Climate Education
Research
Practice and Possibilities

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Abstract

Climate change is becoming an increasingly common topic of courses at institutions of higher education across the United States. However, the literature on appropriate and effective climate education praxis is limited. This session will outline, presents early findings on, and solicit ideas about how best to proceed with, an evaluation of climate education courses and programs. The first stage of this research is the development of a database of climate education syllabi. It is a non-random sample, but should represent the range of courses being offered, and can be used to assess what topics are being covered, at what institutions and program, and at what academic level.
Trends at IHEs: Courses

- Knowing that a student has taken an introductory course on climate change at an institution of higher education in the U.S., we can predict what that student will have learned about climate change.

- Method: Climate course syllabus collection and content analysis
Trends at IHEs: Programs

- Knowing that a student has a certificate or degree in climate change from an institution of higher education in the U.S., we can predict what that student will have learned about climate change.

- Method: program identification and evaluation
Climate Education Goals and Objectives

- There is general agreement about what should be covered in climate change courses, certificates and degree programs at institutions of higher education in the United States.

- Method: survey of climate change educators
Assessing Climate Education

- A set of appropriate assessment mechanisms can be identified for measuring student learning of basic climate issues.
- Method: develop prototype measures, survey validity
Teaching Climate Change Fundamentals

- There is no clearly dominant tool or combination of tools for educating undergraduate and graduate students on climate change.
- Test different modules on comparable students in comparable courses, and use pre- and post-tests to evaluate student learning.
Integrating Climate Change into Existing Curricula

- There is no clearly dominant mechanism for integrating climate change into existing core degree programs
- Compare learning effectiveness literature to existing mechanisms for integrating climate change into existing core degree programs