

The Nature of Teaching: An Engaged Approach to K12 Program Delivery

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The Nature of Teaching is a Purdue Extension program that provides resources for K-12 teachers and non-formal educators to teach STEM standards in the context of natural resources. All resources are pilot-tested, expert-reviewed, and free to download from www.purdue.edu/nature. This program has expanded exponentially in the last two years from thousands of downloads to hundreds of thousands of downloads, became one of the first signature programs for Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension at Purdue, and been adopted by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Agency. This dramatic increase in usership is due to an array of factors including having a driven team with diverse expertise, forming partnerships with diverse groups, providing accessible professional development opportunities, incentivizing program use, assessing student responses, recognizing educator success, facilitating discussion and reflection, and being receptive to program users leading program expansion. Presenters will elaborate on how these factors have contributed to the success of the Nature of Teaching program and how it can be adopted across the country.

Key words: Environmental education; partnerships; Extension; curriculum; professional development; community engagement