content based upon the national standards for physical education teacher preparation programs. The rigorous curriculum includes courses of introduction, science and exercise physiology, skill development, practicum/methods, assessment, adapted, health content/methods, coaching, and technology. Recent additions include comprehensive school physical activity programs, and current issues and trends in physical education.



One of the foundational elements to the program is the emphasis on skill development and strategies, where students gain valuable experiences learning and practicing in a variety of content areas, including 10 credits plus labs in:

- \* Educational games, gymnastics, & dance,
- \* Strength & conditioning,
- \* Target & outdoor activities,
- \* Net & wall games, and
- \* Invasion games.





In addition, all teacher candidates enroll in more than 15 credit hours of teaching experiences in local schools before the 15-week student teaching internship. The program is housed in the beautiful Coliseum and surrounding areas which boast state-of-the-art technology-enhanced classrooms, a fitness lab & aerobics studio, five full-sized basketball courts, a walking track, six tennis courts, and large additional outdoor green spaces for numerous physical activities.



Program faculty are committed to excellence in teaching, service, and research, and are well-represented at state, regional, and national conferences, and are well-published in a variety of national journals. Full-time faculty members' areas of expertise include curriculum and instruction, sport-specific pedagogy, supervision, comprehensive school physical activity programs, and mental fitness. The program is part of the Department of Sport Management, Wellness, and Physical Education in the College of Education.



UNIVERSITY of   
West Georgia®

For more information, contact  
Dr. Brian Mosier, Department  
Chair and Associate Professor  
at [bmosier@westga.edu](mailto:bmosier@westga.edu)  
678-839-5424





The 2017 Governor's Shape Honor Roll schools have been selected. This award recognizes elementary, middle and high schools for their dedication to creating a healthy school environment and a culture of wellness for staff, students and community. Georgia's K-12 public schools were invited to submit an application to be recognized by the Governor's Office, the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Department of Public Health for their exceptional participation in the annual fitness assessment data collection process as well as their commitment to efforts that improve student wellness. All applicants who met the requirements of recognition and submitted proper documentation were rewarded for their outstanding efforts. This year, schools were recognized by four tiers of criteria: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum.

Visit [www.georgiashape.org](http://www.georgiashape.org) for a complete list of the 2017 recipients!

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## **Rise Up! 159**

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# Building Engaged Study Abroad Learners Through Early Physical Education Experiences: A Case Study

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## Introduction

In early fall, 2015, whenever I mentioned that I was accompanying the program director and twenty-six first-year college students to Italy for seven weeks, the first reaction was always, “I didn’t know you taught Italian, too!” as though only Italian language could be taught there. However, I was teaching one of over sixty sections of a newly designed required wellness course.

### Why a Wellness Course Should Be Included in a Study-Abroad Cohort Program

A wellness course is ideally suited for teaching in a format that is partly in the U.S. and partly abroad, because of its structure in which the student investigates individual personal behaviors and their effects on total wellness. Abroad, the student has the opportunity to explore how engaging in different behaviors in dissimilar

communities – home and abroad -- influences the student’s personal wellness, as well as how a different culture perceives and addresses wellness issues. But to explore, the student has to understand how to engage in experiential learning and be able to take responsibility for their own scholarship.

### Methods: An Overview of the 2015 Study-Abroad Program

The program was a new initiative at a large, public, four-year university in Georgia. The students in the cohort signed up for four courses, two of which were taught on campus during the first seven weeks of the semester. The students’ writing course was taught in the seven weeks overseas.





The wellness course spanned the fifteen weeks of the full fall semester. Focused on making a positive behavior change to improve wellness, which takes more than a few weeks, and requiring use of the university's human performance lab for physical fitness testing, the full semester was needed. A number of recognized High Impact Practices for First-Year students (Tukibayeva & Gonyea, 2013) were included in the curriculum: Diversity, Global Learning, Service and Community-Based Learning, Collaborative Projects, Writing-Intensive Assignments, and Common Intellectual Experiences (Association of American Colleges and Universities, N.D.). The curriculum adhered to the good-practice principles synthesized by Chickering and Gamson (Seifort, Gillig, Hanson, Pascarella, & Blaich, 2014).

### **Discovering Student Weaknesses**

Many lessons were learned about education abroad with first-year students. The biggest lesson learned was that most of the students were not explorers, despite nearly half of them having previously traveled abroad. Perhaps this does not seem very important, but we found that it was. In fact, it colored all aspects of the experience, because the students waited for us to show them things, direct them, and narrate for them. It affected their interaction with their coursework, as well. They were not equipped to engage in the High Impact Practices provided to them. They had a lack of curiosity. Even though they had signed on to study in another country, they did not understand how to learn more than their textbook and in-class lectures presented. Attempting to

remedy this shortcoming was a primary focus of the revisions on which the team began working.

The most obvious shortcoming was that the students' K-12 experiences had not helped them develop curiosity or the desire to learn from their surroundings. They expressed concerns when asked to analyze material and draw conclusions, or to identify related elements in their environment. They wanted detailed instructions and a rubric to help them navigate their environment.

### **How Prior Student Experiences Negatively Affected Independent Learning**

It was learned that much of their previous travel had placed the students in an English-speaking "bubble" where their tour guides showed them sights from a tour bus; or their mission trip stayed in one place, while they interacted mostly with other American teens; or they visited sites in international cities where foreign tourists were celebrated. In Italy, they were living in apartments throughout an ancient Tuscan hill town, interacting with local residents, and traveling to other cities using public transportation.

**“The most obvious shortcoming was that the students’ K-12 experiences had not helped them develop curiosity or the desire to learn from their surroundings. ”**

They needed to be equipped to question and explore their surroundings and their relationship to the course content in order to take full advantage of their opportunities. They were not daring. With backgrounds that included learning skills exactly as taught in most of their K-12 physical education and health classes, the students were stymied as to how to explore wellness and make connections between experiences and their wellness course content.

### **Assessing the Course Design**

Though there were aspects of the course design that needed improvements in order to develop explorative learners, there were some aspects of the course design that worked exceptionally well. It was necessary for students to have access to the university human performance lab to complete their physical fitness assessments. Having access to and being encouraged to use the Student Recreation and Wellness Centers helped them create and solidify positive wellness behaviors. They had personal behavior goals in place before traveling.

In the seven weeks on campus, students were following directions, making friends, participating in team-building activities, and doing a lot of packing in multiple suitcases. Forming firm friendships and acquiring basic skills for interacting with other students, faculty, and staff served them well as they began to travel. But they weren't exploring, questioning, or forming hypotheses and the faculty wanted to improve these skills. It was believed that reordering some of the assignments

might help students become more confident in their ability to take responsibility for their learning, partly by exploring their surroundings on their own.

### **Study Abroad: Student Discomfort with the Unfamiliar**

With boots on the ground in Tuscany, the students were encouraged to examine their new home. There was much to see in the hill town where the cohort lived. Every few doorways opened into a medieval or renaissance church filled with rich art. Cobblestone streets led steeply up -- or steeply down. Shops were tiny and crowded with colorful wares, but also frequently hid Etruscan and Roman ruins dating back to 700 BCE. Traveling markets often lined the streets, providing insights into cultural elements from surrounding regions. Ancient artifacts were next to modern conveniences. The Italians were friendly and frequently multilingual. Even with this bounty, the students often restricted themselves to walking from their apartments to the classroom, to lunch and dinner, to the gelato shop or the café. Many of them clung to the early friendships they made at the start of the semester on campus, forming exclusive groups. Once they found a café that offered Wi-Fi, hamburgers, and a good *caffé americano*, many of them looked no further. They spent a lot of their time interacting with their family and friends back home, immersed in social media or Skype.



## **Assessing the Disconnects Between Things Students Observed and Their Course Content**

Students saw the lack of overweight and obesity in Italy immediately, but were still surprised by the doubling and tripling of their usual daily steps as they made two, and sometimes three, trips each day from the main gate at the bottom of the city to the classroom in the fortress atop the mountain. They noted some differences in cuisine, especially the dearth of fresh vegetables and fruits as winter approached. But they asked few questions, passively accepting their professors' lectures on the culture, sights, and course topics. They did not speculate on whether the lack of public transportation and the resultant walking might result in lower BMI measures, or wonder why there was little fresh produce. They did not wonder why heat was turned off in public buildings until November 1, even though they were learning about environmental sustainability.

When asked to prepare a presentation on a small area of the town assigned to them, most used the QR Reader on their smart phones at key tourist spots to call up an English mini-description and read it aloud, verbatim, to their classmates and a visiting Dean, directly

from their phones. They did not include assigned elements in their presentations, such as how someone living in this town could maintain physical fitness or improve spiritu-

al wellness, because they did not know how to find out that information and they did not ask for assistance.

Many of them suffered from more stress than anticipated, with over half the students naming the Stress Management unit as the most helpful in the wellness course, although they reported infrequently using the techniques provided in the unit. Many students were homesick. The faculty believed the inability to feel fully a part of their new community stemmed from their hesitancy to explore and interact fully with it.

## **Re-crafting the Cohort Experience for the Fall 2016 Program**

While planning for the fall 2016 program, the faculty examined the work and habits of the students who were most successful (even if briefly) in the Fall 2015 program. For example, one group from the Fall 2015 program chose to do two independent walks per week during their time in Italy. They found country roads and climbed neighboring hills. They were more observant of their surroundings, because the surroundings were unfamiliar and the students wanted to be sure they found their way home. Because they observed, they found several interesting areas, local businesses, local historical landmarks, and even discovered a small chapel they then chose to frequent for stress management. Through their exploration, the students were able to engage with each other and share their discoveries with the larger group.



Another group from Fall 2015 figured out a complicated train schedule, enabling them to attend the International Chocolate Festival in Perugia one weekend. They learned how to be competent train travelers, and were then confident enough to venture farther afield during their free time, bringing back information they would never have learned had they not been willing to dare the unknown by exploring beyond their familiar boundaries. In so doing, they learned a great deal about the similarities and differences in wellness lifestyles between Italy and the United States.

In fall 2016, year two of the program, with a new group of students, many aspects of the course were revised and reordered. The course revisions were designed to help students quickly become more confident

about their abilities to be true scholars and explorers. New assignments were crafted to capitalize on the techniques those first students used to create their successes. Other assignments were re-ordered to force students to explore their surroundings before leaving for Europe.

### **Redesigning Activities – Methods, Year Two**

In designing additional experiential learning opportunities for the students in 2016, there was a conscious focus on student independence and confidence-building. A team-building day was held at the local Outdoor YMCA. Students were directed to observe each other to determine which students had highly-developed leadership abilities and how they used them, which students attacked problem-solving creatively, and which students were best at implementing the ideas of others.





A cooking class was held on campus, where the university dietitian taught students to make simple but nutritious meals using foods they could easily obtain in Italy. Students located various entities on campus and interviewed staff to learn how these resources could be utilized.

Because of some logistical issues, the study abroad portion of year two began, not with the flight in and a charter bus trip to our “home” city, but with two and a half days in Rome. Before leaving, students were sent a website on the Roman *nasoni* (drinking fountains) (4) and a moderately-successful competition to find the greatest number of examples was initiated—requiring careful consideration of their surroundings as they were moving through the city. Students were asked if the *nasoni* were examples of sustainable or unsustainable use of resources and if/how a similar system could contribute to environmental wellness in the U.S. Arriving by plane, students had to learn how to purchase train tickets from the airport to the city center, drop off their luggage at the hotel, and purchase tickets for Rome’s subway system to begin sightseeing in an international city, all before they recovered from jet lag. In the evening, they were given funds to purchase meals in nearby restaurants apart from the faculty; a rendezvous location for after dinner was marked on their tourist maps. In 48 hours, they visited highlights as a group: the Colosseum, the Forum, the Borghesi Gardens, the Spanish Steps, the Trevi fountain, a number of churches (including St. Pe-

ter’s), The Vatican Museum and Sistine Chapel, the Piazza Navona, the Campo di Fiori, and the Pantheon. Steps were counted, meals were analyzed for nutrient content, and students were asked to develop a mental picture of the life of someone who lived in ancient or Renaissance Rome.

The students went walking through Rome together well into the night on their second day in Italy, followed by a mad rush from Trevi with their professors to get back on the subway before the 48-hour passes expired! On Day 3 they again purchased tickets to travel by train to their new home-away-from-home. Somehow, in two days, they had become a team, working well together to get their mounds of luggage on and off the train during the short stops. They watched the countryside instead of their tablets. Throughout the remainder of the program, there was camaraderie between all the students—no exclusive cliques were formed, and students supported each other in schoolwork and social events. More extroverted classmates drew out the most introverted students. Groups formed and re-formed for travel on free weekends, developing multiple healthy relationships which were enthusiastically dissected during the module on relationship-building. Students were able to identify healthy behaviors in which they engaged to form these relationships. Six months later they are still fast friends, and have organized get-togethers for the entire cohort.

The students reported much less stress than their counterparts the previous year; they also revealed they had frequently used the stress management techniques they were learning about. They began to design some of their own experiences and suggested ways to learn and use wellness material, such as designing a group dinner, forming work out groups, engaging in physical competitions, and shopping at local markets instead of chain groceries.

One of the assignments students were given during the 2015 program was a “scavenger hunt.” Begun during the sixth week of the seven weeks abroad, the students were assigned, in groups, to an area of town. Each student in the group was asked to identify a landmark, do a little research to learn more about it, and present briefly on that landmark to the rest of the group. As mentioned, most of them read from their phones, using QR-coded placards in the town to obtain their information. The students were given a detailed cultural and historical walking tour of the city the day we arrived; to complete the assignment, they merely expanded the information they had already been given.

This assignment was reordered for 2016. The students were given a scavenger hunt the second week of the semester on campus, where they had to find and identify resources they would be using throughout their college careers. Once abroad, the students capitalized on skills gained from the earlier experience to complete a second scavenger hunt. The 2016 revised walking tour consisted of a saunter through the mile or so of the

town’s main street on the day of arrival, where their professors assigned areas of town to each group. They were specifically directed to the Trattoria where they would have dinner that night, and the Fortress where classes would be held. Other than that, they were told nothing. They were given four days to find specific items within their assigned area: something historically important to the city, something that could be used to practice spirituality, something that could help a resident improve or maintain physical wellness, something that promoted environmental wellness, some form of art, and something surprising. Students then provided their classmates with a tour of their assigned area of town. The students made very creative selections, and uncovered far more information, when they had limited instructions and more freedom of choice. Instead of obvious tourist sites, they identified small shrines, significant sculptures, recycling strategies, and hidden doorways. They were able to speak knowledgeably about these locations without referring to notes or websites. They took responsibility for their own learning.



“Somehow, in two days, they had become a team, working well together to get their mounds of luggage on and off the train during the short stops. They watched the countryside instead of their

A third scavenger hunt added at the end of the 2016 program provided evidence of even more creative exploration that had not been evident in 2015. One student discovered a tree species which was introduced to the country only about 100 years ago, and commented on the inversion of what Americans are used to (a new tree surrounded by ancient buildings, rather than ancient trees surrounded by modern buildings). Another student discovered a private garden outside the city walls. One spoke about the nearly-invisible door in a cathedral’s dome behind which Jewish refugees were hidden during World War II, and spoke about the physical fitness required of the children who came from France on foot to be hidden in the dome. A different student identified the one point at the top of the mountain where she could sit to watch both sunrise and sunset to manage stress.

However, the faculty still felt it required extraordinary and continuous efforts to make students excited about investigating their new surroundings. Many of

the students still chose to accompany their professors on optional trips during free weekends, rather than striking out on their own, although none stayed back on free weekends.

While reflecting on the successes of the 2016 program, the faculty considered the following questions: What could happen before students enrolled in our classes so that they would already be more adventurous learners when they arrived on campus? Perhaps more important, what could help them attack their campus courses with the same enthusiasm they did during their time in Europe? What could help all students be explorers, not just those who travel abroad?

### **Educational Techniques That Need to Change**

In evaluating the students’ struggle to maximize their learning while studying abroad, the faculty asked several questions:

- Where had their education failed students that they preferred to observe life through technology rather than experience the real thing?
- What might make students more likely to scrutinize their surroundings to discover new things and consider alternative cultural modalities as viable?
- Why were students not awed by the very fact of walking paths that ancient peoples walked thousands of years ago; and why didn’t they want to learn more about the way of life of those ancient people and how it related to what we know today about positive wellness behaviors?

The answers may stem from the way students are educated throughout their school experiences. There is so much information students are expected to acquire that teachers often feel they must simply provide it in reading material or lectures rather than encouraging the students to explore books and online materials, visit different locations, interview knowledgeable people, and conduct experiments. By the time the students matriculate to the university, their learning style is set. The wellness course uses several flipped classroom techniques, but students still often sat passively waiting for more information about how to interact with the materials they read or experiences outside of class, rather than jumping in to make connections and move their knowledge forward. Frequently they did not prepare at all, trusting that their professors would “give in” and lecture on material that had been assigned to them, but which they had not read.

To improve student outcomes in higher education, students must arrive at the university with an understanding of, and experience in, inquiry-based learning. It is critical to immerse students in exploration of pertinent course content and encourage them to make connections between daily life and that content from their earliest experiences in school.

### **Looking Toward Pre-College Improvements**

It was clear that the students needed more opportunities to explore their surroundings *before* they arrived on campus. We could not provide them with all the keys to a complex style of learning-through-exploration in

their first seven weeks as college students. They had many other things to learn in those weeks, from how to do laundry in the dorm, to how to find the registrar’s office, to how to complete and submit work on time without daily reminders. The students needed their education, beginning in Kindergarten, to include exploratory assignments, rather than always being told what they must learn and how they should proceed to learn it.

### **The Potential Role of the K-12 Health and Physical Activity Classrooms**

Because it allows physical exploration in addition to mental exploration, health and physical education classrooms provide an extraordinary opportunity to infuse investigation into the school curriculum. Starting with creative movement and continuing throughout the student’s health and physical education experience, students can be provided with assignments that require them to take what they know and expand their knowledge. Instead of being taught only one way to approach skills, they can be asked to try different ways to reach the same goal, and determine which works best for them as individuals. They can begin by setting rules and boundaries, then revising them to find what works best. As they become more experienced, students can design activities that utilize skills they are learning. They can take photographs of their community and use the pictures as inspiration for these activities.

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They can design obstacle courses, rhythms, games, and dances, where the physical environment is key to their success. They can create movement and games designed for a specific space, or adapt movement to different spaces, requiring them to explore their surroundings and evaluate potential. Subjects they are studying in the classroom can inform their work in physical education, helping them identify similarities and connections between ideas that at first glance seem to be very different. They can explore their own strengths and weaknesses.

Some ideas for guiding students to question are:

- How do math and science inform the 7 Dimensions of Wellness?
- Where can you find additional credible information about health and wellness?
- How does the food you consume affect your success in school/leisure activities/sports? What happens if you change your diet?
- How do rules change when the playing field is different?
- What interactions make a team stronger and more successful? Where do you fit into the team, and how can you help it excel?
- How do diverse cultures in your community impact how that community structures itself?
- What are your personal strengths in relationships/team building? Design games that use the personal strengths of the players in your group.
- How can you personally market positive health and fitness behaviors to your community?

- Can you design a lesson to teach a skill to your classmates? What happens to your learning when you teach a classmate?
- How can you affect public policy to create communities with no food deserts and designs that encourage health, fitness, and total wellness? Where does your own community excel, and where does it fall short? What can your class do to make a change?

Helping students become more curious and investigative will improve their abilities to do research, solve problems creatively, engage in critical thinking and analysis, draw conclusions, make connections, and generally get more out of their educational experiences. It will help them become global travelers and global citizens, but it will also help them be engaged citizens at home. Their health and physical education teachers have the unique opportunity to mentor them in this journey from the first day they enter the classroom.

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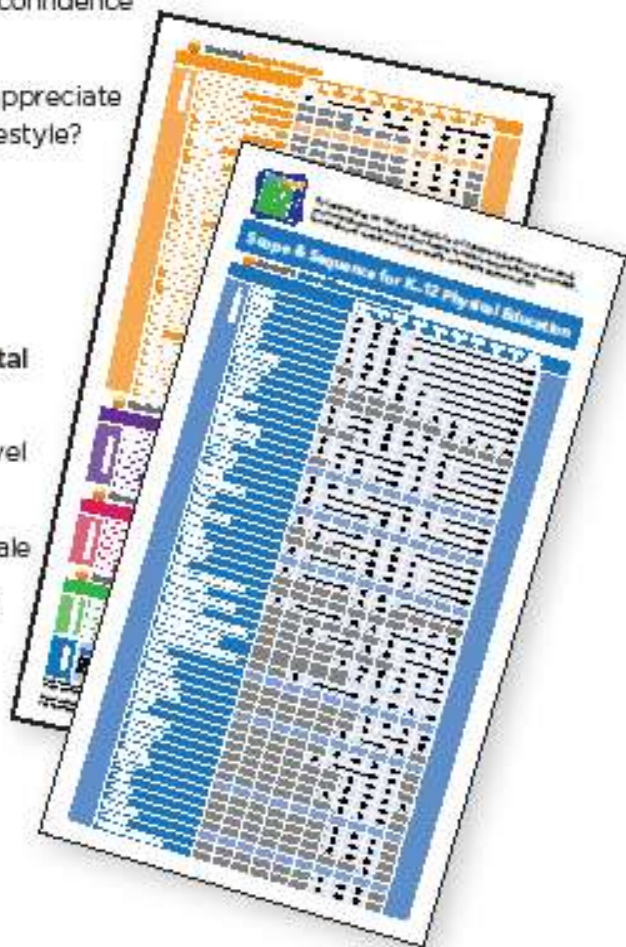
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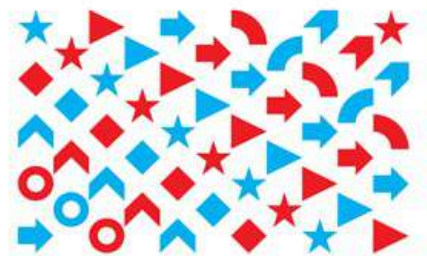
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*At 18 months, a team of surgeons operated for eight hours to fix Bran's complex set of heart problems. Doctors had cautioned the family that Bran would likely need multiple surgeries by the age of 16. He is due for his annual visit to the cardiologist to see what lies ahead in the coming year. So, when Bran asks friends and family to donate to Jump Rope For Heart to help the American Heart Association fund research to learn more about the heart and how to fix it, he's speaking from his own heart.*

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## HEART HERO

Michael, age 10

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- \_\_\_\_\_ Middle School
- \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Two-Year College
- \_\_\_\_\_ College/University
- \_\_\_\_\_ City/County Administrator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

**Other Memberships:**

AAHPERD \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No      GAE \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
 Membership #: \_\_\_\_\_      Membership #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Interest:**

**Division (check one)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Dance
- \_\_\_\_\_ General
- \_\_\_\_\_ Health
- \_\_\_\_\_ Physical Education

**Sections (check two)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ College/University
- \_\_\_\_\_ NAGWS/Men's Athletics
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recreation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Future Professional (Students check here)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary PE
- \_\_\_\_\_ Middle School PE
- \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary PE
- \_\_\_\_\_ Exercise Science