



Exploring My Sense of Place Series

Exploring My Sense of Place: Introduction and First Steps, EDUO 9536

Dates: Instructor Coached

Units: 2

Instructor: Allan Varni, avarni@dominicanCAonline.com

Section A, Part 1 – Introduction

Welcome to **Exploring My Sense of Place**, a series of courses designed by Dominican University of California, Division of Continuing Education.

Exploring My Sense of Place is a program that provides participants with direct experiences in learning from the Earth's systems in their own unique bioregion. This is an experiential, hands on series of courses.

The courses and guidebook are designed to provide the tools to extend its content beyond the classroom. Through first hand experience participants will learn how to read the landscape of their Place through its geologic, weather and climate, plant and animal communities, as well as learn from the ways of the indigenous people. Participants will experience and learn strategies for teaching nature awareness through a series of themes such as the relationship between our food and our Place wherever we are in our local ecosystem. The Series is designed to be taken in numerical order; course 1, 2 then 3. It is important to take course one first: **Introduction and First Steps (Prerequisite course), EDUO 9536**

This two-unit course, **Introduction and First Steps** is the first course in a series of three Instructor-Coached courses. It lays the foundational background for the series and is the *prerequisite* for the other two courses. It will provide the guidelines and strategies on how to fully explore your local region.

Additional courses in the series are:

- **Design Your Own Sense of Place Program, EDUO 9537 (1 unit)**
- **Conduct Your Own Sense of Place Program, EDUO 9538 (1 unit)**

The following book is essential to completing the course(s). The book is based on data and notes taken from programs offered in various regions and states, and created with the intention of being used as a guide only. You are free to use whatever resources needed to create and experience your own unique program while following the course syllabus and requirements.

Text: *Exploring a Sense of Place, How to create your own local program for reconnecting with Nature* by Karen Harwell and Joanna Reynolds. (ISBN 0-9786851)

Grading Rubric for Assessing the Traits of Writing

Participant is required to do all required coursework in each section.

Exemplary, Above Graduate Level Standards Exceeds Expectations A+ to A-	Done to Graduate Level Standards Meets Expectations B+ to B-	Below Graduate Level Standards, Unacceptable Needs Improvement, Must be resubmitted.
Reflective, thorough in-depth and thoughtful ideas and comments relevant to the assignments are clearly stated and demonstrate that the student thoroughly understands their local bioregion and how that understanding can enhance good teaching and learning.	Presents adequate and relevant ideas and understands connections to the bioregion, and adequately understands connection to good teaching and learning are evident.	Few relevant ideas connected to the assignments with little to no connection to good teaching and learning.
Reflective pieces cover broad-based thorough learning of the bioregion and information covered in the course text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and exploration of the past and present bioregion show clear understanding of region's origins and current status. 	Some facts and specific details of the text information were overlooked. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and exploration of the past and present bioregion show adequate understanding of region's origins and current status. 	Few or no specific details of the basic information presented in the text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and exploration of the past and present bioregion show little understanding of region's origins and current status.
Free of spelling and grammatical errors. Assignments are word-processed using standard 12pt font. Presentation is neat with good use of white space and margins.	Contains some spelling or grammatical errors. Assignments are word-processed using standard 12pt font. Presentation is neat with good use of white space and margins.	Contains spelling or grammatical errors. Assignments are not word-processed or using standard 12pt font. Presentation is not neat and lacks good white space and margins.
Organized very well. Supporting material easy to locate, clearly labeled and related to the corresponding assignment.	Organized fairly well. Supporting material somewhat hard to locate and loosely related to corresponding assignment. Is generally organized and labeled.	Organized poorly . Supporting material difficult to locate or not present and/or not related to corresponding assignment. Shows little or no organization and assignments are poorly labeled.
Reflective, thoughtful ideas relevant to the assignment are clearly stated.	Presents some relevant ideas and connections to the assignment.	Ideas are not clear or relevant.

Reflective pieces cover numerous facts and specific details of the learning experience.	Some facts and specific details of learning experiences are included.	Few or no facts or specific details of the learning experience are included.
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Please know the instructor will be available for you to consult with and assist you along the way. You will be writing as well as creating a photo-journal recording your experiences, learning's, and reflections of your explorations in the field.

INVITATION: It is the hope of the instructor while you are working on this course, both inside and outside reconnecting to the natural world in your region, that you will in some way be inspired, perhaps moved, to respond to your assignments in an “artistic way” – painting, poetry or even a musical reference. If so moved, please include that into our work submissions.

I look forward to seeing your project come to life.

Assignments

Part A: Introduction

1. Reading: Preface, Orientation and Foundation sections of *Exploring a Sense of Place*, (through page 24.)
2. Take “Bioregional Quiz” (p. 80) and record your answers. Save the results for comparison, as you will be taking another quiz at the end of the course. Submit your quiz results before continuing.
3. Define your bioregion, your “Place,” and limit it to a scale that you can explore (see page 11.) Focus on your own watershed. Draw a rough outline on a map of your area. (This may be modified as you do your research.) Submit this to the instructor for review and feedback before you proceed.
4. Every place has its story. Research yours. (Refer to pages 20 – 23, Designing your program, p. 26, and Steps 8, 9, 10, 12 and 15.) Find guides and locations in your bioregion that describe your region’s story in the following areas: Submit your work before continuing.
 - A. Deep-time Geologic Story -
 - B. Weather and Climate Story -
 - C. Story of Indigenous People -

Resources could be the Internet, local papers, speakers, naturalists and referrals. Keep a record of the Internet sites, books, etc. that you used during this course. You will be turning this in at the conclusion of the course.

Remember to spend an equal amount of time in exploration out in the field, experiencing it for yourself. This can be with an experienced guide, as well as time on your own, taking long walks,

observing, and consciously using all of your senses. (You can get some ideas on how to do this in Deepening materials starting on p. 76.)

Part B: First Steps

1. Mark 3 - 4 selected locations on your map and indicate how they are representative and how they relate to each other. Submit this assignment when completed.
2. Using the steps starting on p. 28, design a program based on your place and target participant group (adults, children, teens). Remember that the book is just a guide to get you started. Use what you can from the book, but remember that your program is unique to your educational setting and region. Write up a preliminary outline of your plans, including how you would modify the program outlined in the book to fit your situation. Submit this section before you continue.
3. Consult with at least two naturalists or knowledgeable guides experienced in your bioregion, and write a brief description of what you learned from them. Include a background on their training and experience as it relates to your bioregion, as well as how to gain insight into their knowledge of the area. Submit this section when completed.
4. Visit 3 **potential** sites to include in your program, and write a brief description of why you would or would not include them. Take photos of your visits and create a photo essay showing and explaining the areas visited. Submit this section when completed.
5. Create a timetable for when and how you could put your plan into action. See pages 56-57 in the guidebook for a suggested outline. Submit your timetable when completed.

Part C: Demonstration of knowledge

At the conclusion of the course please **submit** the following additional documentation:

1. "Bioregional Quiz - Post" (p. 80) results from the end of course. Describe what you observed about the differences between the Pre and Post Bioregional Quizzes.
2. Tell what research sources you used and what you have learned from each about your local version of the Deep-time, Weather & Climate and Indigenous People's stories.
3. A copy of the map of your chosen "Place". Include a brief description of the key elements.
4. Your photo journal of field observation and experiences. Describe pictures and how they relate to the subject. You might include here any poetry or other artistic inspirations that were evoked in the process.
5. Your reflections on what difference this experience has made to you. Did you get any new ideas for your own teaching? If so, what are they?