



FALL CONFERENCE
November 6, 2026
 Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, VT

Flourish Together: Well-being, Belonging, and Learning for a Changing World



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UVTPC 2026 Workshop Descriptions (subject to change)

Dive into this year's amazing workshop lineup! Each one is part of a strand (look for the matching symbol) so you can easily spot what excites you most. Some presenters shared who their session is best suited for, you'll find that listed in parentheses before the workshop title.

Conference Strands:

 **Caring for Ourselves: Sustaining educators and preventing burnout** *Experience practices that nurture educator well-being, creativity, joy, mindfulness, and resilience.*

 **Caring for Community: Building relationships that foster belonging and support learning** *Explore partnerships, collaboration, student voice, and practices that strengthen connections among educators, learners, families, and communities.*

 **Caring for the Land: Deepening our connection to nature** *Discover experiences that cultivate stewardship, outdoor learning, ecological understanding, and meaningful relationships with the places we call home.*

Morning Workshops (10:45am-11:45am)

 (HS and above and nonformal educators) **Nature Therapy: Learning From The Land by Erika LaRosa, [Rooted Rose Recreation and Wellness LLC](#)**

Embrace the nurturing qualities of your surroundings. Join our Nature Therapy Session to reconnect with your true nature and strengthen your bond with the land around you. Engage in a restorative walk that encourages presence with the wind, honors the changing seasons, and deepens your understanding of your inner landscape. Meet in the Lounge then head outside to Gazebo area (15 max)

 (Everyone) **Nature Journaling by Heidi Colburn, Science Teacher, Bedford High School & [Certified Nature Journal Educator](#)** *Discover the benefits of nature journaling in this hands-on workshop designed for educators. Participants will be introduced to the fundamentals of nature journaling, learn practical tips and techniques, and take part in a guided journaling session outdoors. [Edgewater \(30 max\)](#)*

 (MS-HS) **Hacking the Rural Narrative: Using Local Literacy and Social Capital to Build Belonging by Sean Robinson, Principal, [Bellows Falls Union High School](#)** *Turn the "rural schools problem" on its head. In this interactive session, secondary educators will use Donehower's rural literacy framework to map community social capital. Learn to "hack" standard curricula into place-based projects that counter brain drain, deepen student belonging, and foster community resilience. [Morey Room \(30 max\)](#)*

 (Everyone) **Compassionate Action in Education by Susan Dreyer Leon, Core Faculty and Director of the [Mindfulness for Educators Program, Antioch University New England](#)** *In this workshop we will spend some time practicing contemplation in nature and then discuss the features of "compassionate action" and how this reconceptualization of care can help us as educators to stay authentically open to our students needs while also reducing burnout for ourselves. [Lakeside East/West \(18 max\)](#)*

 (PreK-4th and nonformal educators) **The Loon's Necklace: Exploring Nature, Connection and Stewardship Through the Lens of the Common Loon by Michael Caduto, Founder, [P.E.A.C.E.®—Programs for Environmental Awareness & Cultural Exchange](#)** *In this interactive workshop, environmental educator, author and storyteller Michael Caduto (co-author Keepers of the Earth) uses natural history and the cultural traditions surrounding the Common Loon as springboards to understanding this remarkable bird and how it inspires a deep sense of connection and stewardship for nature. [Lakeside Theatre \(50 max\)](#)*

 (Everyone) **Solutionaries for Community and Climate by Aubrey Nelson, Educator & Professional Learning Lead, [VT & NH Energy Education Program](#); possibly Angie Krysiak, Educator/Action Project Advisor, NH/VEEP** *How do we empower students to ask, "What difference will we make in the world?" The Solutionary Framework offers pathways to integrate meaningful action into curriculum. Through VEEP/NHEEP's proven experiential approach, participants will practice identifying and investigating a local climate-related problem, then explore techniques to innovate and implement solutions. [Gardenview \(30 max\)](#)*

Combined Afternoon Workshops (12:45pm-2:45pm)

 (Everyone) **Blueprint for Resilience: Mindfulness & Cyanotypes in the Woods by Courtney Mulcahy, Education for Sustainability Professional Learning Facilitator & Educator; and Mallory Schmackpfeffer, Farm & Forest Educator, [Shelburne Farms](#)** *Through sensory exploration and mindfulness practices in a forest setting, this workshop helps participants uncover and identify meaningful connections to integrate into their everyday lives. Utilizing natural materials, participants will craft a custom cyanotype print designed to serve as a*

lasting reminder of their personal meaning and deep resilience Meet in the Lounge then head outside to Gazebo area (15 max)

 (PreK-4 and nonformal educators) **Math in the Garden!** by Jacqueline Labate, Community Partnerships Coordinator, KidsGardening; and Em Shipman, Executive Director, [KidsGardening](#)

This workshop for primary and non-formal teachers revolves around hands-on garden and nature activities that introduce and reinforce math skills and concepts. Teachers will experience the activities first-hand and discuss ways to adapt the activities with their grade-level peers. Gardenview (20 max)

Afternoon Workshops Session 1 (12:45pm-1:45pm)

 (Everyone) **Creative Reuse for your Classroom: Crafting with rePlay Arts** by Jamie Rosenfeld and Melanie Adsit, Co-Directors, [rePlay Arts](#)

Come learn about rePlay Arts, a local creative reuse art center in White River Junction and make art using materials that were destined for the landfill! This session will allow educators to get creative with reuse materials and leave with resources and project ideas for upcycling and sustainable artmaking in their classroom. Morey Room (30 max)

 (MS-HS and nonformal educators) **Inquiry, Belonging, and the American Abenaki Curriculum** by Vera Longtoe Sheehan, Director, [Abenaki Arts & Education Center](#) / Curriculum Development Specialist, American Abenaki Curriculum Committee

The interactive session introduces the new curriculum organized to help teachers confidently integrate American Abenaki history, living culture, and perspectives into their classrooms. Experience one of the curriculum's inquiry activities. Compelling questions, contextualized readings, authentic community voices, maps, artwork, historical documents, discussion, and writing help students investigate evidence and construct understanding. Lakeside Theatre (50 max)

 (Everyone) **The Art of Feathers** by Kelly Gadouas, MEd, Educator, [Vermont Institute of Natural Science](#)

Get up close to real raptor feathers from VINS! Observe and try your hand at creating pastel drawings of the feathers. We will explore the structure of owl, hawk and other raptor feathers. Discuss the differences between owls and hawks and explore the creative process with artist and educator, Kelly Gadouas. No art experience necessary. Terrace Ballroom (25 max)

 (MS-HS) **Using iNaturalist Data in the Classroom** by Dana Williams, Community Science Coordinator, Vermont Center for Ecostudies; and Ryan Rebozo, Director of Conservation Science, [Vermont Center for Ecostudies](#)

In this interactive workshop, you will learn how to use iNaturalist to guide hands-on student research, build critical thinking skills, and foster responsible community scientists. You'll leave with a practical framework for designing manageable research projects and support place-based learning with real biodiversity data. Edgewater (25 max)

Afternoon Workshops Session 2 (2:00pm-2:45pm)

 (Everyone) **Self-Care Sampler for Body and Mind** by Laurie Goldsmith, MEd, MSW, Educator, [Vermont Institute of Natural Science](#)

Self-care as educators is paramount to keeping ourselves vibrant and available to those we teach. Cultivating a practice in a time when personal and global challenges weigh heavy is key to not just surviving and avoiding burnout, but for thriving. Come to learn and practice together a basic routine of gentle yoga, qi gong, meditation and for sharing ideas and resources with one another. No prior experience necessary. Edgewater (15 max)

 (Everyone) **Better Together: A VEEN/NHEE Open Forum for Environmental Educators** by VEEN & NHEE Board Members

Environmental education can be isolating work, and [Vermont Education & Environment Network \(VEEN\)](#) and [New Hampshire Environmental Educators \(NHEE\)](#) exist to change that, but only if they are shaped by the educators they serve. This session is for anyone who wants a voice in that shaping. Come think together about what's already working well in these networks, where support is still missing, and how members and non members alike can build something stronger together. Whether you are a longtime member or have never heard of VEEN or NHEE before, your perspective belongs in this conversation. Terrace Ballroom (40 max)

 (HS and above) **Using Humanities Curriculum to Build Connection to Place** by Christine Armiger, Director of Sustainability, [Vermont Academy](#); and Whitney Barrett, Vermont Academy Humanities Chair

Vermont Academy's 11th grade English curriculum uses weekly outdoor-based instruction to foster student connection to place to deepen student commitment to caring for the land. Through a combination of curriculum discussion and demonstration, participants will explore how they can balance content with the restorative work of place-based education. Lakeside Theatre (40 max)

 (PreK-HS) **Managing (or not) Your School Garden in the Summer** by Abbie Castriotta, [Woodstock Union HS CRAFT Program](#); Anna Hubbard, Farm to School and Early Childhood Project Manager, [Vital Communities](#); and 1–2 Woodstock high school garden interns

You shouldn't have to stress about your school garden during the summer. In this discussion-based workshop you will get to rethink how you manage (or don't manage) your school gardens in the summer. We'll go over techniques for choosing and growing crops with minimal summer input for maximum harvest in the fall, winter, and spring; lower maintenance alternatives such as perennial food systems; and share some local programs and resources to help support your garden during the summer. Morey Room (25 max)