



Oregon Outdoor School

Instructional Resource Self-Evaluation Tool

OSU Extension Service
Version 2.0



OVERVIEW

Purpose of This Self-Evaluation Tool

This tool is designed to support the review, development and improvement of the range of instructional resources that make up curriculum used in Oregon's outdoor school programs. This includes both instructional resources with explicit learning objectives (e.g., field studies) and those without explicit learning objectives (e.g., supporting experiences like meal times, free time, songs, stories, etc.). While instructional materials with explicit learning objectives are paramount to helping students learn, intentionally planned supporting experiences have the same potential and can even lead to greater outcomes. The OSU Extension Service Outdoor School Program will not ask you to share your results, but can offer professional development in areas of self identified need.

Expectations, Assumptions and Aspirations for Outdoor School Curriculum

High-quality¹ outdoor school instructional resources should:

- target 5th and 6th grade learners;
- be mostly hands-on, outdoor educational experiences;
- include learning objectives and expected outcomes²; and
- target a cohesive set of program objectives that scaffold throughout the course of a student's outdoor school experience.

How to Use This Tool

This tool is meant to be used for curriculum self-evaluation, reflection and subsequent planning. This process can support outdoor school staff, school districts and the community to co-develop improvement goals for high-quality programming which lead to positive student outcomes. Not all curriculum will meet all of the characteristics identified in this rubric, however these are representative of high-quality curriculum and should be aspirational for outdoor school programs. Additionally, not all of the characteristics will be relevant to all of the instructional resources reviewed (e.g., a game about ecosystems may not be "investigative"). That is okay- programs can skip characteristics that do not apply. The intent of this tool is not to standardize the outdoor school experience, nor will it be used as a punitive measure related to funding. Rather, it supports and promotes the uniqueness that programs should provide to students, and helps ensure that each student has a purposeful and quality experience.

Key Definitions

Instructional Resource: the individual components used to help students learn (e.g., field studies, lesson plans, activities, etc.)

Curriculum: all of the instructional resources that make up the outdoor school program (includes those with and without explicit learning objectives)

Five Steps for Conducting a Curriculum Self-Evaluation

1. Bring together all of the instructional resources that make up the entirety of the curriculum used in your outdoor school program.

ASK: Are there any activities students participate in during outdoor school that are not recorded in a manner that can be reviewed?

2. Select your curriculum evaluation team. The process of reviewing and modifying curriculum is most effective when done with a culturally and demographically diverse team. Consider including someone from a school you support, a member of the field staff, a community member, a student, etc.

ASK: Who is missing?

3. Choose the individual instructional resource (a sample of the larger curriculum) that team members will review. Read the "characteristic" definition in each section (e.g., context and settings for learning, classroom school and outdoor school content integration, instruction and pedagogy). Take notes that include specific examples from the instructional resource. Repeat with additional instructional resources until they have all been reviewed (you may use multiple rubric sheets during this process).

ASK: Are there any activities that were not reviewed?

4. Hold a team meeting to reflect on the entirety of curriculum that your team reviewed. Share notes and discuss which characteristics were found to be absent, emerging and/or highly effective in the curriculum.

ASK: How might this information affect the schools and students that are served?

5. Use this Curriculum Report to evaluate and reflect on all of the resources your team reviewed that make up the entirety of your curriculum. Celebrate what you are doing well and develop an Improvement Plan that targets the characteristics you would like to improve on.

ASK: Does my program need support or training on specific characteristics? Would we be willing to share our curriculum with other programs so that they can learn and grow? If yes, **contact:** outdoorschool@oregonstate.edu

CONTEXT AND SETTINGS FOR LEARNING

Context and settings for instruction can promote Equity, Inclusion³, social and emotional learning (SEL)⁴ opportunities, 21st Century Skills⁵ (4Cs) and Environmental Literacy⁶. This involves location of the learning activities and considers both historical and current perspectives.

Characteristic	Absent	Emerging	Highly Effective	Evidence (e.g., factual, specific and detailed examples pulled from the instructional resource)
Appropriate to the Ecology of the Region Is representative of the ecoregion of Oregon ⁷ where the outdoor school program is held.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> References ecology and organisms not present in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly aligned to ecoregion of the outdoor experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligned to ecoregion of the outdoor experience. Instructional resource(s) utilizes the outdoor learning environment, the attributes of the land and the organisms that live there (e.g., specific bodies of water/features, age/stage of habitats, elevation, etc.) 	
Reflects Local Community Issues and Needs Reflective of the issues and needs of the students' communities, even if the outdoor school program is held in a different community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only issues and needs presented are not reflective of where students live, nor their backgrounds or experiences. There is bias toward advocating for a specific cause, view, policy, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the issues and needs presented may be reflective of the students' communities, but there is limited perspective (e.g., only one point of view). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the issues and needs presented are reflective of the communities of the students being served (e.g., fire management and the effects of smoke on a community) or explicit connections made. Presents and celebrates multiple values and perspectives, encouraging students to think critically about a problem or issue and determine their own viewpoint. 	
Culturally Relevant to History of Land, Place and Space Includes historical, relevant transfer of Indigenous Knowledge ⁸ specific to the space and broader state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absent of indigenous knowledge. When indigenous knowledge is presented it is generalized, not specific to the region, and/or presented in past tense, stereotypical, or romanticized terms. Resources are created without input from local indigenous communities, or materials are co-opted without reference or compensation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow in focus, indigenous knowledge presented is reflective of modern "lifeways" and may be specific to the region, but resources are created with little or indirect input from local indigenous community (e.g., general online sources, or adapting materials developed for another site or content area, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing opportunities for students to learn about the culture, experiences, perspectives and languages of indigenous peoples in their region. 	

CONTEXT AND SETTINGS FOR LEARNING

Context and settings for instruction can promote Equity, Inclusion, social and emotional learning opportunities, 21st Century Skills (4Cs) and Environmental Literacy. This involves location of the learning activities and considers both historical and current perspectives.

Characteristic	Absent	Emerging	Highly Effective	Evidence (e.g., factual, specific and detailed examples pulled from the instructional resource)
Culturally Responsive⁹ to the Context and Settings for Learning Recognizes the historical and current culture, language and perspectives within the region while including the diverse experiences and viewpoints that are representative of the students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not recognize historical or current culture, language or perspectives of the region nor those which are representative of the students. Narratives are confined to experiences, perspectives and accomplishments of only one group or demographic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes some historical or current culture, language or perspectives of the region, but scope is narrow and may not align with or represent student experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historical and current narratives describe experiences, perspectives and accomplishments of diverse communities. Providing opportunities for students to share and/or learn about the culture, experiences, perspectives and languages within their families and/or communities¹⁰. Families and community members are invited to share experiences and expertise related to content. 	

Reflections on Context and Settings for Learning:

CLASSROOM AND OUTDOOR SCHOOL CONTENT INTEGRATION

Integrating content with classroom curriculum and standards can promote Equity, Inclusion, and social and emotional learning (SEL) opportunities, 21st Century Skills (4Cs) and Environmental Literacy. Content is often considered the ‘what’ of learning and is aligned with school standards.

Characteristic	Absent	Emerging	Highly Effective	Evidence (e.g., factual, specific and detailed examples pulled from the instructional resource)
Legislative Guidelines (OR SB 439)¹¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of the state’s environment and natural resources, such as soil, water, plants, animals, etc. • The interrelationship of the state’s natural resources with working lands (agriculture, forestry) and growth and development needs. • Interdependence of urban and rural areas in Oregon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None of the content areas mentioned in SB 439 align with the instructional resource(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content area mentioned in SB 439 may be the topic or is referenced in the instructional resource(s) but is not explicitly written into it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content explicitly fits into one or more of the areas of SB 439. • Students have opportunities to learn about the interdependence of humans and the land as well as both urban and rural areas. • Makes connections to natural resource career fields within Oregon. Students are able to learn about future natural resource career options within their communities. 	
Integrated with School Curriculum and Standards¹² <p>Connected to academic curriculum such as science, technology, engineering, art, & math (STEAM), English language arts, and/or social studies, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning goals are not connected to grade level content and standards. • Learning goals are not communicated directly to students during lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning goals are somewhat consistent with grade level content and standards. • Learning goals are incorporated into lessons, but not explicitly communicated to students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning goals are intricately connected to the classrooms of the students, supporting grade level content and standards. • Learning goals are clearly articulated to students and reinforced throughout the lesson. 	
Interdisciplinary <p>Uses multiple subject disciplines such as science, art, physical and health education, geography, writing, etc. to examine themes, issues, questions or topics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unidimensional and pertain to only one discipline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examines themes, issues, questions or topics across more than one discipline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized around common learning across three or more disciplines. 	

CLASSROOM AND OUTDOOR SCHOOL CONTENT INTEGRATION

Integrating content with classroom curriculum and standards can promote Equity, Inclusion, and social and emotional learning (SEL) opportunities, 21st Century Skills (4Cs) and Environmental Literacy. Content is often considered the ‘what’ of learning and is aligned with school standards.

Characteristic	Absent	Emerging	Highly Effective	Evidence (e.g., factual, specific and detailed examples pulled from the instructional resource)
Culturally Responsive Classroom and Outdoor School Content Integration Recognizes and makes connections to students’ lives in the classroom and the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not recognize or make connections to students’ lives in the classroom and the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connections made to students are narrow in scope and may only represent a small subset of the whole community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning, including their native literacy and cultural backgrounds as resources. Students can make connections between academic content and their local neighborhood, environment and community (e.g., students’ lived experiences “funds of knowledge”). 	

Reflections on Classroom and Outdoor School Content Integration:

INSTRUCTION AND PEDAGOGY

Culturally responsive instruction and pedagogy are multimodal, collaborative/cooperative, learner-centered, investigative and reflective. High-quality instruction and pedagogy promote Equity, Inclusion, social and emotional learning (SEL) opportunities, 21st Century Skills (4Cs) and Environmental Literacy.

Characteristic	Absent	Emerging	Highly Effective	Evidence (e.g., factual, specific and detailed examples pulled from the instructional resource)
Multimodal Structured in a way that uses more than one mode or media, requiring the use of other senses such as touch, smell, visual stimuli, etc. Instructional resource(s) are/may be differentiated; may include adaptations and accommodations such high/low materials, mixed and interdependent student roles, scaffolded and multisensory activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas are communicated through one form of media and focus on the use of only one sense. Accommodations and modifications are not possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some alternate modes or media are incorporated into lessons. Some accommodations and/or modifications are available for students with different needs and learning preferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides multiple ways for students to participate and share their ideas. Tasks are responsive to individual students' strengths, interests and learning preferences. Uses a variety of visual aids and props that support student access to instructions. Visual aids, props and stories are representative of a diversity of people (e.g., race, ethnicity, ability, language, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, or sexual orientation). 	
Collaborative/Cooperative Students work with others, either through group deliberation/discussion and/or active participation/investigation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not intentionally designed for students to collaborate, cooperate and communicate. Students work individually and in isolation. Student roles are assigned arbitrarily or not at all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design includes limited opportunities for students to collaborate, cooperate and communicate. Students are assigned intentional roles but are not accountable to one another, nor supporting each other for a common purpose. Individual roles are designed/utilized for efficiency of task completion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design allows students to cooperate, collaborate and communicate with one another. Students are able to encourage, depend on and be accountable to one another. Students are challenged to recognize the unique strengths and interests of fellow group members and to assign roles to one another. 	
Learner-centered Students are encouraged to direct their own learning in ways that are culturally and socially relevant to them. Learning is responsive through student voice and choice. Learning involves empathy and respect for others, and promotes meaning/self-identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entirely teacher or facilitator directed (e.g., sage on the stage). No opportunity for student voice, choice or agency; does not connect new learning to pre-existing knowledge. Students have no option to share their lived experiences or perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows limited opportunity for student voice, choice and agency. Students have limited or highly directed opportunities to share lived experiences or perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators act as facilitators who guide learning rather than direct learning (e.g., guide on the side). Learning is personally relevant to students, allowing them to construct knowledge and build on individual strengths. Students are able to make connections to one another, the outdoor school experience and their communities. 	

INSTRUCTION AND PEDAGOGY

Culturally responsive instruction and pedagogy are multimodal, collaborative/cooperative, learner-centered, investigative and reflective. High-quality instruction and pedagogy promote Equity, Inclusion, social and emotional Learning (SEL) opportunities, 21st Century Skills (4Cs) and Environmental Literacy.

Characteristic	Absent	Emerging	Highly Effective	Evidence (e.g., factual, specific and detailed examples pulled from the instructional resource)
Investigative Investigates a question related to an ecological/cultural/historical or political phenomena through the collection of evidence and the communication of results; involves elements of inquiry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No opportunity to investigate or investigations are not connected to a meaningful question. Investigation is directive and learners are often passive (e.g., given a specific set of data and told how to interpret it). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas of investigation are limited and/or predetermined. Investigations and data collection are connected to a question, but may not allow students to analyze or interpret their findings, observations or ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to inquire about and explore phenomena¹³ makes learning relevant to them. Students' questions are used as a starting point. Investigation includes multiple ways for students to use problem solving, decision-making, creative and critical thinking skills. Students explore and share how they can enact change and celebrate group accomplishments. 	
Reflective Provides opportunities for students to reflect on their prior experiences or new shared learning experiences (e.g., journaling or discussion); encourages students to reflect on how learning happens for them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No opportunities for reflection in the activity. Learning experiences are discrete and lack depth. Students are not able to consider or display what they have learned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic reflection or connection to prior knowledge occurs. Reflection is brief and lacks depth (e.g., quick questions, yes/no responses, hand raising) or limited in perspective/application (e.g., reinforces dominant discourse. Does not address many learning preferences). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple reflection methods are offered. Reflection prompts have depth and involve social and emotional dimensions including awareness, responsibilities and respect. Reflection is done on both the content and process of learning (e.g., students reflect on how learning happens for them). 	

Reflections on Instruction and Pedagogy:

Outdoor School

CURRICULUM REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1. Tally ALL of the instructional resources that were reviewed and see which characteristics are absent, emerging, and/or highly effective in the entirety of the curriculum.
 2. Determine if you will target this characteristic for improvement. 3. Use the Improvement Plan template to reflect and think about what changes could strengthen curriculum.

ODS Rubric Characteristic	Absent	Emerging	Highly Effective	Check if targeted for improvement
CONTEXT AND SETTINGS FOR LEARNING				
Appropriate to Ecology of the Region				<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflects Local Community Issues & Needs				<input type="checkbox"/>
Culturally Relevant to History of Land, Place and Space				<input type="checkbox"/>
Culturally Responsive to the Context and Settings for Learning				<input type="checkbox"/>
CLASSROOM AND OUTDOOR SCHOOL CONTENT INTEGRATION				
Legislative Guidelines (OR SB 439)				<input type="checkbox"/>
Integrated with School Curriculum and Standards				<input type="checkbox"/>
Interdisciplinary				<input type="checkbox"/>
Culturally Responsive Classroom & Outdoor School Content Integration				<input type="checkbox"/>
INSTRUCTION AND PEDAGOGY				
Multimodal				<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative/Cooperative				<input type="checkbox"/>
Learner-centered				<input type="checkbox"/>
Investigative				<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflective				<input type="checkbox"/>

REFLECTION

1. Which characteristics are a priority to target in order to improve the curriculum? Are there characteristics that do not apply to your program's curriculum? Why?

2. What are the challenges and barriers to modifying and improving your curriculum? How might these be addressed?

CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

GOAL (CHARACTERISTIC TARGETED):

Objective Change that needs to occur	Actions What needs to get done to make change	Individual(s) Needed to Implement	Start Date	Completion Date
	1.			
	2.			
	3.			
	4.			

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- 1 North American Association for Environmental Educators, Guidelines for Excellence in Environmental Education: https://cdn.naaee.org/sites/default/files/glee_materials_complete.pdf
National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC). (2008). K-12 Service-learning standards for quality practice. St. Paul, MN: Author. <https://www.nylc.org/page/standards>
Principles of Outdoor School version 1.0 <https://oregonstate.app.box.com/s/q3hyxli9ny6hbjqlhvjim8uzxk3atp70>
- 2 Braun, S.M. (2019) Outdoor School for All: Diverse Programming and Outcomes in Oregon: 2018 Pilot Study Evaluation. Portland, Oregon. The Gray Family Foundation <https://grayff.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/OSfA-Evaluation-highres-2.19.19.pdf>
Marc J. Stern, Robert B. Powell & Dawn Hill (2014) Environmental education program evaluation in the new millennium: what do we measure and what have we learned?, Environmental Education Research, 20:5, 581-611 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.838749>
- 3 OEIB Equity Lens <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/about/Documents/Commission/COMMISSION/2017/08-August-9-10/4.0d%20Equity%20Lens-reformat.pdf>
Culturally Responsive & Inclusive Curriculum Resources: Creating Culturally Responsive Curriculum: <https://guides.library.pdx.edu/c.php?g=527355&p=3605354>
- 4 CASEL Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) resources: <https://casel.org/>
- 5 The Four C's of Learning Innovation (21st century skills): <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/A-Guide-to-Four-Cs.pdf>
- 6 Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan: <http://oelp.oregonstate.edu/sites/oelp/files/oelp-resources/environmental-literacy-plan-2013.pdf>
- 7 EcoRegions of Oregon: <http://people.oregonstate.edu/~muirp/FuelsReductionSWOregon/ToolsResources/EcoregionsOregonLevelIIEPA.pdf>
- 8 Indian Education Resources: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/NativeAmericanEducation/Pages/Indian-Education-Resources.aspx>
- 9 J. Bryan-Gooden, M. Hester, & L. Q. Peoples (2019). [Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard](#). New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University.
Aguilar-Valdez, J. (2015). Rubric for culturally responsive lessons/assignments: <https://www.westminstercollege.edu/docs/default-source/undergraduate-documents/other-programs/tides/rubric-for-culturally-responsive-lessons.pdf?sfvrsn=2>
- 10 Culture in the Classroom: <https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/culture-in-the-classroom>
- 11 Oregon Senate Bill 439: <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2015R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/SB439/Enrolled>
- 12 The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS): <https://www.nextgenscience.org/>
Oregon Social Studies Standards: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/socialsciences/Documents/Adopted%20Oregon%20K-12%20Social%20Sciences%20Standards%205.18.pdf>
Oregon Academic Content Standards: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/Pages/default.aspx>
- 13 The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS): <https://www.nextgenscience.org/resources/phenomena>

Acknowledgments

A special thank you to the myriad educators, outdoor school providers and experts in the outdoor education field who provided input and feedback in the development of this document. Additionally, we would like to thank the Outdoor School Advisory Committee members, the Oregon Department of Education, the Oregon Natural Resource Education Program, and the Outdoor School Resource Groups for their efforts in reviewing and editing.

Suggested Citation

O'Neill, R. A., Braun, S.M., Cathcart, E. & Dimeo-Ediger, N. (2019) *Instructional Resource Self-Evaluation Tool - Version 2.0* Oregon State University Extension Service Outdoor School Program, Corvallis, Oregon.

outdoorschool.oregonstate.edu



Oregon State University
Extension Service
Outdoor School