

Accessible by Nature: Designing EE to Support All Learners



Dr. Cathy Wissehr

Summer 2026 | May 19 - July 21, 2026

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Accessible by Nature: Designing Environmental Education to Support All Learners. This course uses the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to guide the design of learning environments that are accessible and challenging for all, rather than making modifications for individual students. UDL improves and optimizes teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn, giving all students equal opportunity to succeed. This course is designed to encourage you to reflect deeply on your practice to focus on how you plan and teach to support all learners. The course content and associated assignments are geared towards practicing environmental and outdoor educators, both classroom teachers and nonformal educators.

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Understand the principles of Universal Design for Learning
- Describe terms, techniques, tools, and resources to promote inclusivity and access to better serve diverse populations, specifically those with learning differences, physical accessibility needs, and language barriers
- Evaluate your current teaching practices/pedagogy and your setting to identify barriers to participation
- Apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning to your pedagogical practices to redesign a lesson, activity, or program.

EXPECTATIONS:

As a student of this course, it is expected that you:

- Commit the time required to complete all readings, assignments, and assessments.
- Input appropriate answers and responses in the Course Journal and handouts, or through submissions of art, poetry, video, or recorded spoken word addressing the same topics.
- Complete Modules 1-4 and their associated assignments, as well as submit the final course assessment.
- Participate in virtual discussions. These meetings are not required, but highly recommended. See meeting dates below.

PREREQUISITES:

- Experience working in formal or nonformal education, especially environmental education, is not required but highly encouraged.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Access to reliable internet and a desktop computer or laptop.

GRADING:

- Assignments must be completed with a score of 2 as indicated on the scoring guide provided.
- To receive a certificate of completion for 10 hours, you must complete all assignments and receive the scores as indicated above.

IMPORTANT DATES:

This course runs for 9 weeks, from **May 19 - July 21, 2026**. Although you can complete the course at your own pace, following the schedule below will ensure course completion by the final date:

- Module 1: Complete by June 2
- Module 2: Complete by June 16
- Module 3: Complete by July 3
- Module 4: Complete by July 21 – all coursework completed

Three scheduled Zoom meetings are an essential part of this course. The exact day and time of the two discussion meetings will be based on the availability of registered participants. Previous courses have held discussions in the evening and during office hours, as fitting for that group.

- Introduction meeting: Tuesday, May 19, 7:00 - 7:30 pm
- Discussion meeting #1: Thursday, June 18, 1:00 - 2:00 pm
- Discussion meeting #2: Tuesday, July 14, 1:00 - 2:00

If you are interested in the course, but have a conflict with these dates, contact Sophia Stephenson.