Teaching Outside in Maine 101
Module for Maine Educators

Facilitation Guide
Module Facilitation Guide

Welcome to the *Teaching Outside in Maine 101* Module! We are thrilled to be working with you to help introduce students in your community to the outdoors. Whether you’re moving an existing lesson plan outside to take advantage of the mental health benefits of fresh air, or leveraging your local ecosystem and natural resources to support learning goals across multiple disciplines, we are excited to partner with you in your learning journey.

We have created this module to increase equitable access to outdoor learning for all Maine students - not just those lucky enough to have a champion teacher or a well-resourced school district that is already prioritizing outdoor education. We see a future Maine where ALL students benefit from outdoor learning across all grade levels, disciplines, and backgrounds.

We hope this module will provide **three key benefits:**

1. A starting point to facilitate conversations about creating and supporting a culture of bringing students outside at your school;
2. A set of practical tools for bringing students outside; and
3. Resources and guidance for how to explore this type of education further.

**What Makes This Module Unique?**

We have developed this module as an accessible entry point for teams of educators who want support in navigating how to effectively take students outside for environmental learning projects, or learning in the outdoors in general. While we know that a champion educator can make an incredibly positive change in their school community, we also know that long term school culture change in support of outdoor and environmental learning is most likely to occur and be sustained within a team of like-minded educators, administrators and other partners.

In addition, this and other Teaching Outside materials have been co-designed, (that is, developed, written, and reviewed) by a team of Maine educators; these teams represent in-school and out-of-school educators, school administrators, and statewide leaders in outdoor and environmental learning. As such, the strategies and structures are written specifically FOR Maine educators BY Maine educators. There are lots of existing resources and materials that have been embedded into this module and there are plenty of opportunities to expand beyond this introduction. We look forward to seeing how you use these curated resources to expand access to outdoor learning for all Maine students in your community!

**Who Should Use This Module?**

This module is designed for educators in all disciplines who want support in navigating how to effectively take students outside for environmental learning projects or learning outside in general. If you or your colleagues are looking to rejuvenate your teaching, empower students to think critically, promote mental health and wellbeing for both staff and students, among myriad other benefits - this module is for you!

We suggest working through this module in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) or some
other small learning group of colleagues. While the language of this module is geared towards in-school settings, the materials and resources included are appropriate for both formal and informal learning settings, and can be applied across any grade, age, and subject level.

**How Should We Use This Module?**
This module’s facilitation guide gives instructions for how to facilitate conversations and activities in support of teaching students outside. This module is intended to be facilitated with a team of educators (Professional Learning Community or other structure) within a school or community to support culture change. The lead facilitator can be an educator, a community partner, or a school administrator with any level of experience in taking students outside. In addition, the Teach ME Outside team is available to provide facilitation support to schools and organizations. Please reach out to Alex Brasili, abrasili@mmsa.org if you’d like to discuss how we can support your team.

If you are an individual and are looking to grow your own practice outside of a team, please see the [Teaching Outside in Maine 101 Individual Learning Journey Guide](#).

**How Can We Add To This Module?**
If you have an idea, resource, or case study to contribute, please contact us at https://teachmeoutside.org/connect. Modules are continually undergoing revision to be responsive to educator needs in Maine! We want to hear your feedback so that we can improve this resource for educators to use in all contexts with all students.
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