Educational Action Research to Promote Effective Global Climate Change Education

Mary Brydon-Miller, University of Louisville, United States and North West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa

Addressing the challenges of global climate change requires citizens who have a critical and nuanced understanding of the environmental, political, social, economic, and cultural impacts of climate change and are able and committed to acting to address these issues on both an individual and collective—local and global—basis.

This presentation describes ongoing work on a collaborative educational action research project with partners in the United States and the Philippines engaging middle-school aged students as citizen scientists and environmental activists committed to addressing the problem of global climate change. This interactive session will provide participants with examples of specific classroom activities and school-wide initiatives that can provide students with tools for critically evaluating information regarding climate change, encourage them to reflect upon their own values related to climate change and how their behaviors reflect these values, and offer them concrete strategies for acting on both an individual and collective basis to address the challenges of climate change.

Responding to the challenges that climate change will create (and in many instances already is creating), demands significant behavioral change, a process fostered by becoming more aware of and attentive to our own values related to our relationship to the human and natural worlds and how we put those values into practice on a day to day basis. By introducing ethical and critical pedagogical frameworks for studying global climate change as a component of environmental education we hope to encourage a lifelong commitment among our students to choose to act in ways that protect the natural environment and the human communities around the world that depend upon it.