



Wide Angle



Climate Emergency: Is the Higher Education Response up to the Challenge?

Faced with climate change, students want **their studies to prepare them for the challenges** of the present and the future, but they also demand that **higher education institutions play a greater role** in our societies' ecological transition.

- ✓ Higher education institutions **can do more** to contribute to the ecological transition.
- ✓ Uncertainty about the future is leading young people who are entering higher education to **question the meaning of their studies**.
- ✓ Environmental and climate change education **aims to generate engagement and mobilization**.

Why Should We Be Concerned About This?

In Canada, climate change has an impact on the mental health of nearly 80% of young people aged 16 to 25.

(Galway & Field, 2023)

Anxiety and feelings of anger, injustice and helplessness even lead some young people to call into question their study projects. Climate emotions can also be a great driver of action for change. (Rossato, 2023)



1 A Genuine Commitment or a Mere Facade?

Higher education institutions face **criticism**:

(Stein, 2023)

- Greenwashing
- Climate colonialism
- Technological solutionism

A number of **actions can be leveraged** to reach climate justice:

(Kinol & al., 2023)

- The “Green New Deal”
- “Energy democracy”
- An increase in public funding
- Democratic and inclusive governance

2 What is the Place of Environmental Issues in Curricula?

- Through **existential questioning** that concerns all disciplines; (McCowan, 2023)

- Through teaching practices focused on **critical questioning and deliberation**; (Barthes, 2023; McCowan, 2023)

- Through **political education**. (Barthes, 2023)

3 From Education to Action, and From Action to Education

Environmental education aims to:

- develop a culture of commitment;
- maintain social dialogue;
- contribute to the formation of a strong civic identity and environmental culture (Mangin & Gousse-Lessard, 2022)

Youth engagement and youth action should also be seen as a form of **climate change education**.

(Bowman & Germaine, 2022)

In a Nutshell

Higher education needs to intensify its commitment to environmental issues, namely in respect of governance and education. The student population cannot bear the responsibility of taking action alone.



Avenues for reflection

For Institution Administrations

- How can we **reduce** GHG emissions released by our institution rather than **offsetting them**?
- How much **funding** to our institution (including research) comes from the fossil fuel industry?
- Is there an **imbalance** between research in technological innovation and research in innovation and social infrastructures?
- How can we promote **requalification** toward green jobs?
- How can we further contribute to the **health of the population**?
- Are our decision-making processes sufficiently **transparent**?

For Professors and Teachers

- How can I integrate **critical questioning** and **deliberation** in my classroom?
- What form would **political education** take in the program?
- How can I promote **social dialogue** while avoiding **polarization**?
- How can I promote **awareness** and **voluntary action** through teaching?
- To what extent should student engagement be **recognized** as part of the program or course?
- Is more value placed on the **process** or the **result**?
- What place is there for **participatory approaches** in my course?



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