



An Existential Toolkit for Climate Educators Workshop 3-5 July 2020 Call for Proposals

Conveners: Jennifer Atkinson, Elin Kelsey, Sarah Ray

Location: Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Munich, Germany

Proposal Deadline: 18 November 2019

This workshop seeks materials and presentations for an interdisciplinary workshop that will address the following question: how can educators, activists, and community leaders help students navigate the emotional impacts of ecological degradation and social injustice in the age of climate disruption? Our aim is to develop a practical toolkit for educators, students and activists across disciplines and professions, with potential emphasis on pedagogical applications, curricular implications, and even co-curricular connections (counseling and wellness, student life, etc).

As feelings of environmental grief, nihilism, eco-depression and climate anxiety become more common within the Climate Generation (including current college-aged students), educators across disciplines need the knowledge and resources to help those students deal with these emotional impacts. Many educators in the environmental sciences and studies (ESS), however, persist in communicating the scale and urgency of our unfolding crisis without adequately addressing its affective consequences on students' ability to learn, much less address and adapt to climate change. Our challenge today is to ensure that students have the emotional resilience and existential tenacity to stay engaged in climate solutions for the long haul.

This workshop seeks to stage a conversation between activist traditions, environmental humanists and psychologists, ESS educators, and participants from any other discipline engaged in difficult issues like biodiversity loss, climate change, and environmental injustice. Participants will share and develop new resources, practices, pedagogical tools/strategies, and research with the aim of building an interdisciplinary toolkit for effective teaching in the age of climate disruption. As we explore ways to support students grappling with the emotional fallout of the Anthropocene, our questions are:

What emotional, spiritual, psychological, and existential skills are needed by the Climate Generation as they prepare to take up the difficult work ahead?

- What are the affective implications of our instructional content and methods?
- What are the implicit or explicit affective outcomes of our work with students?
- How might we ethically translate tools of social movements into our pedagogy?
- What might a “climate justice pedagogy” look and feel like, to us and to our students?



- How do we teach the navigation of the “doom-and-gloom” of environmental disaster and injustice?
- As students increasingly experience climate change first-hand, how do we address climate trauma in our teaching?

The workshop will also be a resource for instructors navigating the affective terrain of teaching about power, privilege, identity, epistemological diversity, climate justice, and environmental grief. We recognize that many of us working in environmental fields have only recently begun to confront emotional impacts that have long been taking a severe toll on historically marginalized and frontline communities, and particularly encourage proposals that center these questions around environmental justice and privilege.

Our gathering seeks to build on the momentum and work begun at RCC's 2017 workshop on [Radical Hope: Inspiring Sustainability Transformations through Our Past](#) and [“Beyond Doom and Gloom,”](#) the RCC *Perspectives* publication edited by Elin Kelsey. While the collaborations at RCC that led to these resources explored ways to encourage hope for the future and foster human resilience in the face of environmental degradation, our 2020 workshop will explicitly take up problems in teaching.

Participants from diverse fields and professions are encouraged to submit papers or presentations that explore strategies for addressing the questions listed above. We welcome proposals from any region of the world or field where environmental and climate issues are being addressed: educators, scholars, community activists, educational staff (library, counseling, student life), artists, writers, filmmakers, faith communities and beyond. The conference will be global in scope, putting disparate voices and perspectives into conversation.

Proposals for scholarly papers, teaching or educational materials, or descriptions of other kinds of student-oriented projects that relate to this topic and showcase the participants' unique contributions are due 18 November 2019, and should be no longer than 750 words in length. Please include a position description that explains how your training experience shapes your knowledge on this topic, and a brief description of your specific contribution to the workshop. Please submit your proposal to Sarah Ray, sarah.ray@humboldt.edu.

Participants will be chosen by 20 December 2019. Successful applicants will receive travel support plus accommodation during the workshop from the RCC. Written project descriptions of 4,000–5,000 words, not including footnotes, will be due 15 March 2020 for pre-circulation among the participants. Selected papers will be eligible for inclusion in a collection of essays we aim to publish with a university press and possibly make available through an online resource. This publication will serve as an open-access resource library for educators and others seeking ideas about how to integrate emotion into climate justice programming and teaching.