

New Asynchronous Course Lets Teachers Explore FieldSTEM at Their Own Pace

by Heidi Smith

Time is one of the most precious resources teachers have and there never seems to be enough of it. For those who want to pursue further training through a workshop, finding the time to do it can be a challenge.

With that in mind, several members of PEI's staff have collaborated to develop an asynchronous Introduction to FieldSTEM course that can be completed any time before May 31st. What would normally be a six-hour workshop can now be accomplished at a pace that meets individual educators' needs.

The course contains eight modules, each with a quiz at the end and guiding questions to help teachers consider what

strategies they could incorporate into their lessons. These include potential community collaborators, local relevance, options for elevating student voice and creative expression, Indigenous connections and connections to environmental justice. "The overall goal is for participants to take one of their existing units and make it more FieldSTEM," says Central Washington FieldSTEM Coordinator Megan Rivard. "We step them through the process with these modules."

Once they've completed the course, teachers can connect with the FieldSTEM Coordinator in their region. Ideally, this will be the start of a working relationship, Rivard explains. "Through their participation in the asynchronous course, I immediately know what this person's current understanding of FieldSTEM is and if they have any difficulties with particular parts of it. I can see if they have community partners already and how

Module 1: Introduction to FieldSTEM®

Introduction to FieldSTEM® - Module 1: Introduction to FieldSTEM®

COMPLETE

Approximate duration: 15 minutes

Since 2003, the Pacific Education Institute (PEI) has established teaching frameworks to guide integrated, real-world, career-connected, locally relevant, outdoor-based education that is grounded in Washington State's educational goals. Through this introductory module, you will review the rationale for FieldSTEM through teacher testimonies and education research. You will also become familiar with the layout of the course and the expectations for course completion.



Teachers explore a woodland with Pacific Education Institute and community partners.

Outcomes:

- Champion for implementation of outdoor experiences for student growth and health.
- Articulate value of multi-subject integration for equitable content access.

The self-paced course includes eight modules.

Meet Your FieldSTEM Instructors!

Instructors pictured below contributed to the content and development of this course. One or more of them may be involved in monitoring your progress.



Tressa Arbow
East Sound North FieldSTEM Coordinator



Lourdes Flores
Multilingual Education Coordinator



Megan Rivard
Central Washington FieldSTEM Coordinator



Lara Tukarski
South Sound FieldSTEM Coordinator

Course Resources

Throughout this course, you will be directed to several online files including documents, videos, and websites. Unless otherwise noted, these materials were

PEI's team of coordinators conducted the initial beta testing on the course.

willing they are to jump in and change a lesson. Now we can give them specific help and resources, recommend professional learning opportunities and even connect them with specific community partners if needed.”

Different PEI staff members took on writing each module, sharing their drafts and offering feedback. “We all walked through the process of taking the course first,” says South Sound FieldSTEM Coordinator Lara Tukarski. “It was the first round of beta testing, just to make sure everything was running smoothly. Now we have a second round of beta testers that are doing the course.”

Multicultural Program Coordinator Lourdes Flores also worked on several of the modules. She sees its value for school administrators, even if they don't fully complete the course.

“They can explore FieldSTEM more deeply on their own before getting into implementation,” she says. “This gives them a way to understand what their teachers are doing.”

The current course opened on February 1 and will close on May 31. Participants will complete evaluations and their feedback will serve as the basis for any course revisions moving into the next round. “We'll look at what we can tweak to make this a more valuable experience for them,” says Tukarski. “It will be helpful for us to get those ideas.”

This course is currently open only to teachers in districts which are already implementing FieldSTEM. Check with your administrator to learn if your district is eligible or contact Central Washington FieldSTEM Coordinator Megan Rivard at mrivard@pacificeducationinstitute.org.