



ECOLOGY PROJECT INTERNATIONAL

Belize: Tropical & Coastal Ecology Teaching Science with NGSS Experiential Learning

Course Description:

Ecology Project International's educator courses provide teachers with opportunities to participate in research and conservation projects, while they develop ecological knowledge and hone science and engineering practices. Participants will learn strategies and tools to inspire their students to observe, question, make claims, and conduct independent scientific research using the NGSS framework and the 5E Model of Instruction. Participants will access pre-course materials and resources in a virtual setting, participate in research, experiential learning, lesson development and collaboration in the field, upload a completed lesson to the virtual classroom after field work is completed, and have access to templates and resources to support and guide lesson development throughout the experience.

Expected Participant Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, participants will have gained experience in

- reading and interpreting the NGSS for use in their classroom
- creating NGSS aligned lessons using the 5E Learning Cycle
- understanding and correctly implementing a variety of field research methods
- using research supported teaching methods, tools, and strategies for supporting students in growing their science and engineering practices

Pre-Course Work (completed via Google classroom):

Approximately 5 weeks prior to the field course participants will be invited to a Google classroom to complete several assignments & access pre-course resources. Participation in the classroom is recommended for all participants but required for those seeking graduate credit.

Topic	Assignment(s)
Fundamentals of 3-Dimensional Learning Next Generation Science Standards	Complete all the assignments and review all of materials and resources in the 3-Dimensional Learning Section of the Google Classroom. Using the NGSS Read the Standards search tool, select the grade and discipline associated with the class(es) you will be teaching next year. (If you are not sure what you will be teaching next year, choose the grade and discipline that you want to learn about most.) Next choose a Disciplinary Core Idea (DCI). Click submit. From the list generated by the search, choose four performance expectations you would like support in developing lesson plans for while you are on your EPI field course. Screenshot the performance expectations and submit them online. In addition, print the performance expectations to bring with you to the field experience.

<p>5E Learning Cycle</p>	<p>Complete all the assignments and review all of materials and resources in the Introduction to the 5E Learning Model Section of the Google Classroom.</p> <p>Read: EPI Education Handbook pages 31 - 38 on the 5E Learning Cycle</p> <p>For each of the four performance expectations you selected when you completed your NGSS pre-course work, describe an Engagement activity you could do with your students in the classroom and an engagement activity you can do out of the classroom. For each performance expectation, describe an assessment you might use to evaluate students in their understanding of the performance expectation. Print hard copies of your descriptions and bring them with you into the field.</p>
<p>Ecology and Biology of Field Location</p>	<p>-Read: Articles on the biology, ecology, and culture of the field site you will be working in.</p> <p>-Watch: Videos on the biology, ecology, and culture of the field site you will be working in.</p> <p>-Do: Please answer each of the following questions thoroughly and submit them online.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the largest ecological threats to the area you will be visiting and why? • What are some of the projects local conservationists are working on to mitigate the impact of these environmental challenges? • Which of the environmental challenges facing the area you will be visiting are similar to environmental challenges facing your home community? <p>What is the difference between a tourist and a traveler? Which word (tourist or traveler) best describes the experience you hope to have on the field portion of your EPI course and why?</p>
<p>Building Community Partnerships</p>	<p>-Read: Secrets to Snagging Great Science Partners</p> <p>-Research: Use the Internet and/or community networking to create a list of conservation organizations or individual conservation biologists in or near your community. Complete the following questions and submit them online. Please also keep a hard copy of your answers to bring into the field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the work the organization or person is doing. • Explain how knowledge of or participating in this work could support student learning. • Describe the biggest barriers you see for bringing your student out into the field to participate in this work.

Please bring a binder or folder with provided pre-course readings and written assignments printed for your use in the field.

Field Course Work and Itinerary:

Specific research and conservation activities are dependent upon the EPI field-course location.

EPI Professional Development will provide teachers with experiences that develop their knowledge and skills to integrate environmental field studies into their school curriculum. Each of the field programs offered supports participants as they develop inquiry-based lessons built on phenomena identified during experiences in the field, provides field research and conservation experiences and opportunities, offers an introduction to Environmental Literacy and how to foster environmental stewardship, and taps into the true joy of interacting

with nature. Participants also develop a network with peers, instructors, and researchers to support them after their course experience.

Core Course Activities and Lessons:

Specific research and conservation activities are dependent upon the EPI field-course location. However, each course will have a blend of each of these components.

- **Field research and conservation experiences:** EPI partners with research and conservation organizations to engage participants in on-the-ground research or conservation. Teachers will become community researchers and contribute to research and conservation outcomes all the while building knowledge and understanding of field research and conservation techniques and the underlying ecological science principles.
- **Model student activities:** Teacher participants will step into the role of students to broaden their knowledge of the environments, organisms, and cultures that are their classroom for their course as well as build the skills they'll need to engage in the research and conservation experiences.
- **Pedagogy Workshop:** Through a mix of reflection, direct instruction, self-guided exploration, discussions, and practice, teachers will refresh and expand their understanding and capacity to deliver high quality 3-dimensional science lessons to their students. Research experiences and modeled student activities serve as an example and launching point for exploring pedagogy, science concepts, NGSS, the 5E learning model, and more.
 - CCCs and 5Es (1 hr)
 - From Phenomena to Inquiry Lesson (2 hrs)
 - 3D Techniques: Questioning, Discussion, Claim-Evidence-Reasoning (2 hrs)
 - Environmental Literacy / Education Framework (2 hrs)
- **Curriculum Writing Workshop:** Experiential learning is fundamental to all EPI experiences. For teachers, we'll engage their creativity, knowledge, and skills as teachers in a guided curriculum building progression following the 5E learning cycle. Throughout the process, teachers will share what they know and learn from their peers. Teachers will share lesson plans with their peers during the program sending each teacher home with new ideas and materials that they can apply in their classrooms. Following the course, teachers can use the online classroom to share finalized lesson plans, resources, photos, additional opportunities, and more.
 - 5E Learning Cycle lesson plan template and lesson creation time. (1 hr)
 - Lesson creation / collaboration time (multiple sessions – 2 hrs each)
 - Lesson plan presentation and peer feedback (2 hrs)
- **Fundamental group facilitation:** EPI courses are dynamic events bringing together people from different backgrounds, skills, goals, and personalities. During the course, EPI will utilize a variety of techniques to foster group understanding, cooperation, teamwork, cohesion, and health. These activities occur throughout the day and typically involve ~ 1 hr of time each day.
- **Have fun!** Everything we do is fun; we'll make sure we take some time out from learning to enjoy the location, people, and experiences we're having throughout the course.

Optional College Credit:

Interested participants can receive **4 graduate credits** through Hamline University for participating in this workshop. Separate registration and tuition fees are required. Contact your course coordinator for more information if you are interested.

Assessments:

You will be assessed on the following tasks:

- **Pre-Course Reading and Assignments** - Reading and writing assignments on the topics listed in pre-course work assignments section above. All pre-course assignments must be completed prior to departure to the field location.
- **Field Journal** – Each day you will use your journal for lessons, activities, and reflection. The journaling process is intended to support you in both your personal learning journey and as a model for how to utilize field journals with your own students. Your journal will be assessed at the end of the field course.
- **Field Participation** – Each day you will be participating in unique field research and conservation activities. Full engagement is expected, and you will earn points for participation in group discussions, effort in learning field research techniques, making observations and asking questions, and being ready and willing to try new things.
- **Lesson Plan Presentation** – At the end of the course you will present the lesson plan you have created during your time in the field. After the course we will ask you to share your lesson plan on the Google Classroom as we work to build a lesson library resource.

Grading Method:

Each of the assessments listed above will be counted toward your final grade in the following manner:

Task	Due Date	Maximum Points Earned
Pre-Course Reading and Assignments	1 week prior to course start date	15
Field Participation	Daily on course	50
Field Journal	End of course	15
Lesson Plan Presentation	Last day of course	20
Total Points	70 required to receive credit	100

Required Course Materials:

- Field Journal
- Two mechanical pencils with eraser
- All print outs listed in the Pre-Course Work
- All items on EPI field site packing list

Course Itinerary:

Example course itinerary is included below: Subject to modification due to logistics, activity opportunities, weather, etc.

Day of Course	Course Activities and Lessons Belize 9-day Example:
1 Arrival Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Arrive at Belize City airport – BZE</u> • <u>Transportation to TREES ~ 2hr</u> • <u>Fundamental Group Facilitation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personal introductions, Team building and group cohesion activities ○ Orientation to accommodations ○ Safety and medical procedures ○ Overview of the course ○ Group Agreement
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Research/Conservation Activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessing habitat quality through rapid bio assessments ○ Stream ecology workshop ○ Bat monitoring & mist-netting ○ Camera trap monitoring • <u>Model Student Activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ecosystems Basics w/ systems thinking • <u>Pedagogy Workshop:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NGSS – Reading the Standards Google Classroom review lesson ○ Environmental Literacy/Education Framework • <u>Fundamental group facilitation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Morning opening & Evening closure: Team building / group cohesion activities
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Research/Conservation Activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Independent research projects ○ Bat monitoring & mist-netting • <u>Model Student Activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data Review • <u>Pedagogy Workshop:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CCCs and 5Es • <u>Curriculum Writing Workshop</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 5E Learning Cycle lesson plan template and lesson creation time. • <u>Fundamental group facilitation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Morning opening & Evening closure: Team building / group cohesion activities

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Research/Conservation Activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Amphibians & Reptiles of Belize (night hike w/ sampling) ○ White lipped mud turtle monitoring • <u>Model Student Activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Night hike w/ adaptations • <u>Pedagogy Workshop:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ From Phenomena to Inquiry Lesson • <u>Curriculum Writing Workshop:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson creation / collaboration time • <u>Fundamental group facilitation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Morning opening & Evening closure: Team building / group cohesion activities
5	<p><u>Transfer to Tabacco Caye</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Research/Conservation Activity:</u> • Coral reef monitoring • <u>Pedagogy Workshop:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3D Techniques: Questioning, Discussion, Claim-Evidence-Reasoning • <u>Curriculum Writing Workshop</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson creation / collaboration time • <u>Fundamental group facilitation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Morning opening & Evening closure: Team building / group cohesion activities
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Research/Conservation Activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ REEF fish surveys • <u>Curriculum writing workshop:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson creation/collaboration time • <u>Fundamental group facilitation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Morning opening & Evening closure: Team building / group cohesion activities
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Research/Conservation Activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marine plastics • <u>Curriculum writing workshop:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson creation/collaboration time • <u>Fundamental group facilitation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Morning opening & Evening closure: Team building / group cohesion activities <p><u>Transfer to TREES</u></p>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Course wrap up & celebration:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson plan presentation and peer feedback ○ Course feedback & evaluations ○ Samba Drum circle participation ○ Course reflection/graduation
9-Departure Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shuttle to the airport for departure
Total PD Hours	40hrs