

Teacher Notes- Guide to Addressing the Climate Crisis

Knowledge is important to making students understand the severity of the climate crisis, but in order to connect students with the topic there must be a discussion in the classroom.

Topics to Consider in Class Conversations

Local Impacts

Researching how your state is impacted by the climate crisis is critical for students to engage with the issue. Students need to see how this issue relates and impacts them as individuals.

Question for Discussion:

- What changes have you noticed in the seasons/ weather?
 - Example in California: There has been an increase in wildfires, droughts, and longer summer heat/ raining out of season

Hope

When having conversations on the climate crisis it is essential to address the emotions and feelings that students have. A survey done in 10 countries with over 10,000 student responses, found that more than half felt *sadness*, *anxiety*, *anger*, and *guilt* about climate change ([Hickman et al., 2021](#)). Allow students to share their thoughts and acknowledge the feelings they are going through. It becomes increasingly important to promote hope. Encourage students to think about how their actions make an impact but it is vital that we see systemic change.

Example source to appeal to students:

- ★ Movie: *The Lorax*
 - Analyzing the film adaptation of the Dr. Seuss book allows students to discuss what happens when humans take an excessive amount of resources from the Earth and how these actions pollute the environment. But it also allows students to assess what happens when one person takes the risk to make a change.

Questions for Discussion:

- What type of emotions pop up when thinking of the climate crisis?
- What small changes can you make to combat climate change?

- Conversations on individual change leading to collective change are necessary to foster hope in students
- Who else plays a role in making change?
 - Policymakers and industries who need to make systemic changes
 - Students should not bear the burden, they need to see that the adults in their life care. Ensure transparency with students: you may not know all the answers but you as an educator are willing to learn *with* students

Reference

Hickman et al. 2021. *Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey*

The Lancet Planetary Health, Volume 5, Issue 12, e863 - e873.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext)