

# Climate Kind Pedagogy

Dr. Kshamta Hunter  
University of British Columbia  
[Kshamta.hunter@ubc.ca](mailto:Kshamta.hunter@ubc.ca)

**Keywords:** Climate change, pedagogy, curriculum, sustainability education

**Abstract:** Climate change and the related social impacts have necessitated a re-think of traditional pedagogies. Educators are faced with the challenge to not only engage learners in these multifaceted conversations, but to support and address the range of emotions and pedagogical complexities that involve socio-scientific realities. Climate-Kind Pedagogy (CKP), attempts to synthesize various climate, kindness and justice orientated educational approaches into a comprehensive pedagogy geared at addressing the pressing need for both educators and learners to reconceptualize their relationship with one another and the planet while offering a framework for embedding climate education in teaching and learning.

**Background:** Despite the breadth of information on the climate and related crisis, there is no agreement on what strategies are most effective in teaching about climate change (Monroe et. al., 2017) and related social inequities. Many educators and researchers recognize that climate change education might differ from how other environmental issues are taught (Monroe et. al., 2017) due to the complex and uncertain nature and how the subject matter resonates deeply with personal value systems, which requires harmonizing knowledge of climate change with cultural ideology within perception and learning (Guy et al. 2014). Research shows that effective pedagogical approaches support learners' emotional needs (Salama & Aboukoura, 2018), integrate key pedagogical conditions (Rothberg, 2019), such as reflexivity, and acknowledge learners as "feeling-thinking beings" (Bryan, 2020). In addition, taking a decolonizing approach to education that goes beyond western ideologies and explores alternative ways of knowing and worldviews is essential to effective and inclusive climate education.

**Perspective(s):** Using Appreciative Inquiry approach, the CKP framework builds upon successful approaches in climate and kindness pedagogies. The framework is based in in-depth research on current models of climate and sustainability education while focusing on development of key sustainability and climate competencies (UNESCO, 2017) in students through the lens of Transformative Learning. CKP focuses on how learners construe, validate and reformulate the meaning of their experience and their own feelings, beliefs, assumptions, and perspectives. This includes: Instrumental learning - identifying cause and effect of actions; Communicative learning - individuals gaining communicative skills and learning how to express their wishes, feelings, and emotions; and Emancipatory Learning – becoming aware of individual reality by examining power, positions and values.

**Methodology:** The framework is based in a thorough review of existing research in climate and sustainable development, including kindness informed pedagogies. We researched and documented successful approaches, curricula, and pedagogies in climate science and kindness to start developing a Climate Kind Pedagogy framework. This required research into curricular and pedagogical approaches related to climate and sustainability, including science and environmental education, climate change education, sustainability education, as well as transformative pedagogies, including eco-pedagogy, kindness pedagogy and pedagogy of care. Taking an appreciative inquiry approach (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999), this review focused on successful strategies and approaches rather than unsuccessful methods or gaps. This led to a thorough and comprehensive analysis of existing literature and work in climate

and kindness education to document successful approaches and develop a Climate Kind Pedagogy framework for teacher education courses.

Evaluation of the framework is being done through pre and post student and instructor questionnaires, in addition to focus groups and individual interviews that focus on the learning outcomes of the courses, including interdisciplinary learning with a focus on student experience and inclusion, as well as analysis of student work and researcher observations.

**Educational Significance:** The framework integrates and highlights key pedagogical categories including foundational values, syllabus and course planning, attitude of the teacher, activities, tools, evaluation strategies, and expected outcomes that will be shared during the presentation. Under each of these categories we highlighted significant contributions from the two broad categories of pedagogy: climate and kindness with specific examples to inform and advance climate learning within classrooms and beyond.

## References

- Bryan, A (2020) *Affective Pedagogies, Emotion and Social Justice*, London: Routledge.
- Cooperrider, D., & Whitney, D. (1999). *Collaborating for change*. San Francisco, CA: Barrett-Koehler.
- Guy S., Kashima Y., Walker I., and O'Neill S. (2014), Investigating the effects of knowledge and ideology on climate change beliefs, *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.*, 44; pages 421–429, doi: [10.1002/ejsp.2039](https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2039)
- Martha C. Monroe, Richard R. Plate, Annie Oxarart, Alison Bowers & Willandia A. Chaves (2019) Identifying effective climate change education strategies: a systematic review of the research, *Environmental Education Research*, 25:6, 791-812, DOI: 10.1080/13504622.2017.1360842
- Rothberg, M (2019) *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Salama, S., Aboukoura, K. (2018). Role of Emotions in Climate Change Communication. In: Leal Filho, W., Manolas, E., Azul, A., Azeiteiro, U., McGhie, H. (eds) *Handbook of Climate Change Communication: Vol. 1. Climate Change Management*. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69838-0\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69838-0_9)
- UNESCO. (2017). *Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning objectives*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247444>