

Outdoor Learning Training Course

Young people of all ages benefit from real life 'hands on' experiences. Seeing, hearing, touching and exploring the natural world help young people connect what they learn in school to their life outside it and to the world around them.

This workshop will encourage and support participants to use their local natural environment. We will explore the local environment using a range of hands-on techniques, plan actions to conserve the natural world, and discuss how outdoor learning can be delivered within schools.

Workshop objectives:

- Explore approaches which engage young people with the natural environment.
- Experience and share a range of activities for using outdoors.
- Discuss fears, hopes and concerns about outdoor learning.
- Consider how to develop a programme of activities.

Delivery will be mainly through practical activities outdoors, group work and reflections on how to develop programmes that work for the participants own situation.

Please note that we will be spending lots of time outdoors during the sessions so come prepared.

DAY 1

Time	Details
0900	Welcome
0915	Session 1: Introduction (outside) We will start by getting to know each other, our hopes for the workshop.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions (20 mins) – using stones to find pairs and introduce each other; use theme of ‘journey to being here today;’ things which inspire & grateful for. Participants are asked to reflect on a question relating to themselves. They then walk around until the leader says ‘Pair-up’. They then raise their hand and meet the hand of someone else. They have a given amount of time to share their answers to the question. Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was your first thought when you woke up this morning? - What events in your life have led you to be interested in outdoor learning? - What is your favourite number of legs? - What are your passions in life? - Show your favourite movement. • What are we grateful for – 5 things we are grateful for on our journey here today; link with being grateful towards the natural world and each other...kindness. • Nature Mandala (20 mins) – Guided activity of nature mandala. Exploring place through the senses, raising curiosity and creating a narrative/map. The Mandala (Sanskrit for circle) form is presented throughout history in many cultures and religions. The circle centre is the basic structure of creation that is reflected from the micro to macro in the world as we know it. It is a pattern found in nature and is seen in living things, rocks, at a chemical level and at a universal level. Often it is seen as a symbol of wholeness and the infinite, the world that is both within our bodies and extends beyond. Build a nature mandala using sticks; take five steps to find object – bring back to discuss; repeat moving further away building up objects in our mandala; talk about what is within our mandala and how they connect – mandala as a representation of the universe and in our case our community for the next two days; finish with discussion about what makes a ‘sense of place.’ • Expectations (15mins) – participant’s expectations for the workshop; what will help our community of sharing work effectively over the next three days?
1010	<p>Session 2: Discovering Nature (outside)</p> <p>How do we relate to the natural world? What is our relationship with it? Why does it matter? These are fundamental questions which frame the way we relate with the natural world. These are questions we will return to throughout the workshop, however, we will spend some time exploring them at the start.</p>

	<p>'Single trees are extraordinary; trees in number more extraordinary still. To walk in a wood is to find fault with Socrates's declaration that 'Trees and open country cannot teach me anything, whereas men in town do.' (Robert Macfarlane)</p> <p>How can we find nature (wild places) in our neighbourhood? We do not need to travel to find natural areas that generate curiosity and interest. We will explore our surroundings to identify natural spaces and asking 'what is a natural space?'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EarthWalk (75 mins) – to help us attune to and discover nature. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One of a Kind – each participant will find a leaf and get to know them; the leaf then becomes their ticket to the earthwalk. At the end of the earthwalk we will re-examine the leaves. ○ Whiffs – we will collect a variety of smells from nature, using them to create a natural blend which they share with others at a 'party of smells.' ○ Sound orchestra – sitting silently and mapping sounds around us. ○ Blindfold walk – using the sense of touch to explore textures in the natural world. ○ Colour palettes – collecting small colour samples from nature to create a 'artists palette.' • Magi Spot (20-30 mins) – sitting to identify nature around you. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To be used when we have time. ○ Extension - think from view of ant, bird, worm, human... (beholding eye).
1130	Lunch
1230	<p>Session 3: Exploring Nature (outside)</p> <p>How can we investigate our chosen natural area? We will take part in a range of sensory and science activities that help us understand and experience our chosen area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasure hunt (20 mins) – find something dry, etc (idea of journey sticks) • Woolly thinking (15 mins) – this activity introduces the interconnections between plants, animals and human activity. Participants will for a 'web of life' demonstrating how everything is interdependent. • Nature works (40 mins) – starting with a short activity to demonstrate cycles and flows in nature: soil cycle, water cycle, air cycle, energy flow. Participants will put the knowledge into practice. Using a tree, they will identify the cycles and flow in nature and mark them using coloured wool and discs with symbols.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Function Junction (30 mins) – participants explore how nature provides a range of functions which enable the ecosystem to work for the benefit of all species.
1430	Break
1500	<p>Session 3: Exploring Nature (outside)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magic Spot (10-30 mins)? • Head, heart and hands model (15 mins) – a quick introduction to this well know educational model. • Three questions to review and end the day (20 mins): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The biggest moments today for your head, heart and hands. ○ For tomorrow, what are you wondering about? ○ For tomorrow, what are you hoping to do?
1600	Close

DAY 2

Time	Details
0900	<p>Session 3: Exploring Nature (outside)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fieldwork investigations (60 mins) – a few ideas for more scientific approaches to exploring nature. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lichens and air pollution. ○ Terrestrial invertebrates. • Look Out...and other ways to map your area (e.g. my school journey) <p>Session 4: Conserving and Sharing Nature (outside)</p> <p>How can we take responsibility to conserving natural areas and sharing the results with others? We will plan a conservation activity, and will discuss, review and share their experiences of the course. They will be encouraged to do this through photos, paintings, drawings or words.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will explore a few different activities for conserving and sharing depending on time available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Micro-parks (30 mins) – a debating activity about taking decisions on what to conserve. ○ Future Timelines (30 mins) – designing the future you want for your area. ○ Tanka poems (20 mins) – a Japanese form of poetry to share experiences; we could also do group poems. • Walk about – walk around site and develop a list of projects we could do to conserve this area...and then share as a group.
1130	Lunch
1230	<p>Session 5: Planning your own Programme (classroom)</p> <p>We will complete the workshop by making our own plans based on discover, explore, conserve and share. We will also reflect on how we can deliver curriculum goals through outdoor learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview (10 mins) – we will start by reflecting on the four stages we have travelled through and clarifying what they are. • Are we ready (30 mins) – what qualities do we need as teachers to be successful? Are we missing anything? We could ask? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where can outdoor learning take place in/near to my school? ○ What makes for good outdoor learning? ○ What qualities does a good outdoor teacher need? • Linking themes and curriculum (20 mins) – we will spend a short time seeing how others have integrated outdoor learning into their school programmes and curriculum. • Developing our own programme (60 mins) – participants will develop their own programme based on their own school needs and resources.
1430	Break
1500	<p>Session 5: Planning your own Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of programme ideas. • Workshop evaluation/review and next steps.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Head, heart and hands reflective review (30mins). <p>Person drawn on flipchart with head, heart and hands made clear.</p> <p>Provide an example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Head: "I learned about the different experiences that we all bring to the table and how we can begin to work together."● Heart: "I felt really proud to be a part of this group, and I can't wait to get started on the work."● Hands: "I'm going to act on this by talking with some of the other community members and telling them about our next gathering." <p>Have group members share their responses and, using markers in three different colours, write their comments next to the corresponding area on the flip chart paper: head, heart, or feet. Use more paper as needed.</p>
1600	Close