

Creative Writing
Teaching Material
for Addressing
Environmental Issues
with Young People

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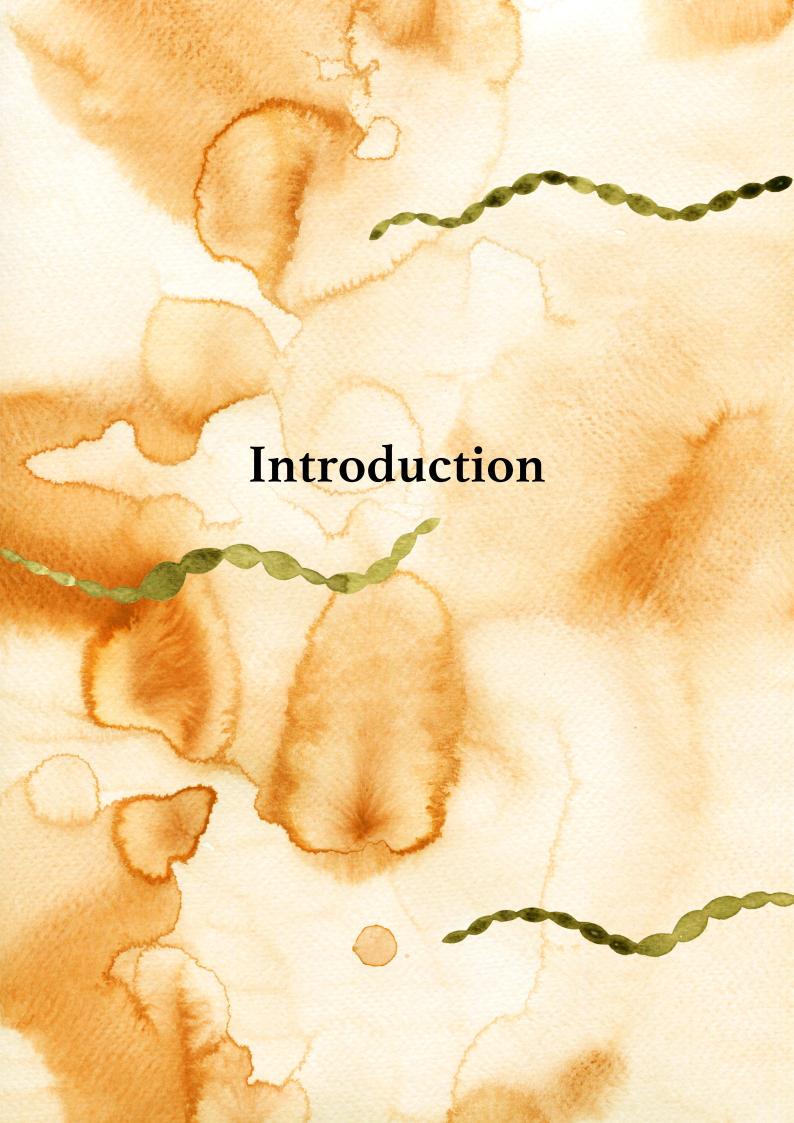
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The global environmental crisis and climate change stir a variety of emotions. Having to give up familiar living environments and habits can inspire for example anxiety, sadness, fear, guilt, or hate. On the other hand, nature experiences and participation in ecological activism can spark, for example, joy, gratitude, feelings of togetherness, and excitement.

Young people are in a particularly vulnerable position regarding climate change. Some young people experience severe environmental anxiety, and their view of the future is bleak. At the same time, young people want more information about concrete opportunities to make an impact, and demand that decision-makers act responsibly and courageously. On the other hand, young people also have many other worries and emotional turbulences that are part of the stage of life they are going through, and some young people are completely uninterested in thinking about environmental problems. This puts educators in a challenging position: How to best encounter the various emotions and attitudes towards environmental issues existing in a group?

Even difficult environment-related emotions can be turned into a strength if the individual is in a position that allows them to address these emotions and has sufficient opportunities to act to combat climate change. Thus, both young people and adults have a need to address their environmental emotions in a safe group and a need for opportunities to consider their own environmental activism

and to take action. Addressing these issues with young people using, for example, artistic methods can increase the acceptance towards differing emotions and attitudes. Encountering various emotions is important for learning to live with our own emotions.

Being able to address one's emotions can also increase the freedom of choice about the way an individual chooses to channel their emotional energy. For example, directing the energy of anger caused by environmental issues into environmental action can be a fruitful choice. Thinking about environmental activism and taking action in a group can support young people's confidence in adults taking environmental issues seriously and them being willing to take action together with the young people. In addition to the desire to have an impact, hope and a sense of the meaningfulness of life are also needed – and participation in environmental action plays a central role in strengthening hope. Environmental researcher Panu Pihkala says that hope can be viewed as an attitude that holds on to the meaningfulness of life even when there is no guarantee of success.

Some high-quality materials to support addressing environmental emotions have been published in the recent years. The web page *An Existential Toolkit for Climate Justice Educators* is one example. The *Climate Change in Me* creative writing teaching kit adds to the educators' toolkit versatile creative writing exercises that can be used on their own, or together with other materials that address the subject.



How to Read This Teaching Material?

This teaching material consists of creative writing exercises for addressing environmental emotions, sustainable future, and environmental activism together with young people. The goal of the exercises is to create space for hearing and sharing environmental emotions in a safe group, for expanding the imagination about the possible futures, and for considering each participant's own role as an environmental actor.

The exercises in this material contribute to the aims set in the Finnish national core curriculum for basic and secondary education including ecosocial knowledge and competence, cultural competence, interaction and self-expression competences, multiliteracy competence, well-being competence, multidisciplinary and creative competence, and participation, involvement and building a sustainable future. Even though the exercises utilize creative writing as the method, many of them are suitable to be used for many other subjects, for instance for geography, biology, health education or emotional and interactive skills lessons.

At the same time, the exercises also introduce various areas of literary art. Literary art means creative literary expression that is based on a broad understanding of texts. Texts can be produced, for example, through writing, speaking, or making illustrations, or in an audiovisual and digital form. The exercises in this teaching

material emphasise the joy, play, and experientiality that are central to literary art. The exercises encourage the use of imagination and insight through their use of various text types and genres. The teaching material introduces experiments with various creative writing methods from inventing new words to creating poems, letters, stories, advertisements, and recipes. Thus, the material is also suitable for developing linguistic, interactive and textual competences in literary art and creative writing groups and as part of teaching the first language and literature subjects.

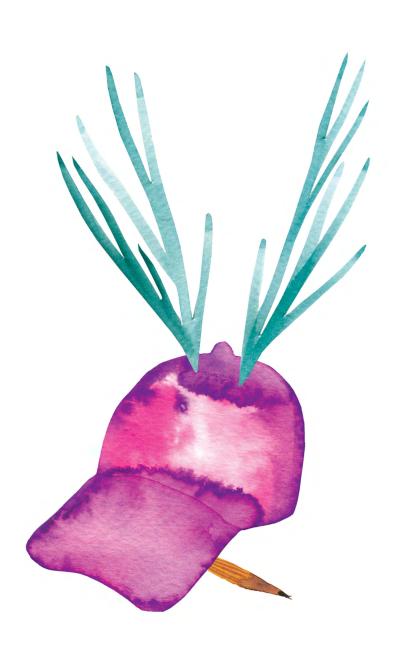
The exercises in this material are particularly suitable for students in lower or upper secondary education and for adults, but some of them can also be adapted for younger target groups. When working with children, it is a good idea to emphasize action instead of talking, and address environmental questions in a manner that is appropriate for the children's age level. The level of difficulty varies between the exercises and it is a good idea to pay specific attention to how the exercise can be conducted in a safe way, with respect to the privacy of all participants.

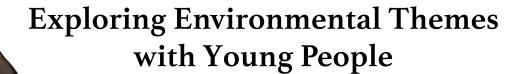
Some exercises are more easily applied to school context, while some of them are more suited for groups interested in creative expression, such as literary art groups. In a multilingual group, it is a good idea to encourage the participants to write in their native language to make it easier to verbalise personal emotions and experiences. The thoughts stirred by writing can then be shared in a language that is understood by the members of the group.

The first chapter of this teaching material, titled "Environmental Emotions", is about verbalizing, expressing and experiencing physically, and sharing personal environmental emotions in a group. The exercises in the second chapter, "A Sustainable Future", deal with observing one's thinking about the future and expanding one's imaginative capacity by imagining a sustainable culture. In the third chapter, "Me as an Environmental Actor", students are encouraged to reflect on their own values and the opportunities that are available to them to have a concrete impact on climate issues. Finally, there are three lesson plan examples, one for each chapter's theme.

The exercises in this teaching material have been grouped in such a way that each chapter begins with easy-to-approach warm-up exercises that are suitable for starting a group session. The goal of these warm-up exercises is to create a safe atmosphere and an appropriate level of alertness for working in a group. At the same time, the warm-up exercises gently help the participants to tune in to the theme of the chapter. As an educator, you can, for instance, choose one or two warm-up exercises that you feel are suitable for your group, and after that do a main exercise related to the theme – you are the expert on your group and know best what works with your group. Based on the exercises, you can also develop follow-up exercises for your group, such as developing texts further using other art forms.

Each main exercise includes a short "tuning in" section to get oriented with the theme and the exercise itself. It is a good idea to allocate enough time after each exercise and group work session for sharing the texts or other works that have been produced, and for discussion.





Addressing environmental emotions is needed both as a part of general pedagogy and lessons related to environmental themes and, particularly, when strong emotions are stirred in a group by, for instance, a topical environmental news item or by participating in a demonstration on an environmental issue. Young people and adults both have differing emotions and attitudes regarding environmental issues, and different individuals are also at different stages of the process of addressing and dealing with the environmental crisis. Some young people are uninterested in thinking about the topic, some may wish to get more information, some may need opportunities for sharing their feelings, and in case of some, correcting erroneous ideas or stereotypes may be needed. The mere fact that young people don't talk about the topic should not be viewed as a proof of their interest or a lack thereof. Rather, working with young people requires both time and trust. Indifference can sometimes be a protective emotion that helps the individual by enabling them to avoid experiencing more uncomfortable environmental emotions.

Educators can adapt the way environmental themes are addressed according to their own strengths. The most important thing is, at the very least, to verbalize the existence of environmental emotions in their group. For example, an educator can use the phrasing suggested by

the *Toivoa ja toimintaa* ("Hope and Action") project: "I understand well that many of you have various difficult emotions regarding, for example, climate change and other issues related to sustainable development. They are such big and distressing problems that us educators also have many difficult emotions regarding them. However, it is possible to live with those emotions together with other people.¹" For many young people, the mere fact that an educator admits that they too have difficult emotions regarding environmental crisis can help them feel better. The educator can also, within the limits set by their own skills, offer opportunities to discuss emotions and then progress to art based teaching methods.

Before conducting emotional group work, the educator is advised to explore their own environmental emotions in order to avoid projecting their own emotions to the group and to be able to support the participants' emotional processes. It is also a good idea for the educator to try to do the exercises themselves before doing them with a group.

When addressing environmental issues, a listening and non-judgemental attitude is particularly important. When starting to work on this theme, the educator can explicitly state that expressing any and all emotions and attitudes is allowed in the group, but on the other hand, there is no obligation to feel or to express anything. One goal in the group is to respect other people's feelings and attitudes without trying to change them. With young people,

I Kemppainen et al. 2019.

creating a safe atmosphere is crucial, as young people can be wary of sharing distressing experiences even in a familiar environment and social context. More generally, people in industrial societies are not used to discussing emotions, such as sorrow, that can seem daunting. Because of this, it is important to give everybody an opportunity to be heard and accepted while also protecting the participants' privacy. Various methods suitable for sharing thoughts anonymously such as, for instance, the AnswerGarden platform or other word cloud applications, can be utilized for sharing experiences, and discussions can also be conducted in pairs, which avoids having to share with the entire group.

An educator should try to be sensitive in observing the group's wishes and needs at any given moment. For some groups, the current need may be addressing and exploring environmental emotions, while some other group may need an opportunity to take concrete action. It is recommended, however, to include both emotional work and practical action in every teaching module. The needs of a group may change, so the educator should be ready to revise their plans as needed.

Different exercises can be used to discover a balance between serious and lighter themes. Difficult emotions are sometimes easier to address using a distancing element, such as turning them into poems or song lyrics. Humour is also an important survival tool, and laughing together in the context of artistic work can be a source of relief. Reflecting on one's personal relationship with nature by being active out in nature or by writing outdoors can offer breathing room amidst weighty issues.

As the environmental crisis is an enormously complex issue, many educators may feel hesitant about whether they have sufficient theoretical capabilities and a sufficient skill set to address such a challenging topic. Both young people and adults living on a planet that's undergoing a change are facing the new and the unknown. So, environmental issues can be addressed with an inquiring approach, with compassion, accepting one's own incompleteness. If the educator is open to wonder and investigate and to come up with opportunities for taking action together with the young people, that is enough!

The ethical task of an educator is to maintain meaning-fulness and in that sense also to maintain hope. At the same time, it is important that the educator does not belittle environmental issues and that there is opportunity in the group to examine also the difficult emotions without an attempt to force them to turn into positive ones. While accepting the negative emotions, it is also possible to bring to mind perspectives that create and strengthen hope, such as the fact that news coverage is often problem-centric, and that many positive things that alleviate the environmental issues are also happening in the world. Besides environmental problems, there are also many other global issues, such as the pandemic and wars, all of which can create pressures on the young people.

Therefore, it is important to be able to discuss climate change with young people in a way that, instead of causing more anxiety, offers them constructive ways to cope.

Providing information about opportunities to have an impact also creates hope, but at the same time it is a good idea to remind young people about the importance of self-compassion. An individual should not belittle the impact they can have, but it is also important to take care of one's personal well-being and manage stress. It is important to note that even though climate change is essentially a challenge faced by the entire humankind together, young people are on unequal footing when it comes to environmental action. For instance, because of financial factors, all people do not have an equal opportunity to change their consumer habits. It is important to avoid making young people feel guilty over their choices, and important for adults to admit that they bear the main responsibility for reacting to the environmental crisis.

When addressing themes of environmental activism, the educator can, for example, remind the students about the view of environmental philosopher Joanna Macy: everyone can discover their own way of having an impact on environmental problems that fits their personal talents. Even small actions can have far-reaching consequences. It is also a good idea to remind the group about the importance of collective action. Environmental issues are such large-scale challenges that no-one can solve them alone. Instead of individual heroism, wide-spread civil activism,



as well as cooperation between corporations, decisionmakers, and grass-roots actors are needed both on national and international levels.



Creative Writing as a Method in Environmental Pedagogy

Art-based methods facilitate more holistic and more physical ways of addressing environmental issues, creating space for alternative ways of knowing and for getting acquainted with the idea of multi-species relationships. In such pursuits, creative writing is particularly useful as a method. Many people are already familiar with writing, and writing as a method makes it possible to address one's own feelings, thoughts, and experiences in a safe, private way. Studies in literary therapy show that writing about difficult emotions and experiences can improve both physical and mental well-being and support the development of positive coping strategies. New tools utilizing creative writing have indeed been developed in recent years for addressing environmental issues.

The use of creative writing to address the environmental crisis can have various goals. Writing can help mobilize emotions and to make an individual more aware of their own emotions. At the same time, writing creates distance between an individual and their emotions and helps them to organize their thoughts. Sharing texts in a group offers a glimpse into the inner world of other writers. Consuming

art and literature as well as creating them can indeed improve empathy skills if the learning context employs pedagogic methods that encourage empathetic interaction.

Various writing experiments can also be utilized to discover a new kind of relationship with nature and to imagine the world from a non-human perspective. Using writing as a means to pause and observe natural phenomena helps to notice how the mind, body, other species, and natural processes all interact with each other. At the same time, strengthening one's emotional bond with nature can increase the motivation to take care of the environment.

Story-telling can be used to influence the kind of future we want to create - for example by imagining inter-species coexistence and cooperation instead of individualistic heroism. Because teaching materials for language and literature often use dystopias to address environmental issues, utopic work is emphasized in this teaching material. Dark tales of the future can be helpful in facing and addressing personal fears, but stories that increase confidence and excitement and portray the future in a more diverse manner are needed to balance the picture. In the view of future studies, there are many futures, some of them more and some less likely, and the probability of the realization of any of them can be affected by personal action. To change the world, we do indeed need to expand what is imaginable and be able to think about future in a constructive way.

Creative writing can strengthen the participants' motivation for taking environmental action, and writing can be also used to plan concrete environmental actions. Survey data gathered from the *Ilmastonmuutos minussa* ("climate change in me") creative writing workshops for adult participants that I ran (in 2018–2020) shows that the use of writing to reflect on environmental emotions and one's personal role as an environmental actor sparked in some course participants a desire to have an impact on environmental issues. Writing in itself can also be one method of environmental activism, along with other activities.

For quite some time, creative writing has, however, been relegated to a secondary role as a method in literary environmental pedagogy, with the main attention being focused on the importance of reading. Similarly, literary art pedagogy in general has not been sufficiently studied. The broad potential creative writing has in environmental pedagogy does indeed deserve more attention. As a method, creative writing is adaptable to diverse experiments: texts can be written collaboratively one sentence at a time, multi-sensory experiences such as movement or music can be used as the point of departure for writing, and the texts that have been produced can be interpreted physically, through painting, or through sculpting. It is useful to experiment without prejudice with writing outdoors as well, in different environments and weather conditions. Writing in nature can facilitate new sensory and emotional experiences and inject texts with more sense of surprise and physicality.

Creative writing can also be incorporated to multidisciplinary teaching modules. An example could be a study module including geography, home economics, health education, and language and literature that covers the causes and effects of climate change, the opportunities to have an impact on and to prepare for climate change, and the verbalization of emotions that stem from climate change using creative writing. A multidisciplinary module to address environmental emotions could include music, language and literature, and visual arts, with the students producing rap videos about environmental emotions. As many of us are familiar with writing as a working method, it is also particularly well suited as a warm-up activity for various group activities, for reflecting on themes that have been covered, and for probing one's own thoughts and emotions before sharing them with a group.

When addressing environmental themes using creative writing as a method, the main thing is the process, not the end result or its evaluation. It is not necessary to share the written text with other participants, but it can also be revisited by reading it alone and underlining important parts, or by reading it together with a trusted friend. For young people in particular, it can be more comfortable to share only isolated words or fragments of their texts. The fragments can be used to create word collage poems on the classroom wall – or in distance learning context, in a chat group – or to create collaborative soundscapes by repeating aloud the words that are said by other participants. In the process, the words shared by the participants

form a new text that can be a source for exhilarating associations and a sense of community and shared creation. If the group is safe enough for the sharing of texts, short encouraging feedback can be given for texts that have been worked further. The group or the teacher can, for instance, tell which qualities or parts of the text they liked and what thoughts related to the theme covered were inspired by hearing the text.

For some young people, creating text independently can be a challenge. The culture of digital media has made other means of expression more familiar. Similarly, for instance young immigrants or other special groups may have difficulties producing text because of their level of language skills or because of other challenges related to verbal and/or literary expression. Various collage techniques that make use of existing texts make participation easier, as the student can put their text together using pre-existing materials. Using pre-written sentence openings or a text scheme to guide writing, or writing free stream of consciousness can also help in getting started. Knowing that sharing the text with others is not mandatory can be helpful at keeping self-criticism at bay.

Young people's attitudes towards writing and art-based work also vary. The educator can remind participants that when doing creative writing exercises, one does not need to consider the rules of grammar, that there are no right or wrong ways to write. Creative writing gives the licence

to try things that are new and irrational, to play with words, and to welcome even the weirdest of associations! Creative writing develops young people's emotional skills and their awareness of environmental emotions. They are given an opportunity to imagine themselves as climate heroes, animals, news reporters, authors, inventors, citizens of a sustainable city of the future, and in other roles where their lives are affected by climate change. This is the mobilizing force of imagination.





Environmental emotions are emotions related to environmental issues, environmental activism, and nature. The aim of this chapter is learning to verbalize one's own environmental emotions. What kinds of emotions do clearcuttings, record heatwaves, or walking in a cool forest inspire in you? Where in your body do you sense these emotions? What kind of movement do they spark?

Warm-up Exercises

Aims:

The goal of the environmental emotions warm-up exercises is to create a safe and encouraging group atmosphere and to inspire the participants to observe their own bodies and their emotions that are related to environment. Lower secondary school and upper secondary school: the exercises develop the transversal competences aims of *taking care of oneself and managing daily life* and *well-being competence*. Literary art basic education: the exercises develop the aim *development as a literary artist* by improving sensitivity to the use of one's senses.

In a Group:

Emotional Continuum (5 minutes)

Imagine an emotional continuum between opposite extremes in the classroom space. The participants go to stand at the position that corresponds to the emotions they have about climate change at the moment.

fear – calmness
sorrow – absence of sorrow / only very little sorrow
hope – despair
security – insecurity
anxiety – relaxedness
worry – unworried
excitement – indifference – being petrified
impulse to act – impulse to withdraw

The exercise is an adaptation of the Tunteiden käsittely ("addressing emotions") exercise by Janette Hannukainen and Veera Kivijärvi in the Rivien välissä: Sanataiteellinen mediakasvatuksen opetusmateriaali yläkouluikäisille ("Between the lines: A literary art media education teaching material for lower secondary school") (Kirjan talo 2019, p. 22).

Improvisation on Words for Emotions (10 minutes)

Verbalizing mental images inspired by various words for emotions. The teacher says aloud one word for an emotion at a time, and the participants react by answering questions about mental images.

Words for emotions:

joy, sorrow, love, hate, fear, hope

Mental images:

- In your opinion, what colour is this emotion?
- If this emotion was a sound, what would it sound like?
- What would this emotion smell like?
- What would this emotion taste like?
- If this emotion was a shape, what shape would it be?
- If you could touch this emotion, what would it feel like to your hand? Would it be, for instance, smooth, rough, soft, or spiky?
- How much does this emotion weigh in your opinion? Is it light as a feather, for instance, or does it weigh a ton?

Method I: Each participant writes the mental images inspired by the word on a paper.

Method 2: The group comes up with mental images orally and the teacher writes mental images sparked by each word under that word on the board.

This exercise has been developed by artist-researcher Henna Laininen in cooperation with environmental researcher Panu Pihkala.

Gratitude Circle (10 minutes)

The teacher instructs: "Think about one thing, big or small, that you are grateful for today and that you are ready to share with others. It can be a thing that gets you in a good mood or that makes you feel safe. It can be something beautiful that you saw on your way to school. Or maybe it is a person, a place, or an object that is important to you. Lift your thumb when you have come up with your source of gratitude."

Next, everyone takes turns telling what they are grateful for. According to environmental philosopher Joanna Macy, gratitude is a resource that helps us deal even with the more difficult emotions that stem from the environmental crisis.

Read more about gratitude: Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone: Active Hope – How to Face the Mess We're in without Going Crazy (New World Library 2012).



Listening to Your Body (70 minutes)

Warm-up:

Shake your arms and your legs. Do a few stretches in different directions. What sort of stretch or movement does your body call for just now? Next, squat down and scrunch yourself up as small as you can. While you do this, also scrunch up your face. Now, stand up on your toes, reach up high and stretch yourself as tall as possible, opening your eyes and mouth at the same time. Repeat the scrunch and the reach a couple of times.

The Quiet:

After the warm-up, quiet down. You can do this sitting down or standing up. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Listen to your breath and to your body. Do you become aware of any sensations or emotions? Just notice them, there is no need to change them in any way. In the end, think about something that you are grateful for today. Feel how gratitude spreads as warmth into your chest. Feel gratitude spreading its warmth to your head, to your right arm and hand, your left arm and left hand, your torso, your right leg and your right foot, your left leg and left foot. Feel gratitude filling your entire body. You can now open your eyes.

Main Exercises



Aims:

To connect with one's own emotions through free writing. Debriefing with the group after doing the exercise creates a space for listening to other peoples' emotions and for sensing the emotional atmosphere in the group. The Stream of Consciousness exercise and the Emotional Mind Map exercise (page 33) also serve as relatively easily approachable introductions to more intensive-reaching emotional work. Lower secondary school and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transversal competences aims taking care of oneself and managing daily life as well as well-being competence and interaction competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim own voice as a writer – the exercise gives the learner an opportunity to verbalize their own emotions and introduces the stream of consciousness method as a way to initiate the creative process.

Tuning in (10 minutes):

The teacher gives a brief introduction on why it is important to address emotions that are related to climate change. Depending on the target group, this can be done in various ways, for example:

a) Orally:

The teacher reads aloud or covers in their own words the introductory text "Why addressing emotions related to climate change is important" (page 134) and shows on data projector the images "Emotions sparked by global issues" (page 137) and "Finns' emotions related to climate change" (page 138).

b) Using video:

Watch the first 6 minutes 50 seconds of the talk "How your climate emotions can save the world" by psychologist Katharina Van Bronswijk at a TEDx event: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZE_TMzLCI_Y

Exercise (10 minutes):

For six minutes, write down your stream of consciousness on emotions related to climate change. Stream of consciousness means that you let your hand(s) work with the pen or on the keyboard without stopping, just recording everything that happens to cross your mind. You will not be asked to read what you write to anyone.

Begin your text with the words: "When I think about climate change, I feel..." After three minutes, continue

writing, this time beginning with the words: "At this moment, I get strength from..." and write for three more minutes. You can use the word list from the "Emotional Mind Map" exercise (page 37).

Debriefing (5 minutes):

a) Alone:

Read your text and underline with different colours:

- words or subjects that are repeated often in the text
- thoughts or things you would like to change
- thoughts or things that give you strength

b) With the group:

Each participant chooses 1–3 words from their stream of consciousness and writes them on large pieces of paper. Arranging the papers on the floor of the room or attaching them on the wall of the room, the words collected from the group are used to create a word collage co-authored by the group. Finally, the teacher reads aloud the new text.

An alternative debriefing method

(for groups that enjoy performing):

Each participant underlines from their stream of consciousness one word that they want to share with the others. The participants stand in a circle. Everyone in their turn says their word aloud and performs a posture, movement or gesture they feel is fit to express that word. The other participants echo the word and mirror the physical gesture.

The exercise makes use of the materials produced by the Toivoa ja toimintaa project, such as the process writing exercise by Maija Raikamo available at https://toivoajatoimintaa.fi (in Finnish only).

Emotional Mind Map (35 minutes)

Aims:

To become familiar with the vocabulary of environmental emotions. The participants practise reconising various environmental emotions in their own personal exprience, and understanding and analysing their own emotional landscape and the relationships between various emotions. To learn to share emotions with others and to increase understanding of other people's emotional landscape. The Emotional Mind Map exercise and the Stream of Consciousness on Environmental Emotions exercise (page 30) also serve as relatively easily approachable introductions to more far-reaching emotional work. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims taking care of oneself and managing daily life as well as well-being competence and interaction competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise

develops the aim *own voice as a writer* – the exercise introduces mind map as an idea development tool, expands vocabulary, and invites participants to create metaphors.

Tuning in (10 minutes):

The teacher gives a brief introduction on why addressing emotions that are related to climate change is important (see the tuning in section for the Stream of Consciousness on Environmental Emotions exercise, page 31).

Exercise (15 minutes):

Familiarize yourself with the list of words for emotions on page 37. Pick from the list the words that describe emotions that climate change inspires in you. These emotions can be directly related to climate change or connected to matters that are related to climate change, such as climate activism or forests that sequester carbon and thus moderate climate change. You can also use emotion words that do not appear on the list. Draw a mind map about the emotions you have that are related to climate change. You can, for example, write your strongest emotions with large capital letters and the less powerful emotions with lowercase ones. You can also connect emotion words that are related to each other with lines or arrows and add pictures to your mind map.

An alternative method:

Creative writing groups can use mind maps to work on inventing figures of speech that describe their environmental emotions. Each participant draws a map of an imaginary terrain and names locations on the map with names that combine words describing locations or features of nature with emotions that are related to them (for example: "mire of misery", "the endless desert of longing", "the spring of hope", "the construction site of courage").

Debriefing (10 minutes):

Use AnswerGarden (https://answergarden.ch/) or some other suitable word cloud application to compile a shared mind map of all participants. Every participant chooses from their personal mind map 3–5 emotions that they are most familiar with and enters them into the application. Word clouds are a good tool for easily visualising the variety of emotions in the group, with the most often mentioned ones being emphasized with a larger font.

An alternative debriefing method:

If the atmosphere in the group is safe enough, the debriefing on the mind maps can be done as pair work. This should only take a couple of minutes. If this method is used, the teacher tells the group that participants will be asked to reveal their mind map to their partner up to the extent that they are comfortable with to share it. The teacher also reminds participants beforehand that things that have been revealed in this exercise must not be shared with outsiders. If a participant does not want to reveal their mind map, they can share how they felt when creating it.

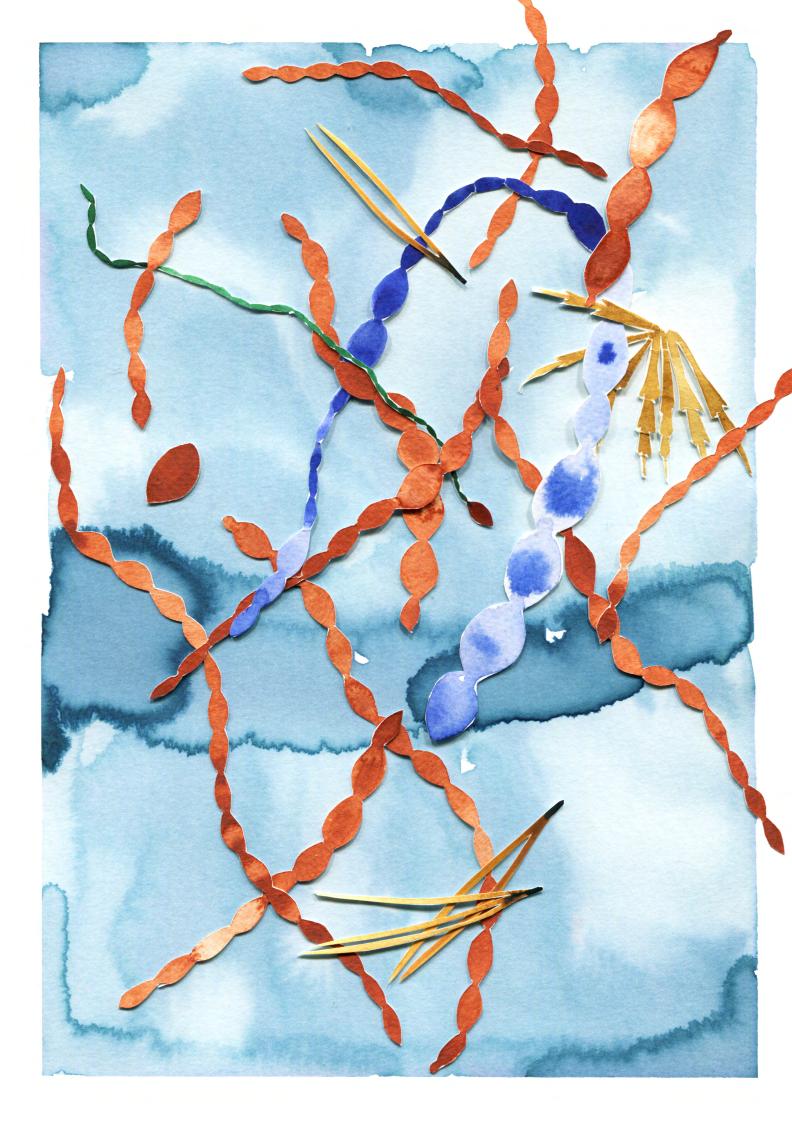
The Emotional Mind Map exercise was developed by the Toivoa ja toimintaa project. A more thorough introduction to the exercise can be found on their website (in Finnish only) https://toivoajatoimintaa. fi/tunteet/tunnetehtavia/#2 Tunteiden kasitekartta The exercise was adapted for this teaching material by Henna Laininen, and the creative writing version was developed by Pia Krutsin.





List of Words for Emotions:

vitality timidness irritability compassion sense of injustice gratitude loss of control sweet wistfulness frustration relief anger momentousness confusion meaningfulness overwhelmedness elation indifference courage boredom feeling of inadequacy contradiction melancholy sense of not belonging anxiety tiredness insecurity togetherness fear sense of security worry enthusiasm sadness longing calmness hope joy quilt curiosity healthy pride (in attachment self or in others) tenderness love respect



Emotional Rhythm (20 minutes)

Aims:

To develop distance between oneself and one's own environmental emotion by the means of language play. To lighten up a serious theme by introducing a humoristic exercise as a change of pace. The exercise is well-suited as an additional exercise after the Stream of Consciousness on Environmental Emotions exercise or the Emotional Mind Map exercise. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims *cultural competence*, *interaction and self-expression* as well as *well-being competence* and *interaction competence*. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim *own voice as a writer* – the exercise introduces production of experimental texts utilising constraints and exploring textual rhythm.

Exercise (20 minutes):

- I. Choose one of the environmental emotions that you have noted either in your stream of consciousness or in your mind map. Letting the words flow without slowing down to edit your thoughts, write a text seven lines in length that describes this emotion in more detail.
- **2.** Use the following scheme to create a new text that is based on the text you just wrote.

- 1) Copy lines 1 and 2 of your original text as they are.
- 2) Pick two consecutive words from line 2 of your original text, and make them line 3 of your new text.
- 3) For line 4 of your new text, repeat line 3 of your original text as it is.
- 4) Pick two more words from line 2 of your original text and make them the new line 5.
- 5) For line 6 of your new text, repeat line 4 of your original text as it is.
- 6) Pick 2 random syllables or letters from line 4 of your original text and repeat them several times in an arbitrary order for lines 7 and 8 of the new text.
- 7) Pick 3 words from line 5 of your original text and create lines 9-13 of the new text using just those 3 words in a random order word flow.
- 8) Next, repeat line I of your original text to create line I4 of the new text.
- 9) Pick one word from line 6 of your original text and make that your line 15.
- 10) For line 16 of the new text, first take the first 2 words of line 1 of your original text, then add the last two words of line 7 of your original text after them.

The stone from my childhood represents to me some kind of connection with nature.

Now climate change makes me frustrated and angry -

Frustrated and

Adversarial politics rises anger

Makes furious

When I think about climate change, I think about its effect on the entire world.

think cli-cli-cli-think-cli-cli-cli-cli think-think cli-cli-cli think-cli cli-cli think-cli think-cli think-cli-cli think-cli cli-think-cli Childhood stone rises rises stone childhood

rises stone stone stone

risesrisesrises rises rises

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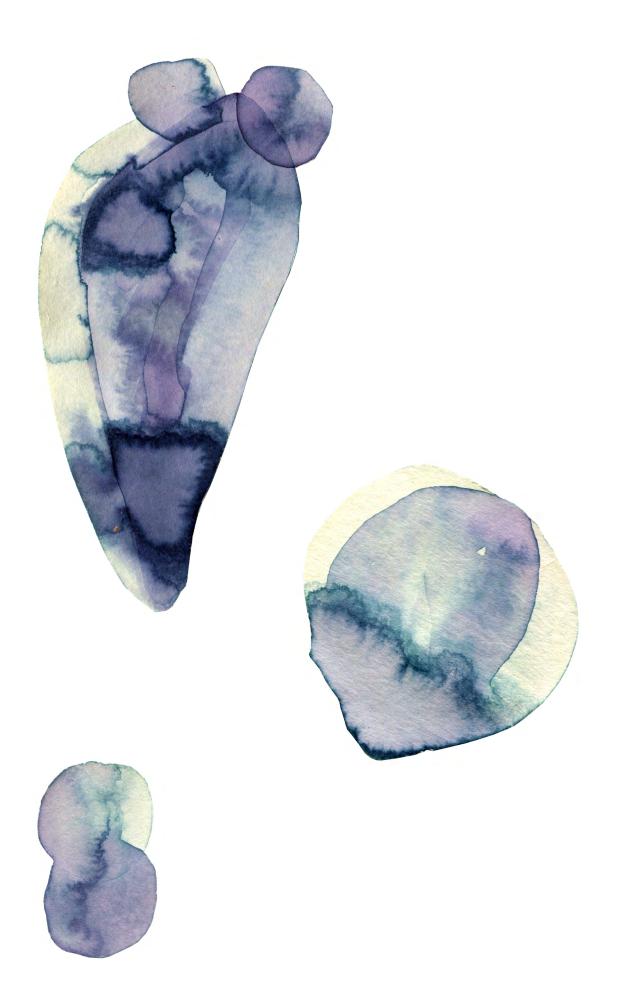
stonestonestonestone childhood

The stone from my childhood represents to me some kind of connection with nature.

Tattoo

The stone over frustration?

A poem created using the rhythm scheme. By a participant of the Ilmastonmuutos minussa ("climate change in me") course at the Adult Education Centre of the City of Helsinki, 2019, course instructor: Henna Laininen.



Dictionary Definition for an Environmental Emotion (30 minutes)

Aims:

To work towards a more accurate verbalization of one's own emotion and consider it from various perspectives. As a form, the dictionary definition helps create distance between the emotion and the individual experiencing it. The exercise is well-suited as an additional exercise after the Stream of Consciousness on Environmental Emotions exercise or the Emotional Mind Map exercise. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims *cultural competence*, *interaction and self-expression* as well as *well-being competence* and *interaction competence*. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim *own voice as a writer* – the exercise lets the learner practise verbalizing their own emotions, introduces dictionary definition as a text type, and invites participants to create new words.

Tuning in (5 minutes):

Read the dictionary definitions for environmental emotions on pages 46–47.

Exercise (15 minutes):

From your stream of consciousness or your mind map, choose one emotion you want to examine in more detail. With the help of the following questions, try to write a dictionary definition for that emotion:

- What name would describe the emotion most accurately?
- What are the types of situations that inspire this emotion?
- What sorts of bodily sensations is the emotion accompanied by?
- How long does the emotion generally last?
- How intensive is the emotion usually?
- What sort of outward behaviour can the emotion manifest as?
- Is it appropriate to display this emotion in various situations?
- How wide-spread is the emotion among various demographic groups?
- How could this emotion be put to use?

Debriefing (10 minutes)

(in case the additional exercise Freeze Frames on Environmental Emotions [see page 48] is omitted):

a) In pairs:

the participants split into pairs and read their texts to each other or tell about the contents of their definition in their own words (see the alternative debriefing method for the Emotional Mind Map exercise on page 35).

b) In a group:

Participants are asked to volunteer to read their texts out loud or to reveal the name they have given to their emotion. The emotion-words invented by the group can be collected as a list on the board.

c) Individually:

When you're ready, read your text silently in your head. How did you feel, writing this text? Who would you like to read this text to or to tell about this emotion of yours? Who could be the appropriate listener: the teacher of the group, a family member, a household pet, or a tree that grows by your walking route? Do remember that it is a good idea to have an open and accepting attitude towards your emotions. There is no need to attempt to change them, and just talking about your emotions to someone you trust can already make you feel better.

The idea of the exercise is based on the **Utopedia** glossary by the group Rakkaudesta. See: www.utopedia.fi. Exercise was further developed and adapted for this teaching material by Henna Laininen.

Heatening

The way in which the notions of burning oil, a warming planet, environmental destruction, and growing desire meld. Hot weather, hot bodies. Burning oil, burning love. Accelerating development and carnal excitement. The beauty of disappearing species and bound bodies.

Pleasure tied to the destruction of nature. A gambler is heatened by the rising of the stakes and an unfaithful lover by the risk of getting caught. Today's humans are heatened by their own way of living. They have amassed riches, but it is possible to lose everything in an instant. Being constantly haunted by the sense of doing something that is forbidden while that very thing also feels so lovely, and it is too late to back off anyway. The roulette wheel spins, the permafrost melts, the Earth looks like a gambling chip when viewed from space.

By Matias Riikonen, from the U**topedia** glossary by the group Rakkaudesta, <u>www.utopedia.fi</u>

Onety

A state in which a human becomes aware that they are a temporary combination of natural phenomena and creatures, and a part of a larger whole that surpasses the borders of thinking. In onety, nature breathes through the human, and the human opens up to the existence of microbes, the atmosphere, solar radiation, the run of elks, and the growth of moss, because they are all component parts of the human. In onety, the borders between the species break. Under onety the human recognizes that they are on the move, that they are a part of an organic landslide along with foxes, black-throated loons, bees, fish, bishop's weed, and pines, and looks at themselves through other creatures. Onety prevents destruction.

By Elisa Aaltola, from the **Utopedia** glossary by the group Rakkaudesta, <u>www.utopedia.fi</u>

Freeze Frames on Environmental Emotions (30 minutes)

Aims:

To experiment with the physical expression of environmental emotions and to learn being seen with one's own emotions. Physical expression helps to channel emotion, introduces humour to lighten up addressing a serious topic and can help strengthen group spirit, if the atmosphere in the group is safe to begin with. The exercise is suited for groups whose members enjoy performing. The exercise can be done, for instance, as an additional exercise after the Emotional Mind Map exercise or the Dictionary Definition for an Environmental Emotion exercise. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims cultural competence, interaction and self-expression as well as well-being competence, interaction competence and multidisciplinary creative competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim own voice as a writer - the exercise includes experimenting with physical expression of texts, using drama as a method.

In small groups (3–5 individuals):

Group members volunteer to read their dictionary definitions to each other or to tell about their environmental emotions in their own words. After this, the group works together to come up with ideas for a "live freeze frame" based on the environmental emotions that the members have introduced. The freeze frame can portray a number of the group's environmental emotions or just one of them. For the freeze frame, each member of the group assumes a position that portrays or describes an environmental emotion. The freeze frame can also come alive with movement and sound, if the group members so decide. The freeze frames are performed to the other groups and after this, the group can either read the dictionary definitions out loud or introduce the environmental emotions portrayed in the freeze frame in a more informal manner. At the end of each group's turn, their freeze frame gets a round of applause. The teacher should remind the participants that not all group members are required to perform: other possible roles include a reader of the texts or a director of the freeze frame.

Debriefing:

After each performance, the audience has an opportunity to tell what they liked about the performance and the texts. Before the feedback is given, the teacher reminds participants that the idea is to offer positive, supportive feedback.

The idea for this exercise comes from researcher, drama educator Anna Lehtonen, and the exercise has been further developed and adapted for this teaching material by Henna Laininen.



Connection with Nature: Nature Poems (75 minutes)

Aims:

The aim of the exercise is to strengthen the connection with nature by moving out in nature while focusing on various sensory experiences. The exercise is also suited for relaxation and recovery, if previous lessons have dealt with more serious and demanding themes such as environmental emotions. Upper and lower secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; taking care of oneself and managing daily life, as well as well-being competence, interaction competence and ethical and environmental competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aims development as a literary artist and own voice as a writer – the exercise introduces sensitive observation of the environment utilizing various senses as well as poetry as a literary genre, and experiments with environment-based writing and expands the participants' vocabulary.

Tuning in (5 minutes):

Read the nature poems by Risto Rasa on pages 54–55. Is there a poem that you particularly like? Why?

Exercise (60 minutes):

Take a walk in nature near your home or school. Have note-taking equipment with you. During your walk, record:

- I) Sensory observations: What do you see, hear, feel, taste, or smell? If you observe something interesting, you can stop and focus on it in more detail. Listen to birdsong with your eyes closed, feel the surface of a tree trunk or moss, taste a plant or a berry that you are familiar with and know to be edible.
- 2) Surprising details: Which details in nature grab your attention, and what associations do they bring to your mind? Record also the weirder observations: "A yellow leaf looks like the face of a smiling old man", "Orange liquid is oozing from a tree stump, I wonder if it's poisonous?"
- 3) Emotions: How does moving in nature make you feel today? Does some detail of nature that you have observed spark new emotions? What might the plants or animals that you have encountered feel? Record your observations: "I feel joy at finding chanterelles", "I'm still grumpy about not sleeping well last night", "I wonder if that squirrel misses his friends".

Next, return indoors and create a poem where you quote from your notes, using material from all points of the list above: sensory observations, details, and emotions. You can use the following scheme:

- I) Describe a detail in nature.
- 2) Relate a sensory observation about nature.
- 3) Reveal an emotion or insight related to the situation.

You can also add new words to the poem and use the list of Empowering Environmental Emotions on page 57. Perhaps some of the words on the list could work well for describing the emotions you experienced in nature?

Debriefing (10 minutes):

Either in pairs or in small groups, read the poems and discuss them. Was there a part of the poem that was particularly memorable to you? What did you like about the poem?



The sunlight is yellow now it gives the pine trunks on the opposite bank a bright glow.

And the forest is as if scents were being cooked

Up on a birch branch a burl that's shaped like an ear, seems to be lis'ning

A decayed tree. A woodpecker, climbing the trunk, studies the menu of a woodworm.

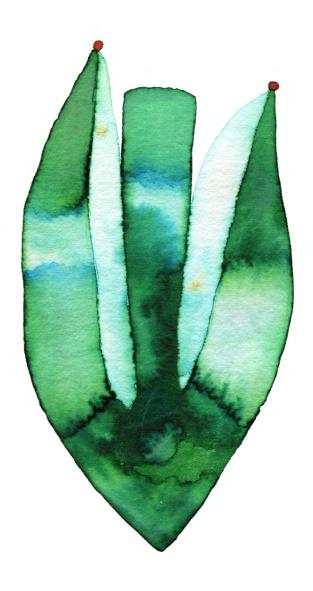
In the grass. I see a tree and blue sky.
A small cloud.
It probably won't dare to pass over me alone.

Greenflies nap in the foliage.
The forest is full of the sound of hearts.

Night after night, the forest darkens. Off a shrub, an ant twists off a raw lingonberry for a lamp to the anthill.

Birds write
the book of changes,
leave it unfinished,
the trees take over.
When it's almost finished,
snow takes it over,
starts from the beginning.

Risto Rasa: **Tuhat purjetta: kootut runot** ("A thousand sails: collected poems") (Otava Publishing Company, 1992)



Empowering Environmental Emotions:

compassion	sense of security
self-compassion	enthusiasm
acceptance	calmness
gratitude	tranquility
sweet wistfulness	presence
longing	connection with
hope	nature
trust	satisfaction
vitality	joy
vigour	happiness
determination	passion
creativity	interest
healthy pride (in	sense of wonder
oneself or in others)	surprise
respect	alertness
relief	curiosity
momentousness	attachment
meaninfulness	affection
elation	tenderness
courage	love
sense of togetherness	beauty

2. A Sustainable Future

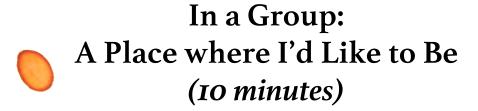
There are many potential futures, and the probability of them becoming a reality can be affected by personal action. This chapter is about imagining different futures and expanding what is imaginable. What kind of future do you dream about? What do you think a sustainable future looks like?

Warm-up Exercises



Aims:

The aim of the sustainable future warm-up exercises is to create in the group a safe and encouraging atmosphere and inspire the participants to observe their own thinking about the future. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims thinking and learning to learn; cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; taking care of oneself and managing daily life; participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; well-being competence; ethical and environmental competence and societal competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim of own voice as a writer – the exercise invites the learner to verbalize their thoughts on future and expands the limits of imagination.



Where on the map of the world would you like to be right now? Imagine that the room you're in represents the map. Everyone goes to the position on the map where they would like to be. After this, everyone tells in a few sentences which place they have chosen and why.

In groups that enjoy creative writing, you can also describe your destination using various senses: what does it look, feel, sound, smell, or taste like?



Poll: My Thoughts about the Future (5 minutes)

The group stands in a circle. The teacher instructs: "Next, I will read to you some statements related to environmental issues and the future. If you agree with a statement and wish to share that opinion with the group, take a step forward. After each statement, take a quick look around so you can see what kinds of views on future are represented in our group. If you took a step forward, return to your place before the next statement." (If the group is sitting down, standing up can be used instead for taking a step forward.)



The statements:

- Being out in nature often brings me joy.
- I am sometimes worried about the way we treat nature and animals.
- Sometimes I feel that I would not want to think about climate change.
- I believe that my home country will be carbon neutral by 2035.
- Big corporations are responsible for the environmental crisis.
- We are all responsible for the environmental crisis.
- Sometimes I feel guilty about my consumer choices.
- Politicians should make more daring decisions to mitigate climate change.
- In regard to the environmental crisis, the most important thing is to protect biodiversity.
- In regard to the environmental crisis, the most important thing is to develop technological solutions to problems, for instance to increase the production of renewable energy.
- It is important to be prepared for extreme weather phenomena and other such upheavals, because the planetary situation on Earth is so grave.

- For me, the most important thing is to live to the fullest in this moment without worrying about the future.
- I believe that I can have control over my own future.
- I believe that the environment, for instance the changing climate or political situation, has the greatest impact on the way my future turns out.
- I believe it is possible to live a meaningful life in the future.

The exercise is based on the ideas presented on the **Luonto ja tunteet** website (<u>luontojatunteet.fi</u>) and it has been further developed for this teaching material by Henna Laininen.



An Oral "Continue the Story" Game about the Future (10 minutes)

Prime everyone's imagination by telling improvised, three phrases long stories as a group. Each participant takes a turn: The first participant starts with a sentence that begins "In the future...", the next one continues with a sentence that begins "Yeah, and...". The idea is to accept the previous ideas, let your imagination fly free, and say the first thing that comes to your mind. For example:

Participant I: "In the future, summers will be really hot and because of that, people will wear swimsuits as street clothes."

Participant 2: "Yeah, and the demand for swimsuits will be so high that shops will run out of them."

Participant 3: "Yeah, and people will begin to modify their old winter wear into swimsuits."

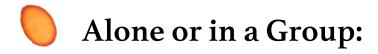
To wrap up the session, the participants may discuss, either with the entire group or with the person sitting next to them, whether any of the stories represent a particularly likely or unlikely vision of the future.



The Happiness Round (10 min)

Participants take turns, answering the questions "What makes me happy?" and "What do I wish I had more in my life?". An alternative method for groups that enjoy creative writing: The teacher records a "recipe for happiness" on the board, based on ideas from the group. Each participant contributes on their turn one ingredient they deem necessary for their happiness. For example: "Three tins of walks with a friend", "a pinch of adventurousness".





"My Thoughts about the Future" Sentences (10 minutes)

Continue the following sentences with the words that first spring into your mind:

I'm sometimes worried that...

I wish that in the future...

The politicians should...

The big corporations could...

The environmental issues will be solved...

I believe that I can have an impact...

When I'm out in nature...

I am happy when...

I wish my life had more...

After the exercise, examine the sentences you have written. Do you identify thoughts or ideas that repeat often? Is there something you would like to change? Which part gives you strength when you read it?





A Letter from the Future Me (45 minutes)

Aims:

To create space for one's own dreams of future and to strengthen positive emotions connected with the future. To look for ways to have an impact on one's own future and to reflect on one's future dreams also from the perspective of adapting to climate change. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims thinking and learning to learn; taking care of oneself and managing daily life; participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; well-being competence; ethical and environmental competence and societal competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim of own voice as a writer – the exercise teaches the learner to verbalize their thoughts on future, introduces letter as a text type, and expands the limits of imagination.

Tuning in (10 minutes):

What kind of future do you dream of? In a group, make a 10-minute imaginary journey into the future that each participant wishes would come to pass. Seated or lying down, the participants listen to calming music with their eyes closed. The teacher prompts the imaginary journey by reading the following story. Read the story in a relaxed

manner, leaving pauses between sentences and between paragraphs. Before reading, instruct the participants to take a few deep breaths and to relax.

"You wake up from your sleeping place in your home in 2035. You have slept well and you feel refreshed today. You stretch your limbs and open your eyes. What kind of place have you slept in?

You notice a delicious fragrance. What is this smell in the air? You go to breakfast — luckily you can take it easy this morning. What does your home look like? Do you live alone or with someone, who? Are there pets or houseplants around you? What will you have for breakfast today?

After you've had a tasty breakfast, you peek out of the window and take a deep breath. What do you see outside? What is the weather like? What sounds do you hear from the outside?

You remember that today is a special day. You'll finally get to realise your great dream. What are you going to do soon? How do you feel this morning?

Before you head out to realise your dream, you check that you have everything you'll need during the day with you. It is 2035 and the effects of climate change are part of everyday life, but people have made attempts to adapt to them. How does climate change affect your everyday life?

You look in the mirror and smile at yourself. There is one thing in particular that has helped you to cope with the occasional challenges in your life. What is it?"

After the imaginary journey, everybody opens their eyes. They can shake or stretch their bodies to return to here and now.

Exercise (20 minutes):

Write a letter from the future to yourself! What could your everyday life be like in 2035, if you had realised your dreams and while doing so, also adapted to the effects of climate change? You can address, for example, the following themes:

- I. What would you like to tell your present-day self about your life in 2035? In the future that you wish for, where do you live? What do you do during the day? Who are your most important loved ones? What sort of creatures do you encounter besides humans?
- **2.** How does climate change affect your everyday life in 2035? How have you adapted to the effects of climate change?
- 3. What had to happen in the past years, in your own life as well as globally, to make such a future possible? What did you do? What did your home country and other countries do?

4. What piece of advice would you give to your present-day self?

Debriefing (15 minutes):

For each of the preceding points, each participant anonymously shares a few important words or sentences – this can be done by writing on sheets of paper taped to a wall or by adding virtual post-it notes to a shared workspace, using the Jamboard application:

https://edu.google.com/intl/ALL_fi/jamboard/

The words/sentences can be grouped under the following headings that represent the exercise themes:

- 1. What does your preferred future in 2035 look like?
- 2. How have you adapted to the effects of climate change?
- 3. What had to happen to make this kind of future possible?
- **4.** What piece of advice would you give to your present-day self?

The teacher reads the words/sentences out loud. After this, discuss what kinds of thoughts they inspired, either together with the whole group or in pairs.

The imaginary journey in the tuning in section of the exercise is an adaptation of the Mielikuvarentoutus tulevaisuudesta ("guided imagery relaxation exercise focusing on future") exercise featured in the Tämä elämä toolkit https://www.tamaelama.fi/tulevaisuuskas-vatus/ and has been further developed for this teaching material by Henna Laininen.





Aims:

To see one's own activity as a part of a broader time perspective, the generational continuum, and to strengthen the confidence in the impact of personal choices. Upper and lower secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; well-being competence; ethical and environmental competence; societal competence and global and cultural competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim own voice as a writer – the exercise introduces collaborative writing as a writing technique, introduces letter as a text type, and expands the limits of imagination.

Tuning in (10 minutes):

In pairs, explore for 5 minutes the *DearTomorrow* website, where people can leave messages to the future generations: https://www.deartomorrow.org/type/letter/

After this, spend 5 minutes with your eyes closed, listening to hopeful music and imagining the kind of future you would want to participate in building. One example of suitable music is *Arrival of the Birds* by The Cinematic Orchestra.

Exercise (20 minutes):

The participants write letters to the future generations together, one sentence at a time. The teacher instructs:

"In a way, we are all already foreparents as our deeds today affect the lives of the future human, plant, and animal generations on this planet. In the next exercise, we will write as foreparents. What would you want to say to the future generations? Do you want to ask something, for instance, or tell a secret, give advice, ask for forgiveness, or say thanks? Everyone gets an empty sheet of paper where you can write your opening greeting and the first sentence of the letter. After this, you can move freely around the room and continue any letter you wish to, always one sentence at a time. Please remember to write in clear handwriting so that the other participants can read your writing without problems." The teacher also begins one letter and participates in writing the others.

The participants write in silence and move around the room until every letter has about 7 sentences. After this, everybody returns to the letter that they started.

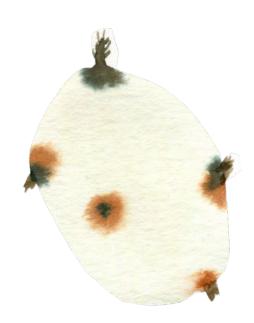
Debriefing (15 minutes):

Each participant reads out aloud the letter that they started. When all letters have been read, discuss in the group what repeating themes there were in the letters and what thoughts the letters inspired. If the atmosphere in the group is safe, the reading of the letters can be turned into a small ritual. The participants stand in a

circle and the teacher marks the beginning and the end of the ritual with an instrument such as a drum or a gong. The participants take turns stepping in the centre of the circle to read their letter, figuratively sending it to the future as they do so.

Important:

The teacher informs the participants about the course of the ritual beforehand so that everybody knows what is going to happen. Move at an easy pace. The teacher takes the first turn, reading the first letter.



We woke up. Not on just one, but on a thousand mornings we opened our eyes and our understanding became deeper, layer by layer. We had lost ourselves and each other. There was so much of everything, products, information, superficial opportunities, consumer choices. Our vision was blocked.

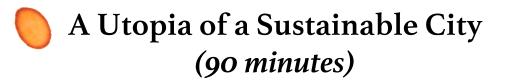
I hope that your vision regarding climate stays clear. Air is vital to us; do all you can to limit the emissions.

Today I feel that I can see most clearly when I sit on the steps of the Parliament House. Where do you sit? I sit on a rock, by the sea. The infinity puts a human in perspective. The smallness in the vastness becomes visible.

The sea is my landscape, my perspective, the love of my life. It's energy and hope.

Treasure these things in your heart!

A text created using the Letters to Future Generations exercise by the participants of the Ilmastonmuutos minussa ("climate change in me") course at the Turku church social work centre in 2019, course instructor Henna Laininen.



Aims:

To reflect together on the prerequisites for a sustainable future and the concrete steps to be taken to make it a reality, and to expand the limits of imagination. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims thinking and learning to learn; cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; interaction competence; ethical and environmental competence; societal competence and multidisciplinary creative competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aims experiential reading and own voice as a writer - the exercise introduces utopian and dystopian literature and creating a scene, a character and a story, and involves sharing personal reading experiences, as well as collaborative writing experiments, and expands the limits of imagination.

Tuning in (15 minutes):

I. Explore the concepts of utopia and dystopia by studying their definitions in a dictionary and reading the article "Utopia and Dystopia Are Twins – Both Are Born Out of Criticism" by Jeet Heer in the *Nation* magazine: https://www.thenation.com/article/society/utopia-dystopia-criticism-dreams/ The teacher reminds the participants of the following viewpoints: Many fictional books that address the future are dystopias – perhaps because readers want stories with suspense. Reality, on the other hand, is often more complex than utopias or dystopias. In the context of environmental issues, for example, there are both positive and negative developments happening in the world: some animal species are on the brink of extinction, but people also work in various ways to protect nature. There are many potential futures, and through the choices we make today we can have an impact on which one becomes reality. Future will probably be a combination of both utopian and dystopian elements, and futures will be different in different places on the Earth.

The teacher gives one example of a utopian or dystopian novel, for example *Memory of water* by Emmi Itäranta. The novel can also be read in advance by the participants. (10 minutes)

2. Discuss in pairs:

Have you read fiction or watched movies that describe utopias or dystopias? What do you think makes a good story? (5 minutes)

Exercise (75 minutes):

The participants form small groups. The teacher instructs: "There are many literary dystopias, but it is also important to consider the kind of future we dream about. Next, you'll have an opportunity to come up with ideas

for a book that is a utopia about a city in the future that is built entirely on the idea of sustainability! That said, the book also needs to be suspenseful and keep the reader hooked, so it will also have some features of a dystopia." The groups are assigned one task at a time, and they have 10 minutes for each task. After each task, the groups present their results briefly to the other groups.

- **I.** A sustainable city: Let's start by imagining the setting for our story. What do you think an ecologically and socially sustainable city in the future a place that offers an optimal opportunity to thrive to both human and non-human lifeforms would be like? Make a bulleted list of your ideas on a paper. Accept everyone's ideas. You can use the list of questions below as the starting point. Finally, come up with a name that's appropriate for your city.
- What are the living arrangements like in the city?
- What do the people eat?
- How do they travel around the city?
- How does the city produce the energy it needs?
- How do the people take care of nature?
- How do the people take care of each other?
- How does nature take care of the people?
- What is the everyday life of the city's residents like?

- 2. The history of the city: Discuss what had to happen to make the city become as sustainable as possible, both ecologically and socially. Write down at least three phases of the city's history:
- What did the political authorities of the city do?
- What did the businesses operating in the city do?
- What did the civil society organisations in the city do?
- What did the residents of the city do?
- What did other species animals, plants, insects etc. do?

If you wish, you can also come up with names that these pivotal eras and moments are called in the history records of the city. For example: "the Tomato Revolution" or "the Era of Downshifting".

- 3. The main character of the story: Come up with an interesting main character for a story that takes place in this city. Answer the following questions:
- What is the main character's name and age?
- Is the main character human, or some other species?
- What does the main character do (occupation, studies, other activity that is central to the character)?
- What's the first thing you notice about the main character when you meet them?
- What are the main character's central personality traits?
- What is the main character's secret dream?
- What weird habit does the main character have?

4. The beginning of the story:

In an interesting story, the main character faces a challenge that they must overcome. Even though the main character's home city is optimally sustainable both ecologically and socially, the effects of climate change are felt there too, making your main character's life more difficult.

The teacher randomly assigns each small group a challenge on a piece of paper. The challenges are: shortage of water caused by a drought, shortage of food caused by a drought, forest fire, flood, violent storm, the populace of neighbouring city who need help. Instruct the groups not to reveal their challenge to other groups at this point. Answer the following questions:

- What difficulties does this challenge pose for the realisation of your main character's secret dream?
- How does your main character intend to overcome this challenge?
- Which person(s) or member(s) of other species help the main character?

Finally, come up with an opening sentence that is as grabbing as possible, making it impossible for the reader to put the book down! For instance, you can begin the story in the middle of some exciting action, or the opening sentence can be enigmatic or hint about what is about to follow.





The "Decisive Moment" Dialogue (30 minutes)

Aims:

To strengthen positive thinking about future by reflecting how problematic situations can be overcome with cooperation. The exercise is suitable to be used as an additional exercise after the exercise A Utopia of a Sustainable City. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims taking care of oneself and managing daily life; cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; interaction competence; ethical and environmental competence and societal competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim own voice as a writer – the exercise introduces writing dialogue and experiments with collaborative writing.

Exercise (20 minutes):

Participants form pairs. The pairs come up with a problematic issue related to climate change and two humans or members of other species who try to solve the problem. If this exercise follows the exercise A Utopia of a Sustainable City, the pairs come up with a problem that the main character of their sustainable city story faces with another person or a member of another species while trying to overcome their main challenge. Write a dialogue between the two characters by taking turns: each member of the pair writes the lines of their own

character. The aim of the dialogue is to come up with a decisive moment. How do the characters work together to come up with a solution to the problem?

Alternative variants:

1) An exercise in brevity:

Each line can contain a maximum of two words. Additionally, actions by the characters can be indicated in parentheses. For example:

Hare: (thumps)

Squirrel: Forest fire?

Hare: Must extinguish!

Squirrel: How?

Hare: Use tail!

Squirrel: Whose tail?

Hare: Your tail!

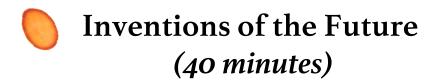
2) Expanding the imagination:

Blindly draw from a cloth bag two unusual objects which the characters use to solve the problem. The objects must appear in the dialogue (for example: a magnifying glass and a balloon).

Debriefing (10 minutes):

The pairs perform their dialogues to the rest of the group, each member of the pair reading the lines for their character. In case of the Exercise in Brevity variant, the rest of the group can try to guess what actually took place during the dialogue.





Aims:

To reflect on the role of inventions in building a sustainable culture by doing a playful exercise. The exercise is suitable e.g. as an additional exercise after the Utopia of a Sustainable City exercise. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims thinking and learning to learn; cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; multidisciplinary creative competence; ethical and environmental competence and societal competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim own voice as a writer – the exercise introduces dictionary definition and user manual as text types, expands imagination, and invites participants to create new words.

Tuning in (10 minutes):

Learn about important inventions through the history of mankind by reading individually or with the group the article "Top 10 inventions that changed the world" by Jessica Leggett and Natalie Wolchover on the *Live Science* news website: https://www.livescience.com/33749-top-10-inventions-changed-world.html Alternatively, the group can browse *The Story of Inventions* by Anna Claybourne (Usborne Publishing Ltd 2012) together.

In pairs, discuss for 5 minutes:

Which invention do you think is the mankind's greatest achievement? Which invention has had the greatest impact on your life?

Exercise (20 minutes):

I. On a paper, list words belonging to the following categories in vertical columns next to each other (5 minutes):

Nature	Emotion	Technology	Object	Activity	Apparell or
e.g.	e.g.	e.g.	e.g.	e.g.	accessory e.g.
squirrel	love	electricity	hammer	running	jacket
storm	sorrow	engine	book	kissing	safety reflector
moss	surprise	smartphone	flashlight	meditation	backpack

- **2.** Create new concepts by combining words from different categories. For example: electricity meditation, moss smartphone, love safety reflector. (5 minutes)
- **3.** Which of the new concepts you came up with could be a future invention that contributes to a sustainable way of life? Write a dictionary definition for this invention. (*Io min*) The definition can include, for example, the following information:
- -What does the invention look like? What is it made of?
- -How is the invention used?
- -What does the invention do?
- -What wide-spread effects has the invention had?
- -Has the invention caused any negative effects? What?

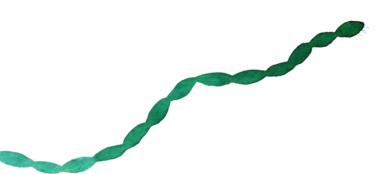
-Who developed the invention? Was it discovered accidentally or as a result of sustained efforts?

Additional exercise:

You can also write a user's manual for the invention. The manual has step-by-step instructions for using the invention and also covers what needs to be taken into account when using it.

Debriefing (10 minutes):

Divide into pairs or small groups. Each participant presents their innovations to their pair or to the small group. As an additional exercise, the participants can prepare freeze frames of their future inventions (see the exercise Freeze Frames on Environmental Emotions, page 48).





3. Me as an Environmental Actor

Environmental issues can be mitigated by cooperation. This chapter focuses on reflecting on individual values and looks at environmental action. What is most dear to you? What do you want to protect? Do you wish to have an impact on environmental issues, and what do you think would be the best way for you to do so?

Warm-up Exercises



Aims:

The aim of the Me as an Environmental Actor warm-up exercises is to build a safe and encouraging group atmosphere, strengthen the participants' positive view of themselves and their opportunities to have an impact, and inspire the participants to observe their own attitudes towards the environment. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercises develop the transverse competences aims thinking and learning to learn; taking care of oneself and managing daily life; participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; well-being competence; ethical and environmental competence and societal competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aims development as a literary artist and own voice as a writer - the exercise invites the learner to verbalize the values that are important to them as the point of departure for their writing and to expand their imagination.



In a Group:

Values Continuum (15 minutes)

The teacher reads a statement, and the participants position themselves along an imaginary line based on how much they agree or disagree with the statement. After each statement, the participants discuss the thoughts that were sparked by the statement for one minute with a participant standing close to them.

Statements:

- I have a hobby that I am passionate about and want to get better at.
- I get strength from nature, for example being out in nature or spending time with animals.
- Spending a lot of time with my loved ones, for example my friends and my family, is important for me.
- I don't really feel like thinking about climate change.
- I want to influence the political decision-makers so that they would implement effective measures to mitigate climate change.
- In my everyday life, I want to make choices that are as eco-friendly as possible.

- I try to choose products that have been produced by companies that operate ethically.
- For me, the most important thing is to realise my dreams, regardless of climate change.
- For me, the most important thing is to take care of the well-being of myself and my loved ones.

If Anything Was Possible (10 minutes)

Stimulate imagination by coming up with creative solutions to facing the environmental crisis. The teacher asks the group: "If anything was possible, how would you protect life on Earth?" Come up with as many different solutions as you can:

- a quick solution
- a fun solution
- a cheap solution
- a technological solution
- a natural solution
- a musical solution
- a local solution
- a communal solution
- a colourful solution

Method I: Each participant writes their ideas on paper.

Method 2: The participants come up with solutions as a group, saying their ideas out aloud, and the teacher writes them on board under each category.

The point is to accept all ideas – also the ones that seem weird or impossible. Brainstorming freely can lead to new insights that can later be developed into something useful!

An alternative method:

Blindly pick up items from a cloth bag, one at a time. Come up with a solution that utilizes the item you picked, either in a concrete or a metaphorical manner. For example: if the item is a rock, the solution could be: "The global decision-makers are invited to a meditation session where they stare at a rock. This makes them realise that we only have this one rock, this one planet, and this leads to negotiations that result in effective climate measures."

Environmental Crisis Toolkit (10 minutes)

Each participant has five minutes to find 3–5 small items from among their personal possessions or from their immediate surroundings that can stand for their own tools for addressing the environmental crisis. The tools can be related to various themes that are topical to the participant, such as sources of resolve, surviving the

environmental crisis, or environmental activism. Each participant writes for themselves a bullet list of notes about the use/relevance of each tool. Next, the tools are presented in pairs. For example:

"Eraser – for me, it's important to be able to sometimes erase the environmental crisis from my mind, for instance by watching a movie I enjoy."

"Lunch sandwich – I want to have an impact on the environmental crisis by choosing a plant-based diet."

"Glitter pen – For me, creativity and dreams are important in life."

The idea for the exercise comes from researcher, drama educator Anna Lehtonen and dance and theatre pedagogue, artist Nella Turkki.



Alone or in a Group: A Poem Selfie (10 minutes)

Strengthen a positive self-image and the trust in one's individual potential for having an impact by answering the questions below. Based on the answers, create a poetic self-portrait, or a poem selfie, using the poem scheme below the list of questions.

- I) Three things I am good at (*verbs*):
- 2) Three qualities I like in myself (*adjectives*):
- 3) My favourite weather (*adjective*):
- 4) My favourite place:
- 5) My favourite animal:
- 6) My favourite pastime (verb):
- 7) A human or other creature who has had a great impact on me or who I admire:
- 8) A human or other creature who I have helped or delighted:
- 9) An activity I dream about (*verb*):
- 10) The most beautiful thing I have seen or heard (noun):
- II) Something that gives me strength (noun):
- 12) Something I'd like to change in the world (a full sentence):

I am (2, choose the best option) (3) (4)
•••••••••
where (5) (does 6)
•••••
When I (do I, choose the best option),
•••••••••
(7) and (8)
(do 9)
••••••
like (10).
•••••
Inside me, there is (II)
••••••
that/who (does 12).

Main Exercises



Values Portrait (40 minutes)

Aims:

To clarify one's own values and to allow playful addressing of the learner's self-image using humour as a tool. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims taking care of oneself and managing daily life; cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; well-being competence; interaction competence; ethical and environmental competence and societal competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aims development as a literary artist and own voice as a writer – the exercise invites the learner to verbalize the values that are important to them, experiment with the dating profile and medical diagnosis text types, and expand their imagination.

Tuning in (10 minutes):

Form pairs. Consider the questions below (5 minutes) and after that, share your thoughts with your partner (5 minutes).

I) What are the most important values for you? From the list below, pick the 5 most important values that you want to live by in your everyday life.

Honesty, friendship, justice, equality, helping others, connection with nature, success moderation, independence, physical activity, eco-friendliness, communality, compassion, sensitivity, well-being, rest, humour, freedom, adventure, spirituality, comfort, creativity, security, courage, love, learning, wisdom, beauty, something else?

- 2) What things or activities make you happy in your everyday life? Some examples: friends, pets, important hobbies...
- 3) Is there a value that you would like to live by more strongly in your everyday life? What concrete action could you take this week to live more by that value?

Exercise (20 minutes):

List:

- I) Five activities that are manifestations of you living by your values. For example: "I support my friends through difficult times." "I go to soccer practice twice a week."
- 2) Five lies about yourself: For example: "I robbed a bank last week." "I'm related to a famous actor."

3) Five impossible things about yourself. For example: "I can read people's minds." "There are two purple horns growing on my head."

Write a dating profile or a medical diagnosis of yourself where you use so some things you have listed from each of your lists.

Debriefing (10 minutes):

The texts are read in pairs or in small groups. The listeners can tell which particular details about the texts they liked.

The exercise utilizes a writing exercise by creative writing teacher and author Niina Hakalahti. The exercise was further developed for this teaching material by Henna Laininen.



Advertisements for Useless and Important Products (65 minutes)

Aims:

To invite the learner to consider their own consumer choices and their attitudes towards material goods, using humour to approach the topic. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims taking care of oneself and managing daily life; multiliteracy; cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; working life competence and entrepreneurship;

participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; interaction competence; multidisciplinary creative competence; ethical and environmental competence and societal competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim own voice as a writer – the exercise introduces a newspaper advertisement as a text type, experiments with collaborative writing as a writing technique and expands imagination.

Tuning in (20 minutes):

The participants fill in the Sitra lifestyle test (15 minutes): https://lifestyletest.sitra.fi/

After doing the test, split in pairs and discuss the following questions (5 minutes):

- I) What are some easy lifestyle changes that would enable me to reduce my carbon footprint to some extent? The changes can be related, for instance, to the following areas:
- food
- housing
- travel and transport
- goods and services
- 2) What about changes that would have a more pronounced effect but would also require long-term planning?

Exercise (30 minutes):

Split into small groups. Each group is a company tasked with creating an advertisement for their latest product. The companies differ in their values and in their mode of operation. Teacher assigns the following companies to the small groups and the company descriptions are read out with the entire group before the small groups begin to work on their assignment.

Group 1:

This company produces products that are useless and harmful to the environment, using materials with high environmental burden. The products are expensive and they are designed to break down three years from the date of purchase. A product example: "A soda bottle cooler with high electricity consumption, made of plastic."

Group 2:

This company produces completely useless products that are relatively harmless to the environment, using recycled materials. The products are cheap, and buyers receive other, useless products as add-ons with the purchase. A product example: "An ear-scratcher made of an empty oat-milk carton, with a pair of jumping stilts made of old car tires free with every purchase."

Group 3:

This company produces highly important and longlasting products, mainly from recycled materials and locally sourced high-quality materials. The products are quite expensive but they have a long lifespan. A product example: "A fleece winter coat made of wool from locally farmed lambs, with solar panels made of recycled plastic on the back for charging your mobile phone."

Group 4:

This company produces only non-material products that are extremely important. They use no materials at all. The products are free, or the profits are channelled to charity. A product example: "Sing an encouraging song to your friend and support a nursing home for homeless cats."

Task I (3 minutes):

Come up with a name for your company that reflects its values and mode of operation.

Task 2 (10 minutes):

Come up with your company's latest product by answering the questions below. Accept even the weird ideas. Now is the time to let imagination run free and go over the top!

- What is the product used for?
- What is the product made of?
- What impact does the product have a) on its user,b) on the environment?
- What would be a fitting name for the product?
- How much does the product cost?

Task 3 (15 minutes):

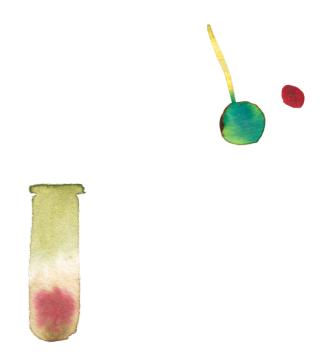
Design a newspaper advertisement for this latest product from your company. The advertisement can contain both text and image(s), either of the product itself or of a situation where the product is used. The advertisement text can include, for example, the following points:

- Name and price of the product
- Advertising slogans: how would you describe the intended use, materials, and impact of the product in a catchy way?
- You can also think about the aspects of the product that should not be mentioned in an advertisement.

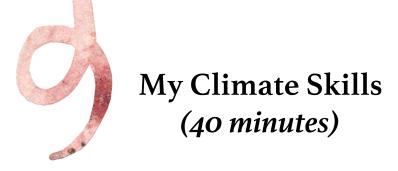
Debriefing (15 minutes):

The small groups present the name of their company, the product, and the advertisement created for the product to the other groups. After the presentations, reflect on the following questions:

- Which of the previously presented products would you want to get or would definitely not want to get for yourself?
- The previously presented products were imaginary, but do they have similarities with real products? Have you perhaps purchased a product that is similar to what was presented? Were you happy with your purchase afterwards?







Aims:

To approach the challenges posed by environmental issues as a learning opportunity. To reflect together on the types of skills that are required in the changing conditions. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims taking care of oneself and managing daily life; cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; well-being competence; multidisciplinary creative competence; ethical and environmental competence and societal competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim own voice as a writer – the exercise introduces dictionary definition as a text type, invites the learner to invent new words, and expands imagination.

Tuning in (20 minutes):

Examine the list of climate skills on page 139. After doing so, consider the kinds of skills you think are or will be required in a climate crisis. This can include various skills: skills related to a sustainable way of life, survival skills, social skills, or emotional skills. Make a bulleted list or a mind map of your ideas (15 minutes).

When directing the exercise, the teacher can highlight the fact that learning new skills is often fun and learning a skill can turn into an interesting hobby. Each individual can discover the climate skills that are most important to them, give them strength, and are useful for furthering the adaptation to climate change in their own life and their social circle and community.

Exercise (15 minutes):

From the skills that you have listed, choose the one that you feel is the most important to you and write a dictionary definition for it, using the following questions as the starting point:

- What would be a fitting name for the skill?
- How does one practise or utilize the skill?
- What kind of an experience is the practising of the skill?
- How does practising the skill change the practitioner or the society around them?

For inspiration, you can read a dictionary definition from the *Utopedia* glossary describing a skill that will be needed in the future on the page 107.

Debriefing (5 minutes):

The dictionary definitions are read in pairs or in small groups. As an additional exercise, you can create freeze frames on your future climate skills (see exercise Freeze Frames on Environmental Emotions, page 48).

Pleffort

A pattern of behaviour that enables communities to invent new solutions to problems. Any member of the community can start a game based on the problem to be solved, and the other members of the community are expected to play along. Pleffort has led to the invention of e.g. linerest (a phenomenon common in urban rush-hour public transport, where one rests their head on the shoulder of the person standing next to them in the line) and the lightweight shared thermal outfits which can be worn by up to five people at the time without impediment to movement). Pleffort has been helpful in many government coalition negotiations and shareholders' meetings. Play can help to find a new solution to a problem, or not.

From the **Utopedia** glossary by the group Rakkaudesta, <u>www.utopedia.fi</u>



Climate Heroes (55 minutes)

Aims:

To address heroism and the means that each individual has to make an impact on environmental issues. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims taking care of oneself and managing daily life; cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; well-being competence; ethical and environmental competence and societal competence. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim own voice as a writer – the exercise introduces superhero stories as a text type and invites the learner to create a character.

As an introduction, the teacher can introduce to participants an idea articulated by environmental philosopher Joanna Macy: a person can view their own environmental activism as an adventure where the end result is not yet known. During their adventure, the hero encounters challenges and discovers means to overcome them. The climate crisis is such a complex phenomenon that, instead of individual heroes, cooperation and the strength of numbers to create change are required. At the same time, one should remember the importance of self-compassion: while everybody can do something for climate, nobody can do everything.

Tuning in (25 minutes):

I. Read the guide "9 things you can do about climate change" by The Grantham Institute: https://www.imperial.ac.uk/stories/climate-action/.

Split in pairs and discuss:

- Do you have a desire to have an impact on environmental issues and which method would be the most suitable for you? (*Io minutes*)
- 2. Read the article "'Africa is on the front lines but not the front pages': Vanessa Nakate on her climate fight" about a young environmental activist by Nina Lakhani on the Guardian magazine website: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/17/vanessa-nakate-climate-activist-africa-cop27?CMP=share_btn_fb&fbclid=IwARoPY-Y7FDSl8grIzFWpoLu8O4bJMtDCbCXQ1Pq2eLpkx-9jaFxOVtMzXnoKA

Split in pairs and discuss:

– Who do you consider a hero of the climate change era? Is your hero a fearless climate activist or a climate refugee struggling to cope with the consequences of climate change? Perhaps a bee that helps fruit trees to reproduce under challenging weather conditions? Or a young person who has grown in difficult family conditions and faces many other challenges besides climate change? Can a community be considered a hero?

- What makes your own life heroic? Which situations or issues large or small have required heroic qualities, such as courage or determination, of you? (10 minutes)
- 3. The teacher introduces superhero fiction genre to the group. Superhero is a type of fictional hero popularized in comic books, movies, video games and literature who has extraordinary, often superhuman, powers. Superhero helps people in emergency situations and fights crime. The teacher gives examples about older as well as more recent superhero comics, such as *The Amazing Spider-Man* by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko (Marvel Comics) and *The Adventures of Superhero Girl* by Faith Erin Hicks, see: http://www.adventuresofsuperherogirl.com/comic/ (5 minutes)

Exercise (30 minutes):

Come up with your personal climate superhero! The superhero's mission is to save the Earth for the following generations by preventing a climate catastrophe. What kind of a hero is needed for this mission? The hero can be either human or a member of another species.

The name of the hero:

Come up with a fitting, descriptive name for the superhero! The name can refer, for example, to the best qualities of the superhero.

The mission of the superhero:

- a) climate activism
- b) promoting a sustainable lifestyle
- c) protecting biodiversity
- d) coming up with ecological inventions
- e) helping animals and humans who suffer because of climate change
- f) something else?

The hero's strengths:

- Mental resources (e.g. characteristics, values and attitudes, mental skills):
- Physical resources: (e.g. body constitution, practical skills):

The hero's weaknesses:

What skill has the hero not mastered yet?
What mental or physical characteristic makes the hero's adventure challenging and at the same time interesting? (Examples: shyness, fear of dark, hair that reaches the ground and gets tangled in everything...)

The hero's helpers:

Who helps the hero to accomplish their mission? The helpers can be human or non-human.

The hero's adversaries:

Who/what (one or more) make(s) it more difficult for the hero to accomplish their mission? The adversaries can be humans, non-human creatures, conditions, or internal qualities (e.g. a storm, laziness).

The hero's equipment:

What is the hero's most important piece of equipment when completing their mission? How does the hero travel from one place to another?

Additional Exercise: The Hero's Journey (30 minutes)

Write a story about how your super hero accomplishes their mission. Include in the story three obstacles that make the hero's journey more difficult: an external obstacle (a circumstance or a random occurrence), an internal obstacle (a characteristic or an emotion), and an adversary (human or member of another species). Tell how and with whose help the hero overcomes the obstacles. Include various ways of overcoming the obstacles, e.g. the hero's skills, appearance of an assisting character, and a cunning plot.





Additional Exercise: Climate Super Hero Movie (10 minutes)

Come up with a name for a movie starring your climate super hero! Write a synopsis for the movie in approximately five sentences. If you have plenty of time, you can also design a poster for the movie by drawing, for example, or by taking digital photos and using graphics software.

Additional reading on environmental activism: Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone: Active Hope – How to Face the Mess We're in without Going Crazy (New World Library 2012).

My Own Communities (60 minutes)

Aims:

To reflect on communality as a resource during the environmental crisis, to take a look at the learners' own communities and to considers the opportunities that are available for impacting the climate crisis through communality. Lower and upper secondary school: the exercise develops the transverse competences aims taking care of oneself and managing daily life; cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; well-being competence; interaction competence; ethical and environmental competence

and *societal competence*. Literary art basic education: the exercise develops the aim own voice as a writer – the exercise reflects on communities as a setting for a story and introduces newspaper headlines as a text type.

Tuning in (10 minutes):

Watch "Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage", the first episode of the *Planet Community* video series by the Fellowship for Intentional Community: https://vimeo.com/showcase/5540107

In the episode, the residents of an ecovillage in Northeastern Missouri tell what they find important for creating a sustainable community.

Exercise (45 minutes):

- I. Create a map of your own communities which local or more distant communities are you part of? We are all part of many different communities. These include family, group of friends, neighbourhood, work or school communities, hobby groups, and social media communities. (10 minutes)
- 2. Next, choose one of your communities and discuss in writing how well that community functions at the moment in your opinion.
- Who belong to the community, who are excluded from it?
- Does the community have a common goal?
- How does it feel to be a part of the community?
- What works well, what perhaps poses challenges?

- Is everyone's voice heard?
- Are there power relations or conflicts that hinder the functioning of the community?
- What kind of diversity is accepted, what kind of similarities are expected?

Finally, consider how you, as a community, could start boosting your sense of togetherness. What kind of tools are available to you? (15 minutes)

- **3.** Explore the images on pages 33–35 of the guide by the international Transition Network: https://transition-network.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/The-Essen-tial-Guide-to-Doing-Transition-English-V1.2.pdf
 Think about how you could promote adapting to climate change and a more sustainable way of life in your local community, for example with your neighbours. (*10 minutes*)
- **4.** Imagine that your local community faces one of the following emergencies:
- a three-day power cut
- an interruption of food or water supply
- a flood
- a massive storm
- a prolonged heatwave

What, in your opinion, would be the ideal way for your local community to act in such a situation? Come

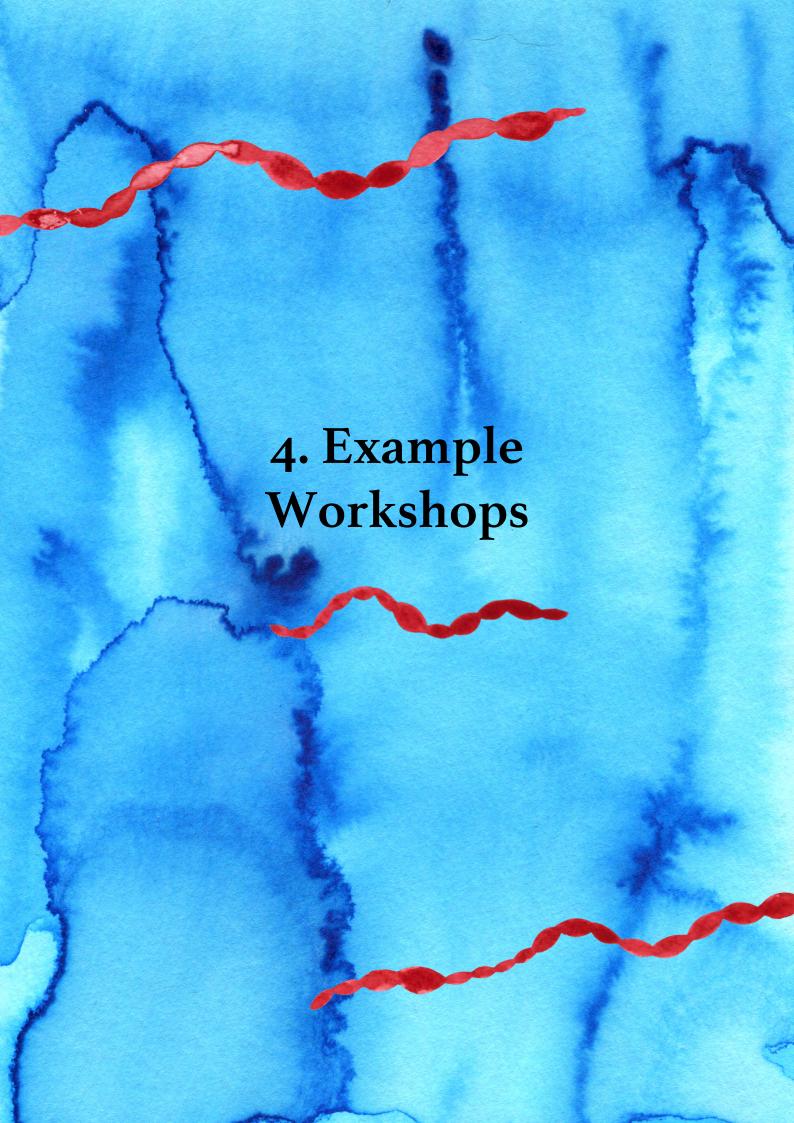
up with three news headlines that describe the great success of this community in facing an emergency. For example: "A garden party by open fire – read how the suburban residents turned a power outage into a communality-boosting experience", "The neighbour's cat saved my life – Tina, 15, reveals what happened during the storm". (10 minutes)

Debriefing (10 minutes):

The thoughts from points 2 and 3 and the news headlines are presented in pairs or in small groups. The headlines can also be compiled together to create the group's shared tabloid front page on the classroom wall.

This exercise is a literary art version of the Omat yhteisöni ("my communities") exercise in the **Minun ilmastotaitoni** ("my climate skills") online documentary at http://ilmastotaitoni.fi/harjoit-teet/#pauliina. The exercise was developed by Henna Laininen and Pauliina Helle.





The following examples for structuring workshops show how the themes covered in this teaching material can be used to create a teaching session that lasts one double lesson (90 minutes). Environmental issues are best examined in the context of a series of teaching sessions, as this gives the group enough time on one hand to explore their environmental emotions and on the other hand, to reflect on their opportunities to impact the environmental crisis. Addressing environmental emotions may inspire in some members of the group a desire to take action. Because of this, it is recommended that, in addition to emotional work, an opportunity for planning and taking concrete action is also included in teaching. The content of workshops planned using these examples can be tailored to match the needs of the teaching group in question. If the group requires a more relaxed pace, the additional exercise(s) can be left out.

I. Environmental Emotions (90 minutes)



Theme and goals of the session:

To recognize various environmental emotions, to share emotions with other people, and to increase understanding of the emotional landscape of other people.

Warm-up Exercise: Gratitude Circle (10 minutes)

Each participant says in their turn aloud one thing, large or small, that they are grateful for today (see the full instructions for the exercise on page 28). If the group members are not familiar with each other, the gratitude circle can double as a round of introductions, with each participant telling their name to the group. An alternative method to be used if the atmosphere in the group is not safe enough: each participant writes privately a stream of consciousness for 3 minutes, starting with "Today I am grateful for..."

Warm-up Exercise: Improvisation on Words for Emotions (10 minutes)

Verbalizing mental images and associations inspired by words for various emotions (see the full instructions for the exercise on page 26).

Tuning in: Introduction to Environmental Emotions (5 minutes)



Tuning in:

The teacher gives a brief introduction on why it is important to address emotions that are related to climate change (see the tuning in section on page 31).

Main Exercise: Emotional Mind Map (25 minutes)

Each participant creates a mind map about their environmental emotions, using the list of words for emotions as a starting point. The mind maps can be shared in pairs, or a shared mind map can be created using the AnswerGarden platform (https://answergarden.ch/) or some other word cloud application. (See the full instructions for the exercise and debriefing on page 33).

Additional Exercise: A Dictionary Definition for an Environmental Emotion (25 minutes)

Each participant writes a dictionary definition for one of their own environmental emotions. The texts are then shared in pairs or read quietly individually (see the full instructions for the exercise and debriefing on page 43).

Debriefing: Shared Emotional Landscape (15 minutes)

Each participant underlines an important word or sentence that they want to share with others in the dictionary definition they wrote for the previous exercise. The words and sentences are used to create the group's shared emotional landscape either as a text collage or a soundscape:

Alternative 1:

Text collage. Each participant writes the word/sentence they have chosen on a large piece of paper. The words collected from the group are used to create a word collage co-authored by the group, by grouping the pieces of paper either on the floor or by attaching them on the wall of the room. Alternatively, the AnswerGarden platform (https://answergarden.ch/) or some other word cloud application

can be used to create the new co-authored text. Finally, the teacher reads the text aloud, and the group discusses the thoughts inspired by the text.

Alternative 2 (for groups that enjoy performing): Soundscape. The participants stand in a circle. Each participant in their turn says their word/sentence aloud and strikes a pose or performs a movement or gesture they think is fitting to accompany that word/sentence. The other participants echo the word/sentence and copy the physical representation.



2. A Sustainable Future (90 minutes)



Theme and goals of the session:

To observe one's own thinking about the future. To share thoughts on ecological sustainability and to expand the limits of imagination by coming up with skills and inventions of a sustainable future.

Warm-up Exercise: Poll: My Thoughts about the Future (10 minutes)

The group stands in a circle, and the teacher reads statements about the future. For each statement, those who agree with the statement take a step forward and then return to their places (see the full instructions for the exercise on page 60).

Warm-up Exercise: A Sustainable Future Brainstorming Session (10 minutes)

Each participant gets 5 post-it notes. In small groups, brainstorm answers to the question "If you could freely decide, what would an ecologically sustainable future look like? What would a future that maximises the well-being of both humans and nature be like?" First each participant lists quietly their answers on the post-it notes for 5 minutes (one answer per note). Next, the ideas are shared in the small groups by attaching the notes on a shared sheet of paper. The participants can group the notes by themes that emerge in discussion.

Alternative, anonymous method:

The brainstorm can be conducted with the entire group with each participant writing, either alone or in small groups, virtual notes in a shared workspace using the Jamboard application: https://edu.google.com/intl/en_ALL/jamboard/

Tuning in: Mankind's Inventions (10 minutes)

Learn about important inventions through the history of mankind and reflect on the role inventions play in the participants' everyday life (see the tuning in instructions for the Inventions of the Future exercise on pages 84–85).

Main Exercise: Inventions of the Future (30 minutes)



Participants create new concepts and, based on the concept of their choice, write a description of an invention or skill that belongs to a sustainable future (see exercise instructions and guide questions on page 85 and 106). The teacher can read aloud the text "Pleffort" from the *Utopedia* glossary (see page 107) as an example.

Additional Exercise: Freeze Frames on Skills and Inventions of the Future (30 minutes)

In small groups, come up with freeze frames based on the inventions and skills of the previous exercise. The freeze frames are performed to the other groups (see the full instructions for the exercise on page 48).

3. Me as an Environmental Actor (90 minutes)



Theme and goals of the session:

To observe one's own environmental attitudes and to reflect on the various means of having an environmental impact as an individual to identify the ones that participants feel are suitable for themselves.

Warm-up Exercise: If Anything Was Possible (10 minutes)

Stimulate imagination by coming up with creative solutions to facing the environmental crisis (see the full instructions for the exercise on page 91).

Tuning in: Learn about Climate Activism (30 minutes)



Learn about various methods used in climate activism and reflect on the participants' own ways of having an impact (see the tuning-in instructions for the Climate Heroes exercise on pages 110–111).

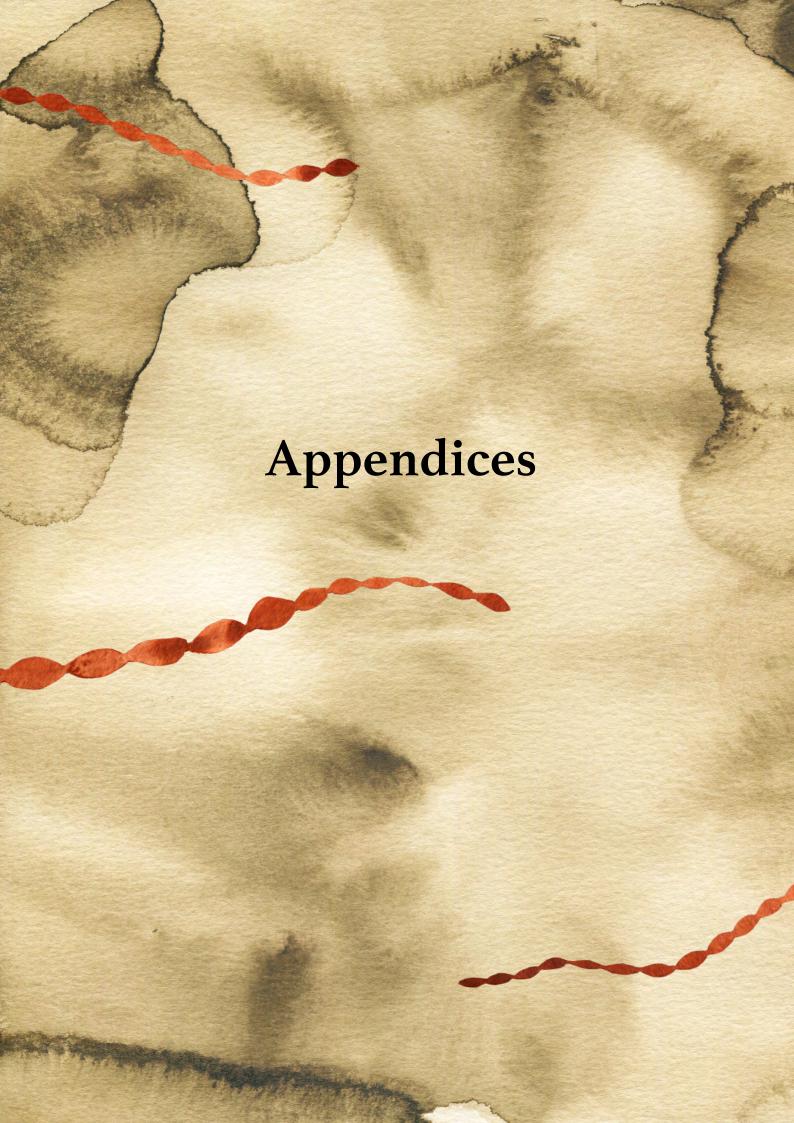
Main Exercise: Climate Heroes (30 minutes)

Invent your own climate superhero (see the full instructions for the exercise on page III). Characters are presented in pairs or in small groups.



Additional Exercise: Climate Super Hero Movie (20 minutes)

Come up with a name for a movie starring the climate superhero from the previous exercise. Write a synopsis for the movie in about five sentences. If you have plenty of time, you can also design a poster for the movie, by drawing, for example, or by taking digital photos and using graphics software. Make an exhibition of the images and texts on the classroom wall and take some time to view them all together. If the atmosphere in the group is safe, each participant can also introduce their creation to the others.



Tuning in -Material for the Stream of Consciousness on Environmental Emotions and Emotional Mind Map Exercises



Why Addressing Emotions Related to Climate Change Is Important

Global issues, such as climate change, inspire a variety of emotions. You may feel empowered when you see large numbers of people taking action for good causes. Or you may feel anxious when you see news about burning rainforests. Or guilty when you see that the products of your favourite clothing brand are manufactured without the workers receiving a fair compensation.

To be better able to act in a more constructive manner, it is important to be aware of the emotions that arise in us. However, facing our own emotions can pose a challenge. The problems in the world may make us so anxious that we simply wish to ignore them. Bad news in my social media feed – hey, give me a cat video! This is only human, but if we all simply run away from the problems, we will

never solve them. Some people may start to worry about the problems so much that they cannot sleep properly, experiencing so much anxiety over the climate crisis.

Here you can see some common emotions that may arise because of the global problems (SHOW IMAGE I). Looking at this for a minute, can you see emotions that are particularly familiar to you? Or emotions that seem foreign and unfamiliar? It is possible and recommendable to get to know your own emotions, and there are many different exercises that can help you with it.

Here you see common emotions Finns experience in regard to climate change – these are a result of an extensive citizen survey by the Finnish Innovation Fund in 2019. (SHOW IMAGE 2). You can see worry and anxiety, but also interest, guilt, and feelings of inadequacy. Many people feel that they, as a single, insignificant individual, are powerless in the face of such huge issues. On the other hand, the lack of action by decision makers and corporate leaders may be infuriating. And some people feel frustrated by the whole public discussion about climate change – that too is an existing emotion, and one we should be able to address.

But there is also a lot of empowerment, a lot of desire to do good, and joy of acting together, and hope. Everyone can do something – even an ocean is made of small drops. Many decision makers are also doing a lot already, and together young people, too, can influence the decision makers. It is

very important to remember that there are also many good things happening in the world, even though it is also a good idea to acknowledge and address the distress caused by environmental issues. When you know your emotions, you'll be better able to channel their energy into the good stuff!

This text is a translation from the Finnish-language teaching video Tutustu kestävän kehityksen kysymyksiin liittyviin tunteisiin ("learn about emotions related to sustainable development issues") by the Toivoa ja toimintaa project. Translated with the permission of the Toivoa ja toimintaa project. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-ZoIIkWoqLw&t=195s



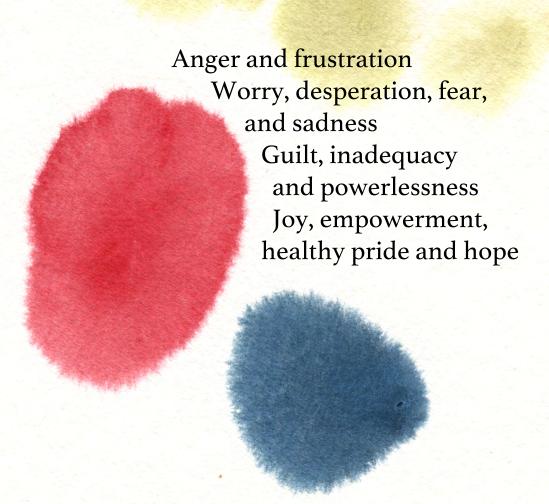
IMAGE 1. Emotions Sparked by Global Issues



```
Powerlessness – helplessness
 Guilt
   Desperation
      Shame
         Desire to make amends
            Desire to have an impact
              Bafflement
                 Confusion
                  Overwhelmedness
                  Resistance to change
                  Denial
                  Anger
                 Sadness
                Fear
             Repulsion
          Sense of togetherness
        Curiosity
      Gratitude
     Courage
    Healthy pride
   Joy
 Hope
```

Source: The Toivoa ja toimintaa project

IMAGE 2. Finns' Emotions Related to Climate Change



Source: The **Ilmastonmuutos ja tunteet** ("climate change and emotions") citizen survey by Finnish Innovation Fund 2019, collected by the Toivoa ja toimintaa project.

Climate Skills



ability to anticipate ability to recover ability to take concrete steps towards dreams ability to tolerate and resolve conflicts ability to tolerate disappointments accepting mortality analytical thinking asking for help being present being rich with ideas boosting gratitude celebrating achievements commons thinking communality comparing electricity contract prices compassion composting connection with nature conserving energy cooking vegan food cooperation skills co-ownership courage creativity determination

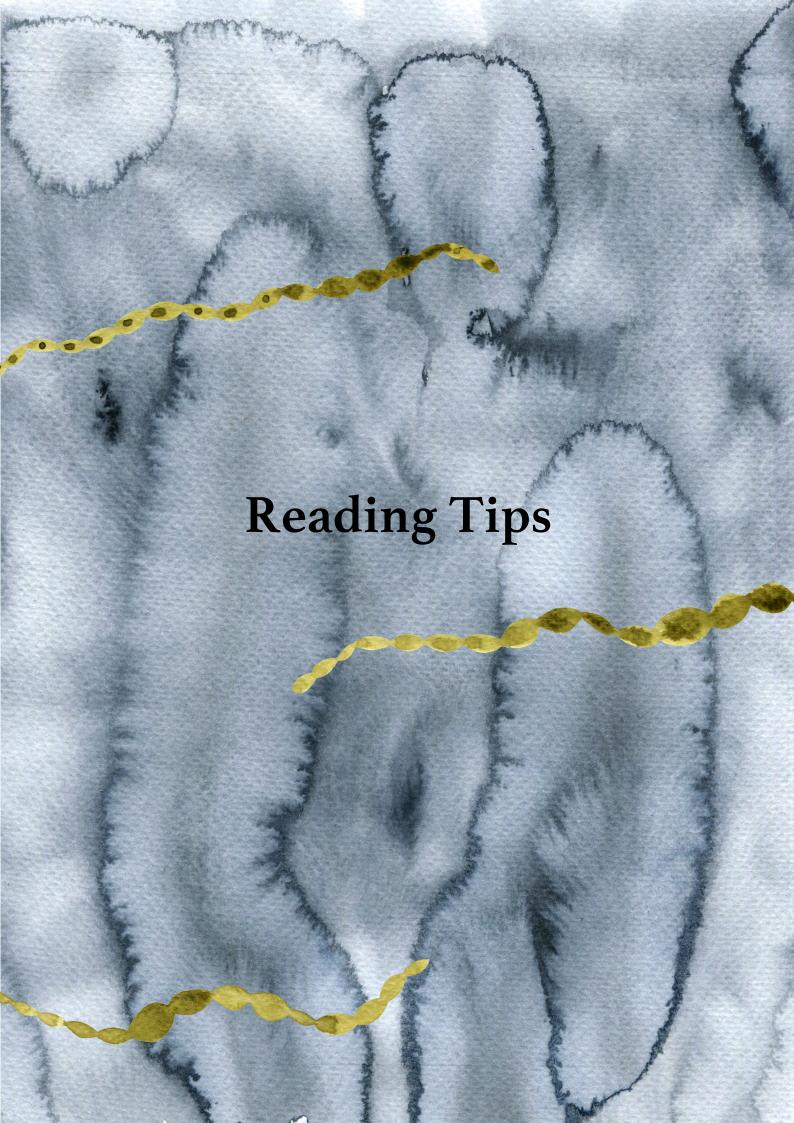
dreaming emotional skills encouraging others experiencing sanctity first-aid skills forgoing buying gathering handcraft skills hope skills increasing diversity influencing skills inspiring others investing responsibly knowledge of wild vegetables listening living in harmony with other species maintaining meaningfulness media literacy moderation natural science skills negotiation skills networking non-violent communication organising permaculture perseverance persistence preparation for disruptions presentation skills preserving foodstuffs

problem solving producing energy in a sustainable manner project management providing help public transport skills putting oneself on the line recycling repairing research resting self-sustainability (e.g. in food or energy production) social activism social media skills sociocratic decision-making storing seeds strengthening local communities survival skills sustainable financial skills sustainable fishing skills systemic thinking taking care of the soil taking future generations into account teaching technological know-how tending a vegetable garden the will for peace thirst for knowledge thriftiness tolerance for uncertainty understanding scale

understanding the consequences of one's own actions
use of humour
visual skills
way with words
well-being skills
winter cycling
writing

The list of climate skills combines the climate skills listed in the Minun ilmastotaitoni ("my climate skills") online documentary, available at www.ilmastotaitoni.fi, and the climate skills list by BMOL ry., the Finnish union of biology and geography teachers. The list was compiled and expanded for this teaching material by Henna Laininen.





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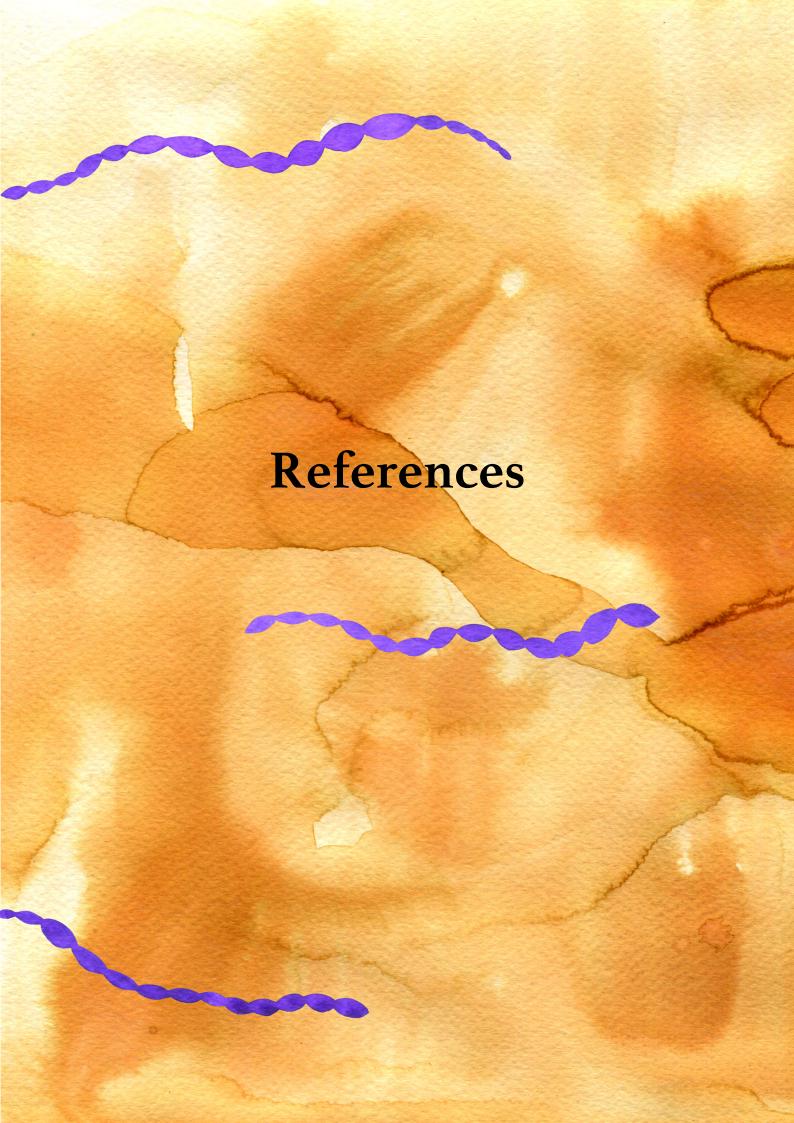
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Further Reading

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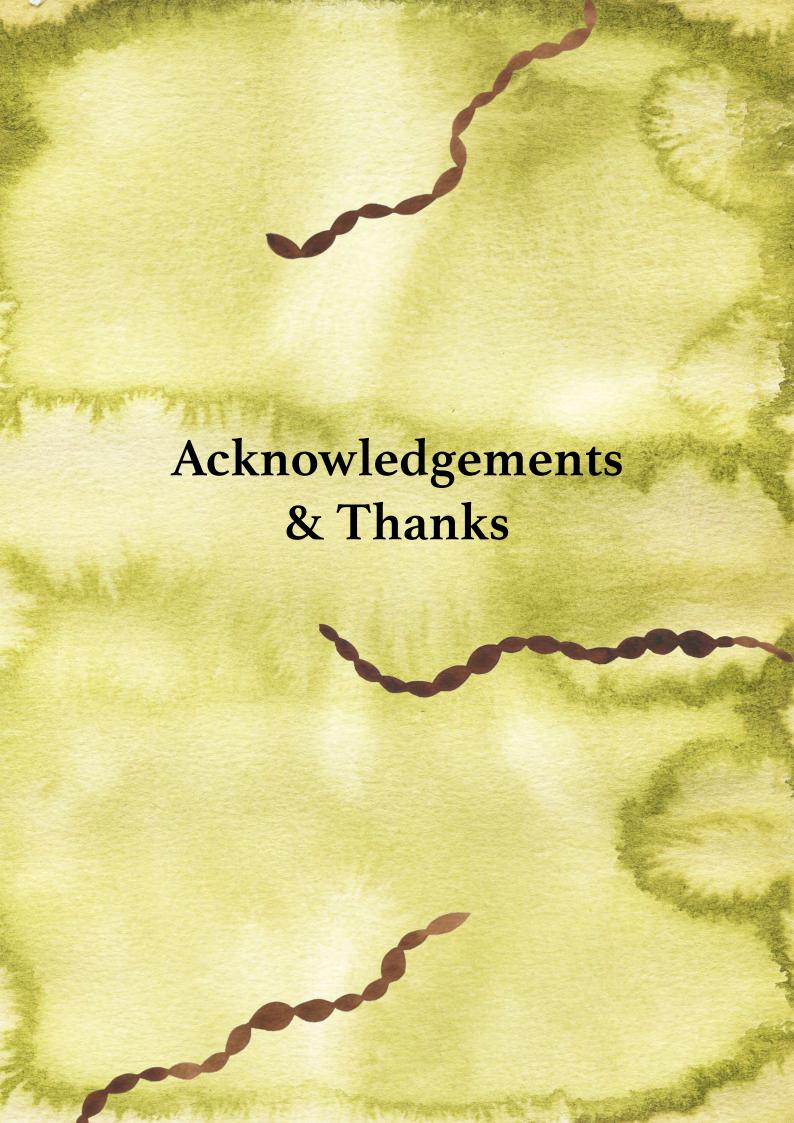
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The full bibliography for the introduction including Finnish-language sources can be found in the introduction to the Finnish version of this teaching material. www.climatechangeinme.fi



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