Thinking about climate change education, policy and justice

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Conversations for Change: The Future of Education for Global Climate Justice
2 November, 2022
Outline

Climate change education policy context
What is climate change education?
Opportunities for enacting justice through CCE policy
Climate Change Education Policy

• Environmental and climate crises are intensifying (IPCC, 2022)

• Related education is marginalised in policy and practice (Reid, 2019; Greer, King and Glackin, 2021)

• Causes of marginalisation are not well understood

• Future programmes are just as likely to be side-lined unless we can understand the causes of this marginalisation
In England...

- Policies have been attending elsewhere
  - CC has a low profile in ed policies
  - Education has a low profile in CC policies

- Responding to the ‘crisis’ is overlooked in education
  - Curriculum and inspection

- Economic orientation of the policy landscape
  - Economic growth is an unquestioned objective
  - Education policies are oriented to work; accountability and management: ‘digital futures’, ‘technology futures’ ‘work futures’ rather than, e.g. ‘sustainable futures’
A new sustainability and climate change strategy

Five action areas:
- Climate education
- Green skills and careers
- Education estate and digital infrastructure
- Operations and supply Chains
- International

Three initiatives:
- National Education Nature Park
- Climate Leaders Award
- Sustainability Leadership

Critique: Dunlop and Rushton, 2022
International policy

Article 6 of the UNFCCC: Education, Training and Public Awareness

Article 12 of the Paris Agreement (COP21, 2015)
Goal 4: Quality Education

Target 4.7
…by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

Goal 13: Climate Action

Target 13.3: Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.
“We want more!”
What is Climate Change Education?
CCE Mosaic

Qualities of a meaningful educational response to climate change

- Offer and be open to alternatives
- Accept and embrace complexity
- Incorporate multiple types of knowledge
- Develop ecological worldviews
- Recognise and support students as agents of change
- Re-orient towards justice

(Greer and Glackin, 2021)
Alternative visions of the future
• Unwedded to perpetual economic growth
• Promote living that achieves equity and sufficiency among humans and all species on the planet (e.g. Sterling, 2017)

Alternative approaches to education
• Unshackled from narrowly defined outcomes and assessment procedures (e.g. Kagawa 2013)

Offer and be open to alternatives
• Climate change is an inherently complex issue
• Multifaceted causes, impacts and solutions
• Recognise the trade-offs associated with mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk and social justice

(e.g. Stevenson, Nicholls and Whitehouse, 2017)
Incorporate multiple types of knowledge

- Disciplinary knowledge
- Wide range of disciplines - bridge disciplinary boundaries
- Spiritual and emotional knowledge
- Ability to critique knowledge and its sources
- Skills to tackle complex problems

(e.g. Kagawa and Selby, 2010; Ojala, 2016)
• More than learning about the natural world and more than learning in
• Revisiting and transforming the relationship between humans and the more-than-human world
• Recognise the rights of other species, for their own and future generations’ survival
  
  (e.g. Sterling, 2017)
• A shift in the way students are viewed:  
  • From: recipients of information and observers and future inheritors of climate change-related problems  
  • To: participants in society’s response to climate change and collaborators in society’s transformation

• Action-oriented approaches and authentic engagement  
  (e.g. Rousell & Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, 2020)
• Climate change is an issue of:
  • inequity among humans
  • inequity between humans and other species
• Recognising global and local perspectives: that everyone shares the risk
• Local participatory learning: local solutions are fundamental to a global response
• Enabling students to live in a climate change world
  (e.g. Lotz-Sisitka, 2010)
Climate Change Education Mosaic

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Recognise and support students as agents of change.
Where are there opportunities for enacting justice through CCE policy?
Policy texts
- What do they say, and what discourses do they carry?
- How are more-than-humans represented?
- How are differential impacts and causes recognised?

Policy-making
- Who is engaged?
- Who has opportunity to voice concerns?
- Is the natural world present?
- How are future generations being represented?

Policy influencing
- Who is engaged?
- Whose views are highlighted?
- Are panels representative of diverse perspectives?
- Who can access the material/ideas?
How *will we* shape education in view of the climate crisis and in ways that enacts justice?
"What does Climate Change and Sustainability have to do with me?"
A survey of teachers in England

Thank-you
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References


Greer, K., & Glackin, M., (2021): ‘What counts as CCE?’ *School Science Review*, 103(383)


