

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 1.2.4

Climate emotions embodiments

Overview

This group practice consists in embodying emotions associated with climate change through a posture and/or a movement. This practice can help express the emotions for which we have no words, or just the overwhelm associated with the multiplicity of emotions we sometimes feel all at once. It is an intense activity, to be practiced by teachers/ educators who are open to doing in-depth emotional work, have emotional literacy and know emotional regulation techniques. As a teacher/educator, you may want to practice it first and a few times with friends or colleagues who are open to the experience before suggesting it to your 18+ students. You should not suggest it to a group of students that does not feel safe for all students. It could also be an activity to which the most committed students sign up for.

Curriculum linkage

Any discipline or class where climate change is discussed.

Competences built

Emotional literacy, emotional regulation, empathy, compassion, self-compassion

Prep Work

- For the teacher/educator, make sure your own nervous system is regulated through what works best for you (e.g. breathing, time in nature, mindfulness) as the embodiment of emotions can help express intense emotions among learners.

BASIC INFO

**Age range:**

18+

Duration:

10- 30 minutes depending on the size of the group

Group size:

Open

Level of difficulty:

Advanced

Materials/space required:

None

Location:

Flexible

Engagement of external stakeholders:

- Have information ready for learners who are particularly distressed and/or request additional support.

Competences/activities to practice first by the teacher:

- Activity 1.1.1. Creating a culture of safety and care.
- Activities from competence areas 1.2 and 1.3 that help you regulate your emotions and feel prepared to welcome the emotions of a large group.
- Other activities from competence area 1 could also be of help.

Steps in the activity

1. Connecting to the emotion(s)
2. Expressing emotion(s)
3. Releasing emotion(s)

Step 1: Connecting to the emotion(s)

1. Inform learners that this activity is an invitation to express their emotions in a group and that they can choose to opt out. It is critical to stress that point. Let them know that if they feel uncomfortable at any point in the activity, they should stop. An alternative to this activity is suggested at the end of the activity card.
2. Introduce that this activity offers learners the opportunity to connect to their emotions without having to make sense of them immediately, and that it will require them to use their body.
3. Invite learners to form a large circle and then turn around and face the wall or the outside of the circle at the start of the exercise.
4. Remind participants that the exercise may feel unusual or uncomfortable at first, but that it should feel painful to them in anyway. They are invited to stop at any point if the exercise itself feels overwhelming.
5. Invite learners to represent how they feel in one posture. Adopting the new posture means that they can move their hands, legs, and head. They can stay standing or move to other positions. However, when they have found their postures after 30 seconds to one minute, they should stay still.
6. Invite learners to turn around, show their posture to the group and discover the posture of others.
7. Group the learners who have similar postures together and invite them to create smaller groups, standing in circles and facing each other. Once they have formed a new circle, invite them to recreate the posture.

Step 2 - Expressing the emotion(s)

1. Invite learners in each group to add a movement to their posture. It can be either how the posture came to be or how the posture could unfold in a movement. The movement is meant to further express the emotion(s) they feel.



2. Once learners have practiced their own movements for 1-2 minutes, move from one group to the other and give each group the opportunity to practice their own movements together, while the other groups are observing.
3. After this, offer learners the opportunity to add a sound, a few words, or a sentence to their own movement. The sound is meant to further express the emotions they are experiencing, not to make sense of it.
4. Once learners have practiced their own movements with the sound added for 1-2 minutes, move from one group to the other and give each participant in each group the opportunity to practice their own sound and movement, while the other groups are observing.

Step 3: Releasing emotion(s)

1. Offer learners the opportunity to spend a minimum of 5 minutes moving, going outside, breathing, journaling, so as to come back to a more regulated space before continuing with the class or other assignments.
2. (Optional) invite learners to journal later about the experience. They can use the climate emotions wheel (1.1.1) in the process of journaling (2.1.1).

Dos and don'ts

Do:

- Accommodate the needs of learners who are not able to stand nor engage in this physical exercise. Accommodations include invitations to draw the posture, the movement and write down the sound before presenting to the group.
- Make it clear that learners do not have to engage or keep on engaging with the exercise if it feels overwhelming for them.
- Acknowledge that this exercise can steer up a lot of emotions as we witness our own or others' emotions being expressed.
- Offer different options at the end of the exercise to come back to a more regulated emotional space. Feel free to choose some of the activities involving movement from competence area 1.3.
- Listen to learners who feel overwhelmed by the exercise, and/or express the need for additional support, and provide them with the information they need to access this support (see activity 1.4.1 for more details).

Don't:

- Don't do the exercise if it feels overwhelming to you.
- Don't try to make sense of the emotions being expressed by the learners for them.

Adaptations

If your learners are not comfortable with each other, nor trusting one another, a tool that focuses on expressing emotions individually (e.g. journaling) followed by an activity involving



movement to calm climate anxiety (e.g. activities in competence area 1.3.) is probably a better choice.

If your learners struggle with expressive arts and improvisation, you can first introduce the practices in arts classes, without connection to climate change. It will then be easier for them to mobilize the techniques they have learned to express their climate emotions.

If your learners feel uncomfortable or stretched already after doing the posture, you can stop the exercise then and move directly to step 3. You can repeat the exercise several times, by adding new elements each time, from movement to sound. This can make it easier for the learners to fully enjoy and benefit from the exercise.

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

The activity was designed by One Resilient Earth, and inspired by Image theater, which has been theorized by Augusto Boal and is described fully in his book [The Rainbow of Desire](#).



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