

Holistic education: a new teaching method of climate change?

"Changes in Students' Knowledge, Values, Worldview, and Willingness to Take Mitigative Climate Action after Attending a Course on Holistic Climate Change Education" is a paper published in 2022 and written by Tolppanen *et al.* This study's interest lies in that it introduces us to an alternative system of teaching climate change, known as 'holistic', by considering the effects of this system on learners' representations and on climate action. Three key points in this article held LFE's attention, namely:

#1 In many countries, education on climate change mainly focuses on the physico-chemical dimension of this phenomenon and the dissemination of scientific data. It provides knowledge but does not teach learners what more proactive approaches to tackling climate issues may be. The alternative education model considered by the authors aims to address this limitation by combining the acquisition of knowledge with the re-evaluation of social and individual representations and behaviours in line with the objective of climate mitigation.

#2 Holistic education can be defined as a new educational paradigm offering a creative, global and multidisciplinary approach that considers the Teaching-Learning process as a whole, where students are able to interconnect different types of knowledge. Applied to the topic of climate change, it aims to increase knowledge, foster reflection, address values and world views, motivate learners to take action, mobilise the emotions associated with climate issues, and create future scenarios of what the world could and should look like. However, although these teaching objectives are widely accepted, there is no consensus on how holistic education can help to achieve them in practice.

#3 The authors stress an increase in scientific knowledge among learners who have taken a course based on this approach. But their knowledge of how to take practical action is increasing only slightly. As a result, there has been no real change in their willingness to introduce mitigation measures. On the other hand, we have seen an increase in biospheric values, which is a powerful factor in pro-environmental behaviour. The course also enabled participants to identify more environmentally friendly strategies for satisfying their hedonic pleasures, and to realise that it is possible to live freely while preserving the environment.

Situation in France

In 2019, it was decided to strengthen teaching on climate change from primary to secondary school. This includes bringing in experts from different fields, with a view to bringing the cross-disciplinary aspect of this subject into the classroom. A number of initiatives inspired by holistic education are also emerging outside the national education system, such as the Université des Colibris, which offers online training courses to teach knowledge and skills aimed at enabling learners to contribute to a more ecological and supportive society.

The opinion of Pauline Bureau, the Vice-Chair of LFE

Far from being a 'miracle' approach to encouraging climate action, holistic education nonetheless invites us to make an inner and in-depth ecological transition, to change mindsets that have led to contemporary ecological disruption.

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