

Level 1: Introduction to Lessons in Educating Out-of-Doors (L.E.O.)
1 Credit Course in Teacher Training
Instructor: Kurt Valenta, MEd

Course Description:

Lessons in Educating Outdoors (L.E.O.) will take you step by step through the process of transforming your schoolyard into a rich learning environment. You will gain confidence for stepping into the outdoors by learning how to apply an integrated cross-curricular lens to your curriculum. Using the natural world's variety of materials and habitats you will be able to craft experiential-oriented lessons that are meaningful, place-based and inquiry-driven thereby strengthening the skills your students will need to meet 21st Century learning objectives. You will use your own school site, constructing lessons by incorporating the familiar as well as accessible. Resulting lesson plans will meet educational objectives and State standards for the elementary classroom.

Goals:

The goals to be achieved in L.E.O. training are threefold:

1. To bring an awareness of the natural world and demonstrate how the endless variety of nature's materials and settings, can be used through-out the school year, to create meaningful and impactful lessons.
2. To imbue the classroom teacher with the confidence, the ability and the management skills to readily use the outside classroom alongside the more traditional facilities.
3. To use a school-specific environment and bring real-world connections for students by applying inquiry and problem-solving with cross-curricular learning opportunities

Additional Themes also Addressed:

1. How to create a culture of curiosity and wonder through seeking a passion for nature.
2. How to identify individual site risks, anticipate individual behaviors and mitigate them by creating a code of safe conduct for the outdoor setting.
3. How to identify individuals in the school community, their strengths and skills and integrate them as allies and/or as classroom resources.
4. The sharing of prior experiences as to the application of play, group activities, stories, technology, and strategies employed in the creation of a functional outdoor classroom.
5. Establishing a collaborative, supportive cohort of teachers whose longer term vision supports the implementation and nurturing of a school-wide, permanent focus on the outdoor classroom to enrich the student/teacher learning journey.

Course Projects:

1. Create an inventory and map of habitats, eco-systems and sites of special interest around the school yard which will contain a list unique flora and/or fauna and features.
2. Identify the “Big Ideas” in the use of the outdoor classroom.
3. Develop a seasonal mini-unit using the identified areas and materials around the school
4. Written reflections of the journey undertaken as relating to one’s personal and professional growth as well as one’s personal perspective of the subject matter.
5. Develop a set of tools and strategies to increase the teachable moments in outdoor spaces

Readings:

1. Broda, Herbert W. *Schoolyard-Enhanced Learning*. Portland, ME. Stenhouse Publishers, 2007
2. Sobel, David. *Childhood & Nature*. Portland, ME. Stenhouse Publishers, 2008 - Selected Readings
3. Smith, Gregory A., Sobel, David. *Place- And Community-Based Education in Schools*, NY, NY. Routledge, 2010 - Selected Readings
4. Rothstein, Dan., Santana, Luz. *Make Just One Change*. Cambridge, MA. Harvard Education Press, 2011 - Selected Readings
5. Hutchison, David. *A Natural History of Place in Education*. NY, NY. Teachers College Press, 2004 – Selected Readings
6. Stone, Michael., Barlow, Zenobia. *Ecological Literacy*, San Francisco, CA. Sierra Club Books, 2005 – Selected Readings
7. Umphrey, Michael. *The Power of Community-Centered Education*. Lanham, MD. Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2007 – Selected Readings
8. Sobel, David. *Beyond Ecophobia*. Great Barrington, MA. Orion Society 1996
9. Stager, Curt. *Field Notes from the Northern Forest*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998 – Selected Chapters
10. Sobel, David. *Mapmaking with Children: Sense of Place Education for the Elementary Years*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998
11. Jensen, Derrick. *Thinking Outside the Classroom, An Interview with Zenobia Barlow*. The Sun. March 2002
12. Kohl, Herbert. *I Won’t Learn From You*. Minneapolis, MN: The New Press, 1994
13. Hammerman, D.R.; Hammerman, W.M. Editors. *Outdoor Education, A Book of Readings, 2nd Edition*. Minneapolis, MN: Burgess Publishing Co. 1973 – Selected Chapters
14. Donaldson, G.W.; Goering, O. *Perspectives on Outdoor Education...Readings*. Dubuque, IW: Wm. C. Brown Company. 1972 – Selected Chapters
15. Gardner, Howard. *Intelligence Reframed, Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*. New York: Basic Books. 1999 – Selected Chapters
16. Louv, Richard. *Last Child in the Woods*. Workman Publishing, NY.NY. 2005

17. Robbins, Annie. *Synthesizing the Outdoor Education Literature to Create a Definition and List of Primary Objectives* . University of Wyoming. 2015
http://repository.uwyo.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=plan_b
18. Outdoor Education – Research Summary <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/leaf/school-grounds/documents/outdoor%20education%20research%20for%20school%20Grounds.pdf>
19. Children’s contact with Outdoors and Nature: A Focus on Educators & Educational Settings - <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/nature-based-learning/Research/childrens-contact-w-outdoors.pdf>
20. Learning New Ways: Transcending Outdoor Environmental Education - <http://clearingmagazine.org/archives/11783>