

Holistic Teaching and Learning Podcast: Debra Weistar

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Abstract

The Holistic Teaching and Learning Podcast is presented by students in the Holistic Teaching and Learning Center (HTLC) at Southern Oregon University. Ultimately, a holistic approach to teaching is taking a step back and understanding that catering to the soul is most important. The pursuits of holistic education are compassion, wholeness, awe, wonder, and a sense of purpose. When you foster the soul of young students self-efficacy follows. When students believe that they are important and supported, the world is their oyster. The purpose of education is to bring out the best in every student and that starts with the soul.

Keywords: holistic education, early childhood education, outdoor education, climate justice, outdoor learning programs

In this podcast episode, host Julissa Taitano and guest co-hosts Emilie McGeary and Robin Martin speak with Debra Weistar, Program Director, facilitator and curriculum developer at Synergia Learning Ventures, on the topic of connecting with students using environmental and outdoor education. Listen as they discuss the complexities and methods of connecting with and educating young learners using nature as a classroom.

Those Damn Kids, a teen forum. As co-founder and program director, Debra brings to Synergia a diverse background in outdoor education, media literacy, and parenting/education.

Julissa Taitano is an Elementary Education major eager to see the impact of holistic approaches on public education. She is part of the Tech Sub-Committee and co-organizer of the HTL-Club. Outside of HTLC, she is a student athlete on the women's wrestling team.

[Click here](#) for the link to the Podcast on Spreaker!

Acknowledgement

Debra Weistar is Program Director, facilitator and curriculum developer at Synergia Learning Ventures. Debra's background in education began when she and Tom decided to homeschool their daughter. After co-founding a non-profit organization in 1986, she expanded on the community education classes she developed, and with Tom ran the Outdoor Education department of the organization, serving as a challenge ropes course trainer, wilderness teacher and guide. From 1990 to 2002 she served the organization as secretary of the Board of Directors. Debra has authored numerous articles on parenting and education, she is the co-author of the book *Win-Win Games for All Ages*, *Cooperative Activities for Building Social Skills*, and speaks on these topics at conferences. She was the creator and host of two long running radio programs *Circle Around*, celebrating children's literature, and