

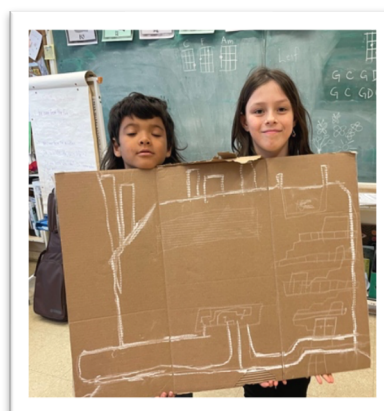
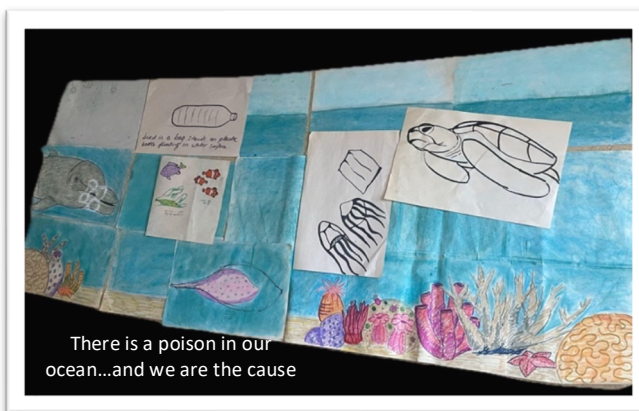


Stories of Climate Change Education

Toronto District School Board - Climate Literacy & Leadership Program 2026

Transforming Climate Worry Into Hopeful Action

Delia Wright, Teacher, Lord Lansdowne Junior PS
Gr 2 French Immersion



Learning Outcomes:

Students will

- Identify, understand and express their feelings about our climate changing world
- Learn how engaging in purposeful and creative action can alleviate their climate anxiety
- Link our local plastic consumption habits to the ocean's ecosystem and its health
- Use art as a medium for public education and social change

Climate Concepts:

Local & Relevant: Meaningful climate education is connected to local issues of relevance to students' daily lives

Collective Action: Moving beyond building awareness to participating in collective actions, builds resiliency and agency in the face of global challenges

Social & Emotional Learning (SEL): Incorporating SEL and fostering self-awareness helps students overcome feelings of climate anxiety, focuses on identity, strengths and values, and contributes to understanding of their role in climate action, as members of an interconnected planet.

Learning Activities:

Collaborative Inquiry Question: How can we use art and stories to move students' eco-anxiety to action-oriented solutions for our community?

Beginnings:

It all started when we held our first ECO CLUB meeting back in October, and 30 little grade 1 and 2 students came in. They were excited and curious. When asked why they joined the club, one said: "I wanted to stop global warming and climate change so that more animals and plants can live more safely than they are right now" (Kensington, Grade 2). It became clear that our students were worried about the future of the planet for themselves and the animals. To better understand if more people felt the same way, we began exploring our local neighbourhood together.

Collective Action on Local Issues:

Through our investigations, we discovered that plastics are infiltrating our streets and is a significant issue affecting both our community and the oceans. We invited the University of Toronto Trash Team to teach us about the four types of recycling and discovered that refusing is an option we never even thought of. Students took action by planting trees and weeding the front garden in hopes of changing the narrative. They continued to pick up trash when they could on the school grounds but always wanted to do more. This led to the idea of engaging the broader community through awareness and education.

"I wanted to stop global warming and climate change so that more animals and plants can live more safely than they are right now"
(Kensington, Grade 2)

Art for Action:

The students wanted the whole community to take part in using less plastic. They were empowered by what they had learned and wanted more people to understand that they too, can make a difference in our fight against climate change. With support from families, who helped create stencils using recycled cardboard, students designed and created a mural near the community play area. The mural highlights the impact of plastic pollution on ocean life and serves as a call to action. Students also incorporated a QR code linking to their research, allowing viewers to learn more and consider their own role in reducing plastic use. Through this process, students used art as a way to express their concerns, reduce feelings of anxiety, and empower themselves and others to take collective action.

Lessons Learned:

I used to think Climate Change was about educating the students about global warming and the leading factors that cause it. Instead, I learned that students worry because they don't understand what they are overhearing. Through stories and action, we are able to empower students to find their own solutions and creatively express the issues they empathize with, and a way forward, thereby reducing their anxiety and empowering them to keep looking for solutions.

Key Resources:

- The Marine Mammal Center (California) & Climate Change <https://www.marinemammalcenter.org/science-conservation/conservation/climate-change>
- U of T Trash Team: Increasing Waste Literacy to Fight Plastic Pollution <https://uofttrashteam.ca>
- Transformative SEL as a Catalyst for Climate Action by Meena Srinivasan *Found at Transformative Educational Leadership* <https://www.teleadership.org/transformative-sel-as-a-catalyst-for-climate-action>