



PROJECT MUSE®

Part 1 Recap

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PART 1 RECAP

Scientists have been studying the effects of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere for well over a century. Nearly all scientists agree that human activities are causing climate change. Environmental educators, with their close ties to local communities and experience teaching about environmental issues, can influence climate change action at a range of levels, from individual household behaviors like reducing energy use to community-scale actions like advocating for bike lanes or increasing access to renewable energy options. Although much of the U.S. public is aware that climate change is happening, for many climate change is not a top concern, and opinions are polarized along political lines. Educators can choose from a wide range of outcomes when designing climate change programs. Like Elena, Jayla, and Will, they can use their knowledge of their audiences' climate change attitudes to guide program outcomes, content, and structure.

Tips for Educators

1. Learn the basics of climate change so you feel confident interpreting the science for your audience and can present options for climate action.
2. Learn about your audience's attitudes and knowledge. Jayla learns about her audience through a survey, but you can also use tools like Yale's Climate Change Opinion maps¹ to find out general opinions in your county.
3. Choose a program outcome that aligns with your strengths and is realistic, given what you know about your audience.

4. Take comfort in the knowledge that the majority of people in the United States believe the climate is changing, even if they disagree on why or what should be done. If you work with audiences who are doubtful or dismissive, consider adjusting your outcomes to reflect the realities of what you can accomplish together. Elena decides to forgo trying to persuade John about climate change, yet she still engages him in a climate change ecosystem-based adaptation action.