



Environmental Education for Sustainability: Motivating People to Action through Learning Experiences and Educational Materials

A 12-week course and professional learning opportunity for environmental educators who design and deliver programs and educational materials for adult audiences

Fall 2021

Tuesdays, 2:30-4:30pm, September 21-December 7, 2021.

Instructor: Lucy Gertz, Mass Audubon's Statewide Education Projects Manager, currently a Lesley University doctoral student examining the relationship between environmental education and conservation behavior in adult learners.

Fee: \$150 per person to take this as a non-credit course.

Optional undergraduate or graduate course credit is available from Lesley University. Students will complete additional class assignments and will pay Lesley University for the credits.

When we connect our adult learners with nature, share the wonder of natural history, create caring nature center communities, and provide information about environmental issues, we tend to expect that all involved will self-identify as environmentalists and be inclined to act in environmentally responsible ways. This assumed progression, from interest to understanding to action is a key goal of environmental education, but do we know if individuals in our adult learning communities are actually behaving in ways that are protective of the living things and systems they are so interested in learning about? Over thirty years of research studies have found that there are many psycho-social factors and influences at play in people's lives and behaviors, quite reliably predictive of how individuals engage with conservation behaviors.

The goal of this course is to help environmental educators become proficient in developing and delivering new EE content and using new research-based approaches for program development, teaching, designing materials, and facilitating engagement to support learners in their progressive environmentalism. We'll look at how the **Environmental Education** community of practice is evolving, and becoming more focused on **Environmental Education for Sustainability**. We'll look at landmark research studies in conservation behavior and sustainability behavior change. We'll cover the approaches, theoretical frameworks, and best practices for effectively teaching adult learners including Adult Learning Theory, learning styles, teaching models, and adult lifespan development. We'll review past and current educational initiatives and campaigns to promote individual behavior change, looking at what was learned in design and implementation. We'll incorporate all of these components as we expand our individual and collective environmental education practices.

This course is designed as an in-depth professional development training and semester-long learning and networking opportunity for adult environmental educators and other interested conservation professionals whose work prioritizes moving people to act in environmentally responsible ways. This course is applicable for anyone who teaches or communicates with an adult learning community.

Course Requirements (for non-credit)

1. *Complete 3 Course Surveys:* Pre-Course, Mid-Course, and Post-Course
2. *Introductory Reflection Essay:* A brief (one page) written reflection on your professional experience with Adult EE, including how you currently incorporate conservation action content into one or more of your programs/materials.
3. *Weekly Synchronous Online Class:* Attend each 2-hour weekly class: Tuesdays, 2:30-4:30pm, September 21 – December 7, 2021.
4. *Weekly Reading Assignments:* Complete weekly readings, usually a small set of published articles or book chapters, along with associated questions and prompts, and come to class prepared for a group discussion.
5. *Incorporate Course Content into Design and Practice:* Develop a new program/material, or assess at least one existing program/material, and devise a plan to incorporate course content and delivery approaches to effectively promote one or more conservation behavior changes.
6. *Plan for Utilizing New Skills and Competencies:* You will develop and share your individual plan for incorporating course content and learning into your Adult EE practice. This can include continuing and advancing this work within the EE community of practice by engaging in post-course professional networking, mentoring colleagues, or developing and delivering trainings.

Students opting to earn undergraduate or graduate credits will have additional assignments and assessments in accordance with Lesley University's policies.

Additional Information

A full syllabus is available for anyone who wants more details about the course.

By participating in this course, you are committing to complete the entire course, and provide input on how the course equipped you to expand your Adult EE practice to effectively motivate your adult learning community to engage with environmentally responsible behaviors.

As active research, this course will be evaluated mid-way and shift as needed in response to student input and to best meet the professional development needs of the students.

All students who complete this course will be invited to participate in a longer-term professional learning community and research project to understand how EE practices are changing.

Questions?

Contact the course instructor, email Lucy Gertz at lgertz@massaudubon.org or call 781-259-2177.