








# Exploring Biodiversity and Ecology Through the Lens of Creativity and Culture

By Nessa Darcy

## Course details

-  One week course
-  Starting from 480€ (Cultural activities included)\*
-  Min. 4 - max. 14 participants
-  Certificate of attendance included (80% of attendance required)
-  Available in Barcelona, Dublin, Strasbourg and Verona

\* A 60 € late registration fee will be applied if you register less than 8 weeks before the course start date.

## Course description

We, humans, tend to perceive nature as something to control or visit rather than being instinctively aware that it is something that we are an integral part of and that our lives depend on.

How can we re-wilden ourselves and the land that we use? This course aims to reintroduce you and your students to your natural habitat through colorful, interactive encounters with diverse plants and animals.

Combining hands-on ecology with visual arts, storytelling, music, drama, and games makes it easy to form an intimate knowledge of our planet's ecosystems and a deep affection for the biodiversity that they support. It enables us to imagine a healthy, abundant future for our environment and take positive action toward that vision.

Multi-sensory observation of nature has mental health benefits and is a way to include all kinds of learners. It can also act as a gateway into other learning opportunities and personal development. It is an ideal subject for boosting the confidence of quieter students, as they can easily gain first-hand personal expertise in this fascinating topic.

Each day of the course builds on the previous one, from introducing the concepts to hands-on field-based activities to the creative treatment of a species encountered on a field trip, and then to act on what you have learned.



The course takes a place-based learning approach, encouraging engagement with your local wildlife, folklore, community, and citizen science biodiversity recording schemes.

We will focus in particular on insects and the plants that they live on, as these are the most widespread, diverse, and easily accessible study subjects for children. Every dramatic scene you would expect from a nature documentary can be witnessed in miniature in the undergrowth.

Students who find insects repulsive are soon converted to bug-saving heroes after they have held one in their hands, drawn its portrait, and gained an understanding of why it is important and what it needs to survive!

## Learning outcomes

The course will help the participants to:

- Facilitate the scientific and sensory exploration of living things and their habitats;
- Engage students in understanding and appreciating the living world through simple creative activities;
- Increase their knowledge of flora and fauna, with a particular focus on invertebrates, an easily accessible, diverse, and useful group of species;
- Nurture students' relationship with local natural folklore and ancestral nature knowledge;
- Boost students' confidence and wellbeing as they develop a personal knowledge of and connection with nature;
- Inspire student action to conserve and spread awareness of biodiversity in creative ways.

## Tentative schedule

### Day 1 – Exploring the concept of biodiversity

- Introduction to the course, the school, and the external week activities;
- Icebreaker activities;
- Presentations of the participants' schools;
- Exploring the concept of biodiversity: from your lunchbox to the rainforests of Madagascar;
- Using creative activities to make biodiversity accessible to children with different learning styles.





## Day 2 – Introducing ecology

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- Introducing ecology and the interdependence of living things;
- Developing awareness of the local environment and the life it supports;
- Provoking students to think creatively about the human species' relationship with our ecosystem, through physical and visual activities;
- Drama and storytelling about nature.

## Day 3 – Field trip

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- Field trip to Turvey Park in Donabate / Red Rock in Howth / Tymon Park / Phoenix Park;
- En route: teaching biodiversity through song;
- Discovering biodiversity through a range of field sampling techniques;
- Using art to document insect anatomy and habitats;
- Setting a moth trap or pitfall trap.

## Day 4 – Place-based nature

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- Revealing and recording the contents of your insect trap;
- Engaging with identification resources;
- Adaptations for survival: a rich source of inspiration for creative practices;
- Reacquainting ourselves with folklore: place-based nature relationships, including the biodiversity knowledge of migrant communities.

## Day 5 – Art and environmental activism

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- Designing biodiversity conservation actions for your school;
- Using art to create a shift in attitudes towards nature and engage in environmental activism;
- Untidy Towns: collaborating with the local community;
- Painting a vision for the future of a healthy planet.

## Day 6 – Course closure and cultural activities

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- Course evaluation: round-up of acquired competencies, feedback, and discussion;
- Awarding of the course Certificate of Attendance;
- Excursion and other external cultural activities.



\*The schedule describes likely activities but may differ significantly based on the requests of the participants, and the trainer delivering the specific session. Course modifications are subject to the trainer's discretion. If you would like to discuss a specific topic, please indicate it at least 4 weeks in advance.

Our courses usually include two cultural activities. Further information is available on the webpage of each course location.

## About the provider

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