

Virtual Risk Management: using online training to increase risk awareness in university faculty

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Project Background

Field trips and field courses provide an unparalleled learning opportunity for university students, especially in the sciences of forestry, geography, ecology, anthropology, and geology. Field experiences provide students with hands-on training, expose students to real-world scenarios, and allow students to observe pristine environments. Overnight field courses provide these learning opportunities and facilitate students' connection to nature and a sense of community.

Faculty Risk Management Survey

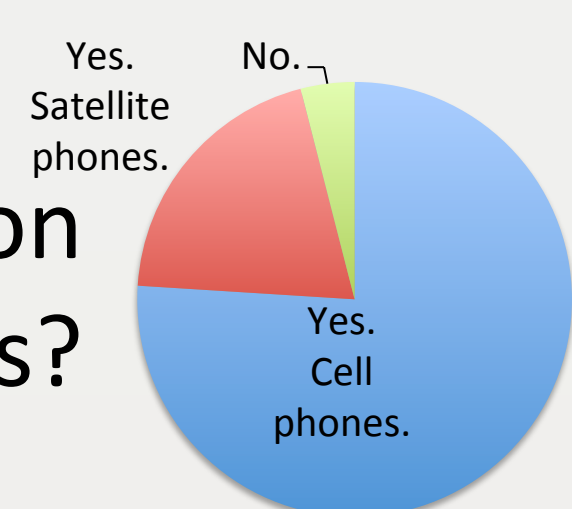
In order to understand the risk management practices and protocols in place on university field courses, I distributed a short anonymous online survey about field management practices on overnight courses to community college and university faculty. I distributed the survey on listservs for ecologists, geologists, and anthropologists. I gave the survey in 2013 (n=16) and 2015 (n=36). Most of the respondents were from the USA and Canada, but 20% teach overseas.

Course Subject *	Course Environment	Course Length
Ecology 59%	Forested Environment 26%	1 night 13%
Biology 44%	Rivers / Lakes 22%	2-3 nights 20%
Env. Science 38%	Mountain Environments 21%	4-7 nights 18%
Geology 26%	Coastal Ecosystems 13%	7-14 nights 15%
Forestry 12%	Deserts 6%	14+ nights 22%
Anthropology 6%	Urban Areas 3%	Other 10%
Other 20%	Other 9%	

* Respondents could select more than one answer for the course subject area.

Survey Results

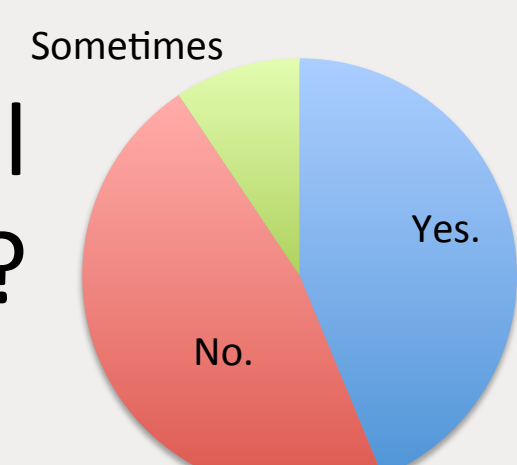
Do you carry field communication devices on overnight courses?



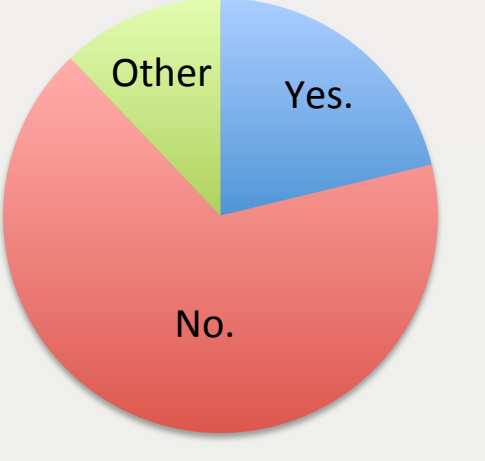
Do you have someone who is trained in wilderness medicine on course?



Do you have someone on call while you are in the field?



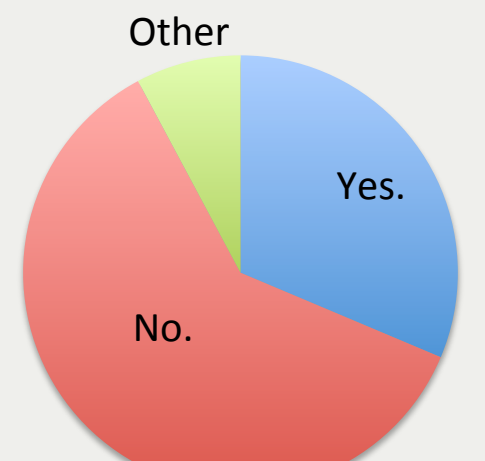
Do you carry an emergency evacuation plan with you in the field?



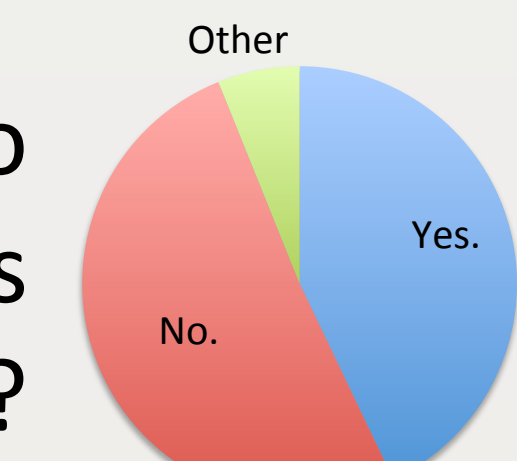
Does your institution have an emergency response plan for a serious field incident?



Do you feel that the training, policies, and protocols on your courses are adequate?

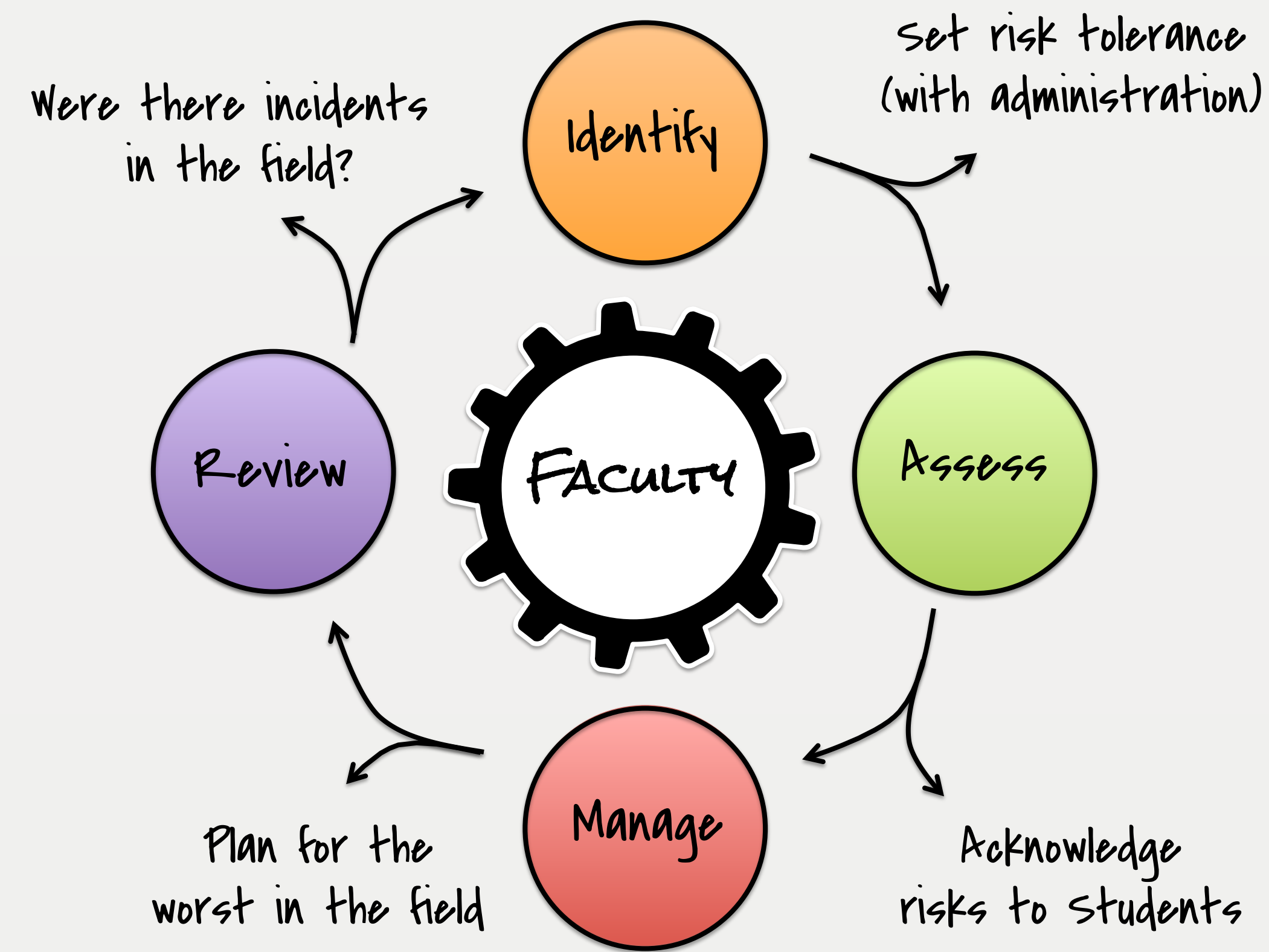


Are faculty members asked to disclose the risks on their courses in syllabi or marketing materials?



Online Risk Management Training

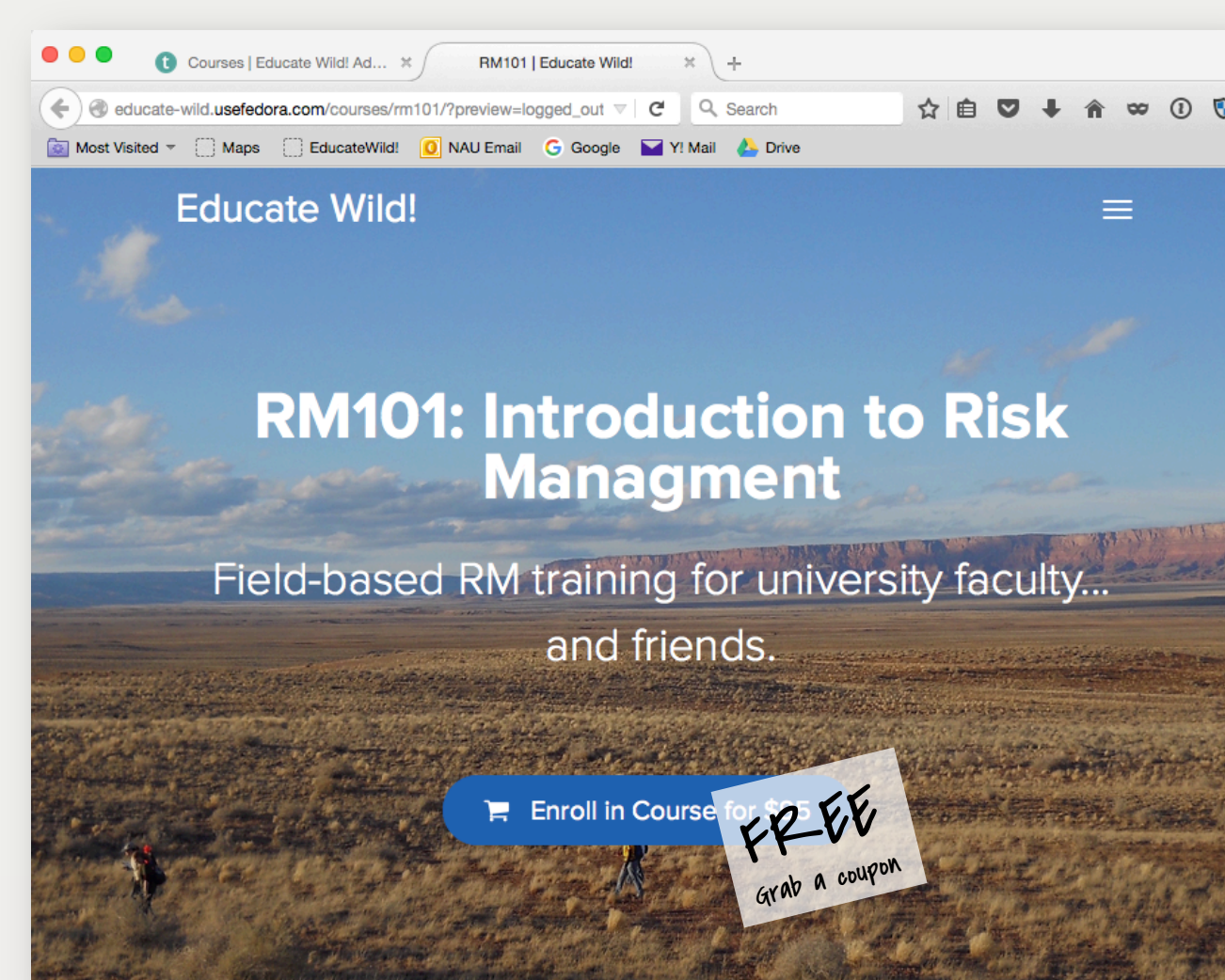
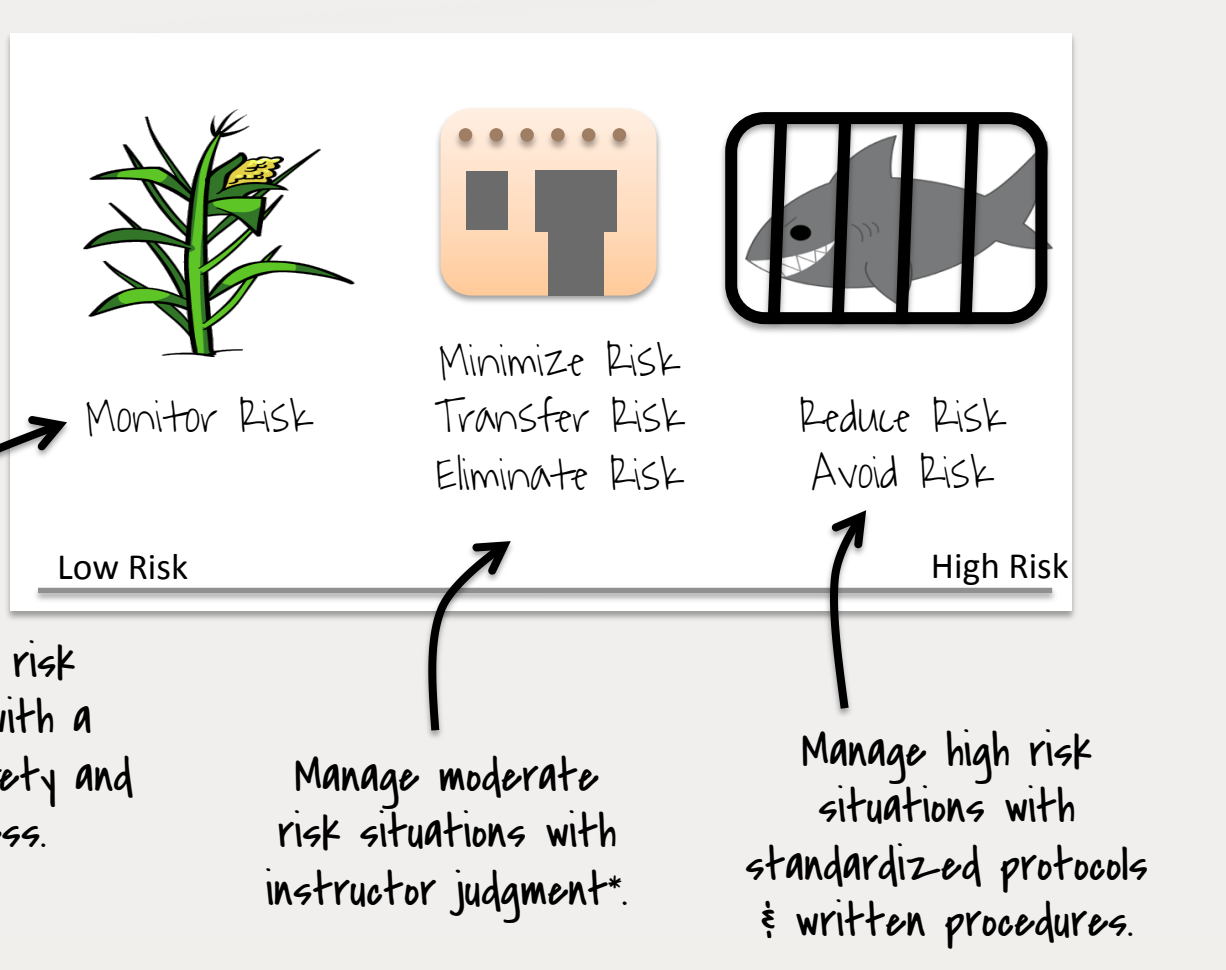
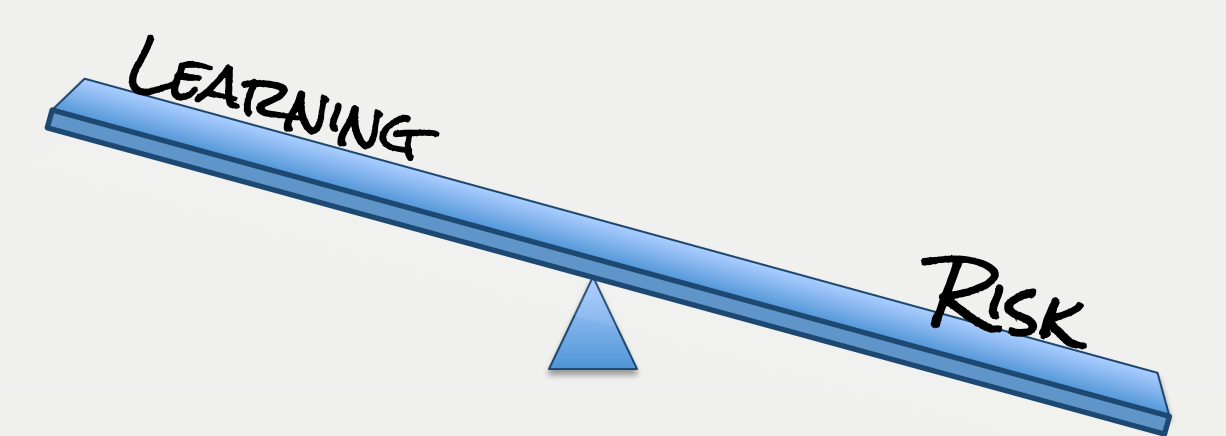
The majority of college faculty who teach field courses do not have an outdoor education background. I designed *RM101: Introduction to Risk Management* in response to a request from colleagues for a brief risk management training that would highlight their blind spots and help them plan to manage risk. It introduces a framework and that faculty and administrators can use to weigh the risk of course activities against the learning outcomes for the class. The training also provides written planning materials and sample emergency response forms.



RM 101: Introduction to Risk Management

Introduces college faculty and administrators to a risk management framework:

- Identify** 1. Consider human factors, environmental hazards, and planned activities when identifying risks during the design of field courses.
- Assess** 2. Weigh the risk level of an activity against the learning outcomes of a class or the mission of the institution.
- Manage** 3. Determine whether to avoid or reduce the risk and identify the appropriate strategy for managing risk in the field.
- Review** 4. Provides a list of questions to consider when reviewing the course design and any incidents.



RM101 is located on Teachable.com, which allows me to update the course content as risk management practices change over time. It also allows students to enroll once and have access to all of the current and future content in the course.

Check it out – for free!

RM101 combines video lectures, whiteboard animations, scenarios, short quizzes, and online discussions to illustrate basic principles of field risk management. The training is in the testing phase right now; the full release will be in mid-November. If you'd like to get a preview of RM101 please take a card below and use the free coupon code to register at <http://educate-wild.teachable.com>. You can register now and have access to the full course later this year.

