



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

### **Reading/Research**

There is not a required textbook for this class. However, refer to weekly reading assignments and additional materials within each milestone.

### **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.

### 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.

## Topics Agenda

### **Milestone One: The Evolution of "Nature Deficit Disorder" and Major Categories of Research**

Participants will discuss how conditions have changed since their childhood. An examination of the research related to how these changes affect children, families, and adults will occur. The question "Why don't kids go outside anymore?" will be answered by comparing research findings from a variety of sources. Identification of some major categories of research related to why children don't go outside will be presented. The existence of "Nature Deficit Disorder" will be examined.

### **Milestone Two: Benefits of Outdoor Education**

An examination of how outdoor education is beneficial and ways it can be used will be explored. Outdoor education comes in many forms. The foundations for good outdoor education use will be presented along with implementation theories. A comparison of the various forms of outdoor education will be created.

### **Milestone Three: Using the Schoolyard as a Classroom**

This module will identify how a schoolyard can be used in math, science, social studies, art, language arts, PE, music, and character education.

### **Milestone Four: Outdoor Education Legislation & Movement**

No Child Left Inside Legislation and the Outdoor Bill of Rights will be reviewed.

### **Milestone Five: Being an Effective Outdoor Educator**

Elements of an effective outdoor educator will be examined.

### **Milestone Six: Analyzing Outdoor Programs**

Examples of successful and unsuccessful outdoor programs will be provided and reviewed. Exploration of various models and activities will be conducted.

### **Milestone Seven: A History of Environmental Education**

A history of the environmental education movement will be presented. How environmental education is used and ways it should be implemented will be presented.

## **Milestone Eight: The Abundant Childhood and Steps to Implementing an Outdoor Education Program**

Participants will explore the balance of “the abundant childhood” including an emphasis on nature, creativity, and health. Participants will reflect upon outdoor education in their own school and community. Steps to begin the planning process to bring outdoor education to the school and community will be presented.

### **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 the 8 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 specific dates to start the course and complete the requirement assignments. 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.

### Late Work and Make-Up Policy

Participants are expected to keep pace with assignments and expectations. If a situation arises in which an assignment cannot be completed, the participant is expected to make arrangements with the instructor for the timely submission of such work. Failure to complete all work in this time frame will 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.