



Opening the Doorway to Sustainability: An online course for educators

Date: 11 January – 24 March 2010

Course Information

Course information

EDUCATION HAS A VITAL ROLE TO PLAY IN ENSURING THAT PEOPLE HAVE THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO MAKE LIFESTYLE CHOICES THAT ARE SUSTAINABLE.

This philosophy underpins WWF's education programme.

Opening the Doorway to Sustainability: An online course for educators is a professional development programme from WWF, being run in 2010 by Sustainability and Environmental Education (SEEd). It offers an opportunity to explore how taking a *Learning for sustainability (LfS)* approach to education can benefit pupils, teachers, the wider community and of course the health and wellbeing of the planet on which we all depend. Some elements of the course are based on the English government's National Framework for Sustainable Schools, but this structure has many features in common with other education for sustainable development (ESD) models and it simply provides a coherent platform for discussion.

Course participants will explore different aspects of sustainability and sustainable schools. They will identify and begin to develop key skills, and practise reflective and action learning approaches to ensure new skills and knowledge are applied. At the end of the course, participants should feel equipped to take forward sustainability in schools and beyond with confidence.

No previous qualifications in sustainable education are required; this course is open to people regardless of their starting point. It is a mixture of perspectives, both in terms of experience and local context, which provides the quality of the discussion and knowledge building within the course. The anticipated time commitment over this 11 week course is the equivalent of a full-time week-long course.

Participant feedback

Here are some comments from previous course participants:

- "I feel that I've gained a much broader knowledge and understanding of LfS, of sustainability in the wider context, and how it affects society and the economy in different ways. I'm definitely glad I've had the opportunity to take part in this and extend my learning about sustainability"
Jenny Martin
- "(The course) has got me thinking much more deeply about the issues involved and has widened my view of what we actually mean by sustainability. It has increased my determination to make a difference and I now try to ensure that sustainability issues permeate all of the work that we do."
Mark Stead
- "The course has changed my feeling of pessimism about sustainability in secondary schools. I thought I was pretty knowledgeable about sustainability but I've realised how much more there is to know and do. I've been inspired by some of the participants and the extent to which they practise sustainability in their own lives."
Ian Capewell
- "Enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm – I am more passionate about SD and my own enthusiasm fires others."
Linda Reading

Course plan

The course takes a '*Learning for Sustainability (LfS)*' approach, which involves critical thinking, action learning and participatory approaches. This approach is based on WWF's 20 year history of working with schools that have placed sustainability at the very core of their school – curriculum, campus and community.

AIMS OF THE COURSE:

- To provide professional development for educators in sustainability and Learning for Sustainability (LfS);
- To adopt a participatory learning approach online;
- To build an online sustainability practitioners community; and
- To enable you to take action in your workplace.

BENEFITS OF THE COURSE:

Course participants will explore different approaches to sustainable schools, identify and begin to develop key skills, and practise reflection and action learning approaches to ensure new skills and knowledge are applied. At the end of the course, participants should feel confident and equipped to take sustainability forward in their professional and personal lives.

Course elements

RESOURCES

Online materials – readings, texts and links to other websites – provide the core content and stimulus for the course. Online facilitators will help with your learning as well.

ACTIVITIES

Individual activities are designed to help you understand what you learn, apply it to your own experience and prepare for the participatory activities.

DISCUSSIONS

Participation is central to the course. Each week you will have opportunities to get involved in online group work, networking, discussion and debate. Some weeks, outside experts will be online to answer your questions and join in.

TAKE ACTION

Create your own Action Project, relevant to your area of work, to be discussed with your facilitators and peers. Before the start of the course you will be asked to work with your mentor/co-learner to identify a practical outcome you hope to achieve, as the focus for your work on the course. You will be able to share your progress on this as the weeks go by. At the end of the course we will ask for a brief report of the learning process you have followed as you developed and implemented your Action Project.

Course requirements

PARTICIPATION

The course runs for eleven weeks from 11th January – 24th March 2010. It involves 2–3 hours work per week, during which time you will be expected to take part in online discussions and activities. It is best to plan your time to take part several times over a week, to contribute to discussions as they develop, rather than aiming to do 2–3 hours work in a chunk.

You are not expected to spend the whole time online. You can print off resources if you prefer to read from the printed page, rather than onscreen. Discussions take place over at least a week, not in 'real time'. You can take part at times that are convenient for you.

The course is supported by skilled facilitators, with a background in sustainability and online learning, who will guide participants through the stages of the course whilst encouraging dialogue and peer support.

If you are confident about using a computer for word-processing, sending emails and browsing the internet, you will easily be able to take part. You do not need advanced technical expertise. The course assumes that you do not have previous experience of online learning and provides an introduction to what is involved.

EQUIPMENT

You do not need special software, just access to the internet with a browser and an email address. If you are planning to use a school or workplace computer, you should make sure that it allows you to access the internet and contribute to online discussions. It is recommended that you use Internet Explorer browser version 5 or later.

The 2010 online course will be supported by Moodle. Moodle is an open source e-learning software platform that is extremely user friendly and provides a suite of tools that facilitates discussion and promotes online learning and collaboration. Today, Moodle supports 45,852 registered sites with 24,888,316 users in 2,366,099 courses throughout the world.

CO-LEARNERS

Our experience shows that it is important for you to be supported during the course. We would therefore ask you to provide details of your co-learner. This person can be someone with a leadership role in your school, or a governor or a collaborative colleague. The role of the co-learner is to build support for you in your work and to aid you in the implementation of your Action Plan. If a co-learner registers for the course with you, a discount to the course fee is applied.

Timetable

STAGE 1	GETTING STARTED
11 – 20 January 2010 (1.5 weeks)	<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find your way around the course and start taking part in online activities. • Know what to expect of online learning. • Make contact with your facilitator and other participants.
STAGE 2	MEETING THE GROUP
21 – 27 January 2010 (1 week)	<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop your online learning skills. • Reflect on what you already know and your own learning and experience. • Pool experiences of opportunities and problems you face in your practice. • Share and discuss your course Action Project.
STAGE 3	WHAT IS <i>LfS</i> ? WHAT IS <i>SD</i> ?
28 January – 10 February 2010 (2 weeks)	<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an online search for <i>LfS</i> and sustainable development information. • Discuss and compare different viewpoints about <i>LfS</i> and sustainable development. • Identify key characteristics of <i>LfS</i> and qualities of an <i>LfS</i> educator. • Share favourite resources with other participants.
STAGE 4	SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS?
11 – 3 March 2010 (3 weeks)	<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically review the DCSF Sustainable Schools' eight Doorways. • Consider how the themes of Campus, Curriculum and Community apply to developing sustainable schools.
STAGE 5	THE WIDER CONTEXT
4 February – 17 March 2010 (2 weeks)	<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of wider context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ <i>LfS</i> nationally and internationally; and ➢ Sustainable development in the wider community. • Evaluate the relevance and implications of wider issues to own work and practice.
STAGE 6	THE WAY FORWARD
18 – 24 March 2010 (1 week)	<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on learning. • Review action projects, yours and others. • Plan further action to strengthen <i>LfS</i> in your personal practice, school or organisation. • Graduation.

Costs

The course fee is **£250 per educator**. SEEd members and schools that wish to enrol more than one educator (co-learners, preferably one a member of the SMT and one a teacher) qualify for a 10% discount i.e. £225 per educator.

Payment is accepted via online transaction or cheque.

Cheque made payable to: Sustainability and Environmental Education

Secure online payment: www.se-ed.org.uk/onlinecourse2010



* Please note that course fees are non refundable.

Course preparation

Make a start on these tasks to get ready for the course.

BROWSE

Explore the websites wwwf.org.uk/oneplanetschools and se-ed.org.uk and look at the resources and information there.

REFLECT

Start thinking about your own experiences of Learning for Sustainability. For example:

- What do I do that is “Learning for Sustainability?”
- What activity do I engage in that is most directly related to LfS?
- What resources have I used recently that are good for LfS? Why?
- What do I dream about changing? Why?

COLLECT

Start gathering materials and evidence:

- LfS resources; and
- Current media articles about sustainable development and LfS.

Course support

You will have a facilitator to provide support and to organise the work of smaller discussion groups. Technical help will be available (via telephone during office hours or via email). You will also have peer support from other participants – previous years' participants identified this as a key benefit of online learning.

Technical support

Technical support for the online course is available via email and Skype.

Email: help@se-ed.org.uk
Skype: justin_hayward

Registration

To register you need to complete an application form. To receive an application form, please contact Hermione Fricker at the contact details listed below:

Attn: Hermione Fricker
Sustainability and Environmental Education (SEEd)
9 - 13 Kean Street
London
WC2B 4AY

Telephone: 020 7420 4445
Email: hermione.fricker@se-ed.org.uk

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: TUESDAY 22 DECEMBER 2009.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOUR REGISTRATION IS NOT COMPLETE UNTIL PAYMENT HAS BEEN RECEIVED.