



Tool 1.2

Offering climate emotions checks

CLARITY Competence Area:

Taking care of climate emotions and trauma

GreenComp Competence Area:

Acting for sustainability

Why use this tool?

This tool enables each student to start growing their emotional literacy as well as emotional regulation skills, so as to limit and better cope with climate emotions, including climate anxiety. It is critical for students and educators to check the level of anxiety, stress and overwhelm in the group, while providing simple practices to address some of the anxiety, stress and overwhelm on the spot. It helps to express emotions and release the tension surrounding them.

Activity 1.2.2

Emotions checks

Overview

Daily emotional check-ins provide consistency, helping teachers establish a routine and integrate emotional literacy, fluency and care into everyday practice. This practice can be challenging at first, if you are not used to acknowledging emotions during class or to offering care when emotions emerge. It requires you to become emotionally aware and committed to establishing a culture of safety and care (see activity 1.1.1) including by seeking the support you need in the process. Regular emotions check foster emotional regulation, mindfulness, and improved self-awareness in students. It normalizes conversations about emotions and feelings, expands emotional vocabulary, and promotes problem-solving skills. For teachers, these check-ins offer insights into students' emotional states, enabling you to offer them support if needed. Ultimately, regular check-ins help students articulate emotions and build essential competences.

Curriculum linkage

Any discipline or class where climate change is discussed.

Competences built

Emotional literacy, presence, self-reflection, self-compassion, compassion

Prep Work

Brainstorm and jot down prompts for check-ins, check-outs, checks before and after activities. These shall be related to bodily sensations, feelings, emotional states, or intentions.

Practice emotions checks with yourself. Try out different types of prompts and questions. Observe your response to them.



BASIC INFO

Age range:

7+

Duration:

Max. 5 minutes - to be performed on a regular basis

Group size:

Individual task, can be kept on an individual level or shared in group

Level of difficulty:

Basic to advanced

Materials/space required:

Flexible, for the basic version* no materials are required

Location:

Flexible (same setting as where the main activity takes place)

Engagement of external stakeholders:

None



Competences/activities to practice first by the teacher:

- Climate Emotions Wheel (1.2.1)
- Creating a culture of safety and care (1.1.1)

Levels in the activity

1. Try out in class
2. Nurture emotional literacy
3. Follow up

Level 1: Try out in class

Background: This activity should be performed as a regular practice, so as to grow emotional fluency in the group. It can also be performed after some supposedly negatively charged climate-related content has been shared.

1. Recap the event, activity, or content that has happened or been discussed or presented in class. Normalize the fact that this is most likely triggering different reactions in different people. You can use the climate emotions wheel (activity 1.2.1) to share examples of climate emotions, or give examples from your own experience.
2. Invite the learners to feel into the shared experience, shrug their shoulders and take a big breath through the nose counting for instance for four while breathing in and a matching count while breathing out. Alternatively, for bigger release, you can ask them to breathe in through the nose, and out through the mouth.
3. Use your prompt, ask a simple question related to their emotional state right now. Depending on the age, you might want to phrase it differently. Keep it simple. Some examples: How do you feel right now? What emotions has this [discussed topic] triggered for you? Where do you feel it in your body?
4. Invite the learners to make a mental note of the triggered emotion (and/or have them jot it down on a post-it). Make sure that the students know they do not have to share their emotions with the group.
5. The follow-up step is to acknowledge and again normalize what has come up, among the learners who wish to share. It could be individual or group reflection, depending on the time allocated for this activity and the interest of the learners in taking part in this activity.



Level 2: Nurture emotional literacy

Based on the individual emotions checks, different types of short-term (immediate) or long-term activities could be created.

1. Immediate activities: different types of group sharing could follow the naming of feelings, emotions, etc. with the prompt of pattern seeking, finding similarities in our emotional experiences.
2. To further help regulating emotions, this could be followed by e.g. a climate emotion symbol activity (see 1.1.3).
3. Long-term (individual level): creating an emotional map of each of our learners, by using emotional checks in connection to most of our climate-related learning activities. Ask learners to collect these post-its on a poster, in a workbook, in their journal (see 3.1.1) with a date.

Level 3: Follow-up

Emotional maps are to be followed up with the learners individually on a regular basis.



Dos and don'ts

Do:

Regarding this tool card, it needs to be mentioned that these are vulnerable activities, especially for a group where bullying is (or might be) an issue. It is good to have conversations about consent and allow students to choose whether they want to participate. And if they chose to opt out, they can do so without judgment (Show no disappointment!)

Regarding Level 1 Step 4, sometimes learners might not be able to connect to their inner experiences, feelings, emotions, and they will come up with NOTHING! If so you might want to normalize that too, and help them with simpler prompts, or just invite them to listen to their peers' sharings and get back to them later - if that helped them to understand or feel their own feelings, emotions, etc.

Remind participants that all emotions are normal and valid, and that they provide information to consider.

Adaptations:

We invite you to adapt this activity to the specific needs of your learners, including by taking into account their neurodiversity. When adapting tools and activities for neurodivergent



learners, please note it is not about treating others how *you* want to be treated, but how *they* want to be treated. Ask, listen, and stay open to different ways of learning and engaging.

References

This activity is adapted from UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center by Lund University.

- Find out more at the Greater Good in Education, a free resource hub for educators from UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center:
 - <https://ggie.berkeley.edu/practice/check-in-circle-for-community-building/>
 - <https://ggie.berkeley.edu/practice/what-kind-of-happy-are-you/>
- More information on check-ins (and other tools) can be found on the Transformation Hosts International (THI) homepage, which is a community of practice for Transformative Learning and for hosting the socio-ecological transition:
 - <https://hostingtransformation.eu/method/check-ins/>
- Find out more about integrating social and emotional learning into everyday teaching in middle- and high- school classrooms here:
- Srinivasan, M. (2019). SEL Every Day: Integrating Social and Emotional Learning with Instruction in Secondary Classrooms (SEL Solutions Series). Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company.
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