“The scientific evidence suggests that we are entering a ‘long emergency’ for which there will be no quick fixes or painless solutions. Any worthy vision must hold out solid hope of the millennial kind. It must include rights for future generations.”
— David Orr

“I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve (or save) the world and a desire to enjoy (or savor) the world. This makes it hard to plan the day.”
— E.B. White

“Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it, and by the same token save it from that ruin which except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable.”
— Hannah Arendt

Critical questions for climate change education

This presentation examines some of the challenges rapid climate destabilization will cause for environmental educators and students alike. We will focus on three sets of questions in particular:

1. First, how will teachers and students maintain their morale and spirit under conditions of climate stresses? There has been little research on the emotional and psychological effects of long-term climate change, but the bond between humans and nature will be severely stressed for centuries ahead. Driven by changes in rainfall, heat, and ecologies, natural systems will become more capricious and less fecund. Artificial nature and virtual reality will become more powerful. How do educators preserve the bond between humans and natural systems under such conditions?

2. Second, what will students need to know under the changes driven by climate destabilization? What are the curricular changes in schooling and pedagogy appropriate to the post-fossil fuel world? Does education for the industrial and technological world work in the Anthropocene? If not, what analytical and practical skills are appropriate?
3. Third, if genuine hope is, indeed, on a farther horizon, what is the essence of the vision for that distant, and happier, future? What is the core vision for an end to the war humans have waged on natural systems for thousands of years? How can the human enterprise render itself durable? How is that vision embodied in curriculum and educational methods? How might it be maintained over centuries ahead?

Climate change education internet resources

- UNEP Climate Change Portal
  http://www.unep.org/climatechange/

- International Climate Change Education Portal
  http://climatechangeeducation.org/international/index.html

- Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development at UNESCO

- UNESCO Climate Change Initiative

Climate change education books


Publications by Orr


Publications by Corcoran


Other resources


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