

Embedding disaster and climate education within curricula

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This post is the third of three in a series on disaster and climate education (DCE). In the first two posts, [Pedagogies for disaster and climate risk reduction](#) and [Collaborative and co-learning for disaster and climate justice](#), [Kaori Kitagawa](#) introduced what DCE is about and techniques for collaborative co-learning to prepare for these scenarios and reduce their impact. In this post I hone back in on schooling to share resources that could enable teachers to embed DCE within their lessons. I use the case of England's Citizenship school curriculum, but the principle of embedding DCE into learning and the resources themselves have wider application. I draw on my and Kaori's recent publication '[Preparing for disasters through Citizenship Pedagogies](#)'. The new [Co-learning for disaster and climate justice](#) master's module at UCL uses these themes to enable students to develop pioneering approaches and resources of their own that further progress practice in DCE.

Disasters and preparation for disasters require engagement with citizens. [Hayward and Johnson](#) provide valuable reflections on this principle in the context of liberal democracies. In the worst of times, division and disarray can easily occur in a vacuum. The misinformation that occurred during the recent LA wildfires and the Covid-19 pandemic, for instance, illustrate that challenge. An important dimension to this is how nations *prepare* their citizens in advance to face possible threats, be they conflict or disasters. Just recently, we learned of [France's reported plan to send every household a 'survival manual'](#). Japan has a long history of preparing and responding to disasters; examples of practice include [Inoue's](#) engagement with school and intergenerational community collaborations to build disaster prevention warehouses or local disaster toolkits, drawing on the work of [Kitagawa and Samaddar](#).

Looking closer to home, England is currently conducting an extensive review of its national curriculum for schools, to ensure it is meeting the needs of all learners and is 'fit for the future' in which young people will move into adulthood. The [review panel's interim report](#) notes: "...society is rapidly changing, and bringing new opportunities and challenges, including those presented by AI, and those relating to global political developments and climate change. These will require particular knowledge and skills to address".

We hope the curriculum review only strengthens these dimensions of England's curriculum, bringing greater prominence to DCE. Meanwhile, there are a wide range of research and resources that schools can utilise to strengthen their coverage of DCE. Many are concerned with learning lessons from history. [Wonyong Park's](#) work, for instance, explores a range of disasters and how DCE can draw upon them. Taking the specific example of nuclear conflict, we need to avoid problematic civil defence initiatives like those advocating we can survive a direct nuclear attack, and instead focus more on [nuclear disarmament education](#). A specific example of an 'off the peg' learning resource in that regard is CND Peace Education's [Dial M for Missile](#). In turn, as we move forward in responding to disasters and the climate emergency we need to think carefully about how to avoid the further marginalisation of minority communities and instead hear a wide range of voices and perspectives. The research literature offers different lenses in that regard, from [Preston's work concerning](#)

[disaster and race](#), to analyses that highlight [the varying impacts of climate change on different communities, such as LGBTQ+ communities](#).

England's existing curriculum for Geography and for Science explore the cause, impact and science of disasters and climate change. Meanwhile, it is the [Citizenship curriculum](#) that provides the space to explore the political dimensions of such threats. It encompasses the general principles of how citizens can make change through [active citizenship](#) and [learning to work with each other](#). It enables children and young people to develop [critical media literacy](#) and [political literacy](#) and to work together to think about how to [claim their rights](#). It is here that co-learning for improving engagement with disasters and climate change can take place. The [Teach the Future's curriculum track changes project](#) explores some of these concepts, while also challenging the very notion that climate change education is only relevant to Geography, Science and Citizenship, an area we all need to focus on. These are issues we explore in further detail in the latest issue of the journal *Teaching Citizenship*, [Make Space for Citizenship: Citizenship for all](#).