



PROJECT MUSE®

Closing Thoughts

Published by

Schuldt, Jonathon P., et al.

Communicating Climate Change: A Guide for Educators.

Cornell University Press, 2018.

Project MUSE. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/book.68536>.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/68536>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

[23.137.249.165] Project MUSE (2024-11-21 22:21 GMT)

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Climate change is an interdisciplinary topic that integrates perspectives from across the biophysical and social sciences. Climate change educators can benefit from a growing body of research in the social sciences. Psychological research on climate change informs how educators can assess an audience's perceptions of climate change based on that audience's identities and values and in turn shape their own communication and education strategies to achieve their program outcomes. Being familiar with psychological mechanisms such as motivated reasoning that may lead to climate denial helps educators craft programs that appeal to their particular audiences. Because research on psychological distance is inconclusive, educators may want to experiment with framing their programs with close and distant frames to find what resonates with their audiences. Communication strategies like framing, using metaphors, and using trusted messengers are fundamental tools that aid in program planning and implementation. Specifically, positive frames relevant to audiences' values, hope, and collective action help achieve climate change program outcomes.

As environmental educators strive to meet the need for climate change education, they are building on past work that focuses on individual behavior change, and on work that emphasizes collective action to better address the scale of climate change. Based on research about the tenuous relationship of knowledge to behavior, and on phenomena such as climate denial, educators are moving away from assuming information is sufficient to promote environmental action.

Instead they are taking into account audience identities, emotions, beliefs, and values, and incorporating notions such as trust, trusted messengers, and framing for collective action. In this period of uncertainty, climate change educators are trying new approaches to tackle environmental education's most critical challenge to date.

