

DESIGNING EDUCATIONAL ECOSYSTEMS

A Whole Systems Permaculture Teacher Training • August 18-27, 2017 • Omega Institute
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Dear Educators,

Have you heard of **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)**? CSAs involve people paying a grower for farm produce shares in the winter, and then picking up their produce shares over the course of the following growing season. CSAs have many benefits, including: giving the farmer up-front capital when they need it most; guaranteeing the farmer's income; ensuring the purchaser gets quality, locally-produced food; keeping money in the local economy; and building stronger farmer-eater relationships.

Community Supported Education (CSE) is very similar!

You have expressed interest in attending a permaculture teacher training, and you need money up-front in order to attend. That makes you similar to a grower needing to buy seed, fertilizer, and so on before the growing season begins. Rather than struggling to come up with the funds yourself, or asking for loans or donations, you could contract with friends, family, and your community to pre-purchase a service that you provide later, just like when consumers buy a CSA share and pick up their vegetables later. In this case, though, they would pay you up-front for an educational event that would take place after the teacher training! And here's just one bonus: *this teacher training is specifically designed to give you direct practical support to design and test workshop material you can use after the training is over.* So the training will help you meet the educational and financial obligations you incur through your CSE!

A Few Practical Thoughts

Your event could be an evening talk or a half-day, one-day, or two-day workshop. Gauge that by your sense of confidence and what you have to offer. Commit to something enough bigger than your self-confidence that you stretch without strain! During the course, we will support you to design and put on this event through a series of exercises that build on your pre-course homework. We will provide you with budget templates, draft curricula, advertisement templates, our excitement about your work and access to our teaching experience. We will help you build new skills and gain confidence in the ones you already have. The work you develop before and during the course can be part of your workshop; we are stacking functions here. You will also be presenting to your classmates and to the public during the course, which can serve as a test-run for part of your workshop.

We recommend you plan your event to occur within two to three months of the teacher training. This will give you time to land after the training, to further develop your event outline and materials, and, most importantly, to set up the logistics and do publicity to pull in more people than your pre-subscribers if needed. You can certainly do it sooner if you want. In either case you should probably set up the venue ahead of the training, as some venues book six months or more in advance. However, don't wait too long after the training to run your event—keep the momentum going once the training is over so you don't lose the threads the training gives you. The commitment to put on this event ensures you the opportunity to warm up your teaching skills right after the training, and to break the public ice when you have momentum from the training.

We recommend doing a decent budget for the event before asking for subscribers so you have some sense of how the economics might work out. Contact us if you have not received a template for this as part of this package. We suggest that you use most of the money from the subscribers to pay your teacher training tuition and set some aside to produce the event. We propose you save about 25% for this purpose, but the amount you set aside depends entirely on your circumstances, hence the budget.

We expect the fact that you are trying to get teacher training will help you advertise and receive support for your event—use this in your subscription advertising! This situation can help you gain traction in the public eye and break into the field. By supporting your professional development through pre-payment, subscribers could get a discount on your workshop and help bring valuable skills pertinent to these changing, unstable times into their communities. If you are part of a CSA farm, you might start with members there who will have an easier time understanding what you are trying to do.

You can, of course, advertise your event to other people too once the teacher training is over. Attendees who did not subscribe can therefore provide additional income for you.

The CSE subscription agreement will be solely between you and your subscribers. We are here to support you, but we are not part of the agreement (we do not want to play the role of guarantor to your subscribers). We are only providing an idea and some support structures to help you create your own CSE program. We will put you in touch with other teacher training participants who are doing the same so you can collaborate if you like.

On the educator training [website](#) we've included:

- A draft one-page flyer describing the CSE agreement to potential subscribers
- A brochure about the educator training course in case potential subscribers are curious about what they might fund you to do. We suggest you fill in details about the workshop you will provide at the bottom of the attached flyer with the CSE header—or throw that out completely and start fresh.
- An Excel budget template for a short workshop, which you can use or modify for your own purposes.
- A number of one-page workshop flyers you can use as samples to help create your own workshop flyer.

If helpful, you can ask us about receiving some of those pdf workshop flyers in a computer format that works for you if you want to use them as templates to make flyers for your event. Please don't hesitate to [contact us](#) with any other questions.

Isn't this a sweet idea?

In support of you and our shared work,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Faulkner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dave, Chris, and Kim