



Learning in Places is a project funded by the National Science Foundation and is a 4-state collaboration between researchers at Northwestern University and University of Washington Bothell, education and community leaders, and educators in Washington, Michigan, Louisiana, and Illinois. We are designing, implementing, and studying a model of field-based science education for PreK-5 students that **centers equity and families' cultural ways of knowing**, is **NGSS aligned**, asks “**should-**

we” questions (what should we do?) , or questions that involve ethical deliberation and decision-making, and **integrates literacy and civics/social studies** learning. We aim to expand students’ understanding of **nature-culture relations** – that is, relations between human worlds and the natural worlds – towards just, sustainable, and culturally thriving forms of life by cultivating ethical decision-making, communal adaptations, and leadership. We are looking for cohorts of PreK-5 teachers and educators to join us in this exciting project!

When does it start and how long is the commitment?

We are hoping that educators can commit to being involved with the project for at least one calendar year, from Summer 2023–end of August 2024. Though we are developing a leadership cohort that may stay with the project across multiple years.

What’s involved in joining us?

We will meet several times each year to co-design the curriculum units together and to implement what we have designed. This is intended to engage and recognize the wide range of expertise we all have. There are several types of meetings that we’ll gather for:

1. **A five-day in-person co-design summit in the summer:** We will gather together in our respective states (for example, Michigan folks will gather in Michigan) to learn together, get to know each other and the land that we’re on, and co-design learning units and storylines. Dates are specified below.
2. **Quarterly 1.5-day cross-state co-design:** During the school year, we’ll try out what we designed in the summer, then gather quarterly (3 times during the academic year) to reflect on what we’ve learned during implementation, look at data from our students’ learning, re-design lessons, and plan for the next implementation. These sessions will occur in the afternoon on a Friday and half day on Saturday. We do this to ensure that teachers can participate without having to get a sub and to avoid any labor union challenges.
3. **Monthly co-design meetings at your schools or community context:** These meetings are typically 1.5 hours long. This is where educators can really reflect on local problems of practice, walk and design with the land that our schools are on, and plan for next steps in implementation.
4. **Implementations:** Across the year we ask the educators to implement aspects of the Learning in Places model in your learning environments (school or community based settings) - as you're able and it is additive to your work. The project is flexible about

implementations but we do hope for educators to try and implement a full seasonal storyline by the end of the academic year. We scaffold this across the academic year.

5. **End-of-year 1.5 day cross-state co-design summit:** We will come together for a final co-design at the end of this year and before the next summer summit to reflect on our work and make revisions for the coming year.
6. **Participate in a research study of our collective learning this year**—as part of a National Science Foundation project, we are interested in researching how you as educators learn through the year and how your students engage in co-designed materials. This will involve some interviews with you along the way, as well as some surveys and audio and video recordings of co-design meetings. We hope to also collect samples of student work along the way. We are hoping that we can also answer some of your questions that you have about your own practice too!

Our meetings this year are as follows:

- **3.5 - 5-day summer summit: July 16-18 (in-person) and August 26 (half day on Zoom) for MI/LA, July 31-August 4 (in-person) for WA, August 14-16 (in-person) and August 26 (half day on Zoom)**
- Quarterly 1.5 day zoom summits (3 of them) (3 hrs friday, 4 hrs saturday)
- End of year zoom summit (could be tacked on to the summer summit or separate)
- Monthly 1.5 hour calls/drop-in hours to support implementation

Why participate in this?

[Learning in Places](#) is committed to transforming education and helping to prepare young people and communities to adapt to the challenges of this century in generative and healthy ways. We have actually been around for six years already and during that time, we have worked with educators, teacher educators, families, community based organizations and teacher leaders in co-designing field-based science for PreK-5 students and beyond. Teachers, educators in community based contexts or informal settings, and families tell us that being involved in Learning in Places has helped them think more deeply about issues of equity, family engagement, power, and culture as they relate to their science teaching. Perhaps most importantly it has changed people's relationships to the natural world and the responsibilities we all carry to adapt to changing ecosystems. They have gone on to lead their own professional developments with their teaching teams in their schools or in their CBOs. Families have created their own programs. We are thrilled by how Learning in Places has continued to grow in ways that people need. There is a \$2000 stipend paid to educators who participate in the project.

How do you get involved?

Please contact Tom Dixon or Megan Bang (learninginplaces@northwestern.edu) if you're interested! We can get you registered to join us immediately.