

Using Climate Stories Project in the Classroom

Climate Stories Project (CSP) is an educational and artistic forum for sharing personal and community responses to climate change and has been used successfully in many high school and college classrooms. Conducting a CSP educational workshop in your classroom has many benefits, including:

- Students augment their studies of climate change science by learning about personal observations of and responses to climate change.
- Students learn how to speak directly about their own responses to climate change.
- Students learn how to plan, carry out, record, and edit interviews.
- Students learn to communicate with people from different generations and cultures.
- Students develop empathy for people already responding directly to climate change.
- CSP fulfills Common Core education grade 6-12 standards for communication skills and speaking/listening.



How it works:

You should plan for two or more class periods for the CSP workshop. Ideally, the full project should extend over 1-2 weeks, including work out of class.

Setting up interviews should begin well before the start of the first classroom session. Interviews can be arranged with community members, scientists, elders, or farmers, among others. It is

important that interviewees can speak about their specific personal observations of and responses to climate change. Interviews can take place in the classroom, at another location in the community, on Skype, or over the phone. It is great to have students arrange interviews, but the teacher can help arrange interviews if needed. Make sure that interviewees understand the scope and goals of project and that they are OK with being recorded and having their interviews edited and shared.

1) To prepare for the workshop, students should listen and take notes to some recorded audio or video interviews on climatestoriesproject.org, writing down answers to the following questions about the interviewees:

- *What is the interviewee's name? Where do they live? What do they do (work, school, etc.)?*
- *What do they value in their local environment? What changes have they seen in their environment?*
- *How are they responding to the changes around them? How is their community responding?*
- *How do they feel about climate change happening now or climate change expected in the future?*
- *What are their hopes and vision for the future? How are they working toward creating a better world?*

- 2) The teacher leads a classroom discussion with the students on personal and community responses to climate change, including the following questions:
 - *What types of observations or measurements can we make in order to see climate change in our communities?*
 - *How can people respond or adapt to climate change?*
 - *How are you (the students) responding to climate change (emotionally or intellectually); what are your hopes for the future?*
- 3) Working in groups, students make a list of five questions that they would like to ask an interviewee about their personal or community responses to climate change. Students can also choose from questions on the CSP website but at least two questions should be their own.
- 4) Model good/bad interview techniques for the students and solicit feedback. Students should practice the interview techniques of listening and asking follow-up questions about a simple topic such as family, hobbies, or career plans. For the climate change interviews, the students should encourage the interviewee to speak about climate change using specific anecdotes and imagery, rather than just generalizations.
- 5) Students practice setting up and using recording equipment. Students can use smartphones, video cameras, Skype recording apps, or the school radio or TV station, if available. Proper mic placement will ensure good sound quality and a tripod is recommended for video recording.
- 6) Students conduct and record interviews with the interviewees as arranged previously. Students should remind interviewees about the scope and goals of project, get permission to record, collect biographic details, take notes during the interview, take a photo of interviewee, and thank the interviewee for their participation.
- 7) In the class following interviews, students reflect on what they learned about interviewees' responses to climate change and share their own responses to the interviewing process.
- 8) Time permitting, students edit interviews using computer software such as Audacity; to facilitate sharing, interviews should be edited down to 2-3 minutes in length. A great option is to develop interviews into digital storytelling projects or documentaries using audio, photographs, music, and/or video footage. However, the workshop can be successful even if the students simply conduct the interview, take notes, and then share in class about what they learned.
- 9) Share student interview projects on climatestoriesproject.org, at your school, in your community, and via social media. Ideally, teachers and students can build on the school workshop to initiate further community dialogue about responding to climate change.

These steps are just guidelines and can be adapted depending on available time and resources. Workshop forms and more resources can be found at climatestoriesproject.org/education. Please contact jason@climatestoriesproject.org if you have any questions or you'd like help arranging a workshop at your school.