



**No Child Left Inside: Examining Rationale and Methods  
to Use the Outdoors as a Classroom  
Online Participant Syllabus**

### **Course Description**

This course is intended for K-12 educators seeking ways to expand their teaching expertise by applying outdoor education skills and awareness as a means to improve student learning. Educators will be provided with opportunities to explore and make sense of current research and to become confident in their abilities to utilize the outdoors as they plan lessons within their curricular areas.

### **Course Prerequisites**

No prerequisites for this course are required.

### **System Requirements**

- Computer with word processing software
- Internet access connection
- Online video viewing capabilities/Adobe flash player
- Software capable of reading PDF files

### **Text Books/Supplemental Reading**

Will be provided within 1-3 days of class start date.

### **Global Goals of the Course**

To deepen and/or apply the content and skills of the teacher's existing professional knowledge base by meeting the following global goals of this course:

1. To examine the causes which have created children who could be described as "Nature Deficit" (NBPTS 1, 3, 4; InTASC 1-3)
2. To investigate how exposure to nature and outdoor education can benefit children and their education (NBPTS 1, 3, 4; InTASC 1-3)
3. To understand basic foundations of environmental education and common pitfalls in its practices (NBPTS 1-5; InTASC 1-8)
4. To explore and apply a variety of outdoor education teaching methods (NBPTS 1-5; InTASC 1-8)

### **Instructional Objectives**

By the conclusion of the course, each participant should be able to do the following:

1. Analyze how their upbringing differed from that of today's youth by identifying experiences in their lives that are uncommon among children today.
  - 1.1. Explain what "nature deficit disorder" is through self-reflection and group and partner discussions.
  - 1.2. Explore factors that make today's children experience a "nature deficit" in their daily lives.
2. Assess how outdoor education can benefit student learning.
  - 2.1. Examine the research regarding the benefits of outdoor education.
  - 2.2. Be aware of how powerful learning outside the classroom can be in raising standards of achievement in schools by reflecting on examples presented.
  - 2.3. Recognize that experiences in learning outside the classroom can meet many curricular objectives.
  - 2.4. Demonstrate how learning styles and interdisciplinary teaching can work in outdoor education by creating examples to share.
  - 2.5. Describe the "eighth intelligence" and identify how this relates to educators who embrace outdoor education and to the students they teach.
3. Explore types of outdoor education and determine their value across curricular areas.
  - 3.1. Diagram the pros and cons of each type of outdoor learning.
  - 3.2. Develop a variety of outdoor education opportunities.
  - 3.3. Construct methods for introducing learning outside the classroom following sound foundations of outdoor education.
  - 3.4. Review different supervision styles and how each style can benefit or hinder learning.
  - 3.5. Assess a variety of different follow-up activities for effective learning.
4. Understand basic foundations of environmental education.
  - 4.1. Address the importance of exposing all students to outdoor instructional activities during their school years.
  - 4.2. Apply principles of environmental education and identify elements and causes of ecophobia.
5. Create an environmental lesson or unit which encompasses the major principles and research important to outdoor education.
  - 5.1. Develop a comprehensive plan that includes timelines, objectives, obstacles, and rationales.
  - 5.2. Construct an educationally sound outdoor lesson.

### **Teaching Methodology and Delivery Model**

Teaching methodologies used in this course are specifically designed to maximize learning in a graduate-level, online distance-learning model. Each course facilitator is

trained and/or experienced in facilitating graduate-level online courses as well as the specific content and skills of this course.

1. Online methodologies include instructor/expert presentations, directed skill practice, Forum and Assessment completion, as well as the synthesis of new knowledge and skills in designing educational applications.
2. The course is taught in a supportive learning environment with teacher-participant interaction and feedback.
3. Content focuses on the presentation of advanced concepts linked to instructional strategies which accommodate learning needs of a diverse student population.
4. Course content, activities, and assignments are organized into Milestones that participants complete during the 12-week span of the course. Course content is intended to cover material equal to 45 seat hours of instructional time.
5. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills to their own teaching situation.

### **Learning Assessment**

Formative assessment of learning objectives for this course is conducted informally throughout the course via discussion, critiques, self-evaluations, instructor feedback, and activities requiring participants to make sense of new knowledge and/or skills within their realm of teaching. Additionally, three formative assessments are embedded within the course. Summative assessment for the course occurs in the form of a final project which requires each participant to synthesize class content and apply it within the teacher's specific teaching environment. Copies of the course performance assessment rubrics are included in Appendices A-C.

### **Compliance with National Board of Professional Teaching Standards**

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards represents the highest level of professional achievement in the continuum of teacher professional development. There are five core principles (standards) which cover five aspects of professional educational practice: (1) commitment to students and their learning, (2) knowledge of subject matter and instructional strategies, (3) management and monitoring of student learning, (4) systematic reflection about the teaching profession to learn and grow from experience, and (5) collaborative participation in the educational learning community.

### **Compliance with Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards**

The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium's work is guided by one basic premise: An effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels. All teachers should meet the following standards: (1) learner development, (2) learning differences, (3) learning environments, (4) content

knowledge, (5) application of content, (6) assessment, (7) planning for instruction, (8) instructional strategies, (9) professional learning and ethical practices, and (10) leadership and collaboration.

### Final Projects

Participants taking courses for professional development unit (not-for-credit) must follow the same Participation Expectations as posted in the course syllabus. Participants complete readings and tasks as outlined in the Task List. Forum Post Reflections are also required. However, participants will be exempt from completing the Formative and Summative Assessments unless otherwise noted. Proof of seat hours will be presented to the participants after completing the state required course evaluation located on the student portal.

In keeping with best instructional and assessment practices, this course requires participants to demonstrate synthesis and application of course knowledge in an applied final project linked to the instructional objectives of this course. Assessment of the project should not be limited to the quantity of work submitted but should carefully consider the quality and intellectual value of the work.

Final projects are due and will be submitted to the instructor within 12 weeks of the allotted class time. Unless the instructor states otherwise, all papers are expected to be properly formatted electronically.

### Assessments and Grading

Throughout the course, participants will engage in both formal and informal formative and summative assessments. Points are assigned based on a four-point criterion rubric specifically delineated for each assessment that can be further defined as follows:

**Distinguished:** The assessment is highly imaginative; demonstrates critical thought; is unique; shows substantial application to one's own teaching or professional position; *goes above and beyond requirements*; is creative; demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge of transition-related subject matter; shows individual's personality; is professional in presentation and appearance; and demonstrates considerable effort. The assessment is exceptionally completed and demonstrates clear understanding of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Distinguished" on the course rubric.

**Proficient:** The assessment is well-organized and complete; is effectively and clearly presented; demonstrates clear understandings; applies what has been learned to the author's own classroom situation; clearly shows connections; is detailed; and is thoughtful and supported with ideas. A thoroughly completed assessment demonstrates that the participant shows awareness of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how

the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in “Proficient” on the course rubric.

**Basic:** This is the lowest passing grade. The assessment meets minimum requirements; includes general information but lacks descriptive detail; shows limited application to teaching/learning; and lacks originality. This denotes work that does not meet **all** aspects of standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in “Basic” on the course rubric.

**Unsatisfactory:** The assessment is missing evidence or information; is sloppy and poorly organized; demonstrates only surface understandings; shows no evidence of application to the author’s own teaching situation; is poorly written; and does not meet minimum standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in “Unsatisfactory” on the course rubric.

The assessments for this course are weighted as follows:

Participation and Reflection	30%
Formative Assessments	30%
Summative Assessments	40%

### Academic Honesty and Integrity

All participants are expected to maintain academic honesty and integrity by doing their own work to the best of their ability. Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the participant receiving a zero for that assignment or paper.

### Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act, participants who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class, are encouraged to inform the Director of Academic Affairs prior to the first class session. Reasonable academic accommodations, aids, and adjustments may be made as needed to provide for equitable participation.

### Attendance

Participants will have 12 weeks from the time of their first date of login to complete the course. They will need to contact their instructor and The Connecting Link at (888) 550-5465 should they not be able to complete the online class in the time given. Failure to complete all work in the 12 week time frame may result in an **incomplete** or a grade of **F** for the work, depending on the reason for the delay.

### **University Compliance**

Course content and instruction are bound by policies associated with the university granting academic credit for the course. Such policies include, but are not limited to: academic integrity and honor codes, institutional objectives and grade grievance procedures. These policies are located within the official academic catalogs which can be accessed through the university's official website.