



“It’s getting HOT here!”

Workshop Report

Report on the first workshop for students of 8th Standard on climate change under CSM’s programme on

Democratising Climate Change Discourse

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Army Public School

Bangalore

In partnership with Army Public School, Bangalore

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Précis

The students were from 8th standard. This was not an optional event. We still had 11 students absent. Our total was 25 students.

The Principal of Army Public School, Mrs. Raman, welcomed us all. She strongly drove home the importance of the topic of climate change and that she and her school are strongly committed to bringing such awareness to their campus and community. She emphasized the role of this particular group of kids as pioneers and leaders.

The kids were from different sections of 8th standard. They are all members of an environmental group on campus. So, we had kids who were predisposed to environmental concerns and solutions.

I presented the workshop under the following broad tropes:

1. Difference between weather and climate.
2. The nature of the green house effect.
3. Green house gases.
4. The way the climate has been changing.
5. What are the manifestations of climate change?
6. What role are we playing as problem makers?
7. What can we do to be part of the solution?

The method was interactive. The kids were involved in considerable give and take. However, the discipline structures of our school system do not allow for so much freedom that a kid would interrupt you when you are addressing them. That said, when asked a question, their response was very enthusiastic. Sometimes they obviously bent their minds to the questions, with good results.

At one point in the workshop, when we were discussing the three "R" mantras, we got into talking about what we can each do to reduce our impacts. The kids mentioned turning off lights, fans, etc. I asked them to look around the room and see if they can do something right then and there. I gave them 5 minutes. Inside of two minutes, all the fans but one were turned off, unnecessary lights were switched off. The way they sprang into action was nothing short of inspirational.

At various points during the workshop, we gave out different bookmarks (you have all seen the e-copies that Viva had sent out last week). Not everyone got all the bookmarks. The intended effect was quickly observed: they were comparing bookmarks to see who had got which ones. Every time a bookmark was given out, one or two students were asked to read out the five things to remember on that bookmark. The general pattern of issuing bookmarks was: when we discussed a theme (see list above) and asked a question related to that theme, whichever group answered would get the bookmark related to that theme. For example, when a student from each of two groups answered a question on how we are part of the problem, everyone in those two groups got the bookmark that listed the five ways in which we are part of the problem.

Frequently, I kept drawing the attention of the students to the inter-disciplinary nature of the topic of climate change. I kept reinforcing this idea with various slides and pointing out

explicitly that they need to bring their knowledge of chemistry, geography, physics, mathematics, language, etc.¹

Subsequently, each group was given blank paper and asked to come up with two examples for each of the three "R" mantras (reduce, reuse, recycle). Two criteria had to be met. Each must be something they (a) can do, and (b) will do (either at home or school or both). Each group was asked to appoint a secretary and a spokesperson. Everyone in the group had to be involved in the discussion. Come presentation time, each group's spokesperson presented the outcome of their discussions. Ideas included:

- Making decorative objects from old CDs
- Making bags from paper
- Switching off appliances when not needed
- Using mass transit
- Reducing water use
 - Using left-over water in their water bottles at the end of the day to water plants instead of just throwing the water down the sink
 - Using dirty water from laundry for other purposes
 - Reducing the amount of water used in end-of-term water fights
- Reducing paper waste by
 - Recycling used notebooks
 - Taking blank pages from used notebooks, making a new notebook with them
 - Sharing used textbooks with children who cannot afford them
 - After making paper airplanes and bunging them about in the class (when teacher is not there), collecting them back and using them for something else

I have urged them to start implementing these ideas in any ways they can and to let me know of their progress. For this, I have suggested that they take help from the Principal and teachers. I have also told them that, soon, we will set up e-forums and such for them to share their ideas, thoughts, and experiences with others. I have given them my email address. We have collected the email addresses of whoever has them. We will send them reminders and encouragement beginning very soon.

At the end of the workshop, everyone got a copy of the pledge bookmark with a request that they go online and sign the pledge. I also told everyone to tell their friends to come to future workshops; to tell them what this group learned and got out of this workshop. I invited them to come to level-2 (Two-Star) workshop also. These were reinforced by the Principal also.

I gave them the choice of how they would like to receive the certificates: from the Principal, from me, or from each other. They opted for the third method. So, each kid gave out the certificate for another kid. This proved immensely popular and fun. Every certificate presentation was photographed.

At the end of the workshop, we took the customary group photograph under the topic banner (enclosed here).

¹ Full disclosure: as a geographer, I did emphasize geography *just* a little bit more than the other subjects; not that anyone could really tell, I am sure!

Feedback

From the students

Two things I liked most about the workshop

- The way it was discussed.
- The book marks.
- The sir was joking type.
- They also show some cartoon character.
- It was in a interesting way not like the usual lectures we get. it was fun and influenced me. (*hand-drawn smiley next to it*)
- The way everybody interacted with each other.
- That I came to know about the change in the climate.
- It was not restricted to only listen to someone else; we all had chance to voice our ideas & opinion.
- I learned new ways of tackling Global Warming which I had never thought of.

Two things I suggest to make the workshop better

- I think it is already doing great
- They can make the childrens do some activities.
- Perfect to be frank we could have got more games Hangman was good but it was very easy. (*ellipses in the original*)
- Getting kids to form some questions.
- Having a longer time for the workshop.
- The workshop was as good as any workshop could have been; may be a little more encouragement to kids for stating their thoughts would have been better. (*hand-drawn smiley next to it*)

Any other comments

- Thank you for choosing our school. We learnt alot. Please do come again.
- They can make the childrens do some activities. (*repeated*)
- It was very nice. ('very' and 'nice' in large letters). I loved it (*hand-drawn star and smiley*)
- The workshop was good & it brought down the idea that Global Warming is not just a sci-fi, it's the reality that happening right under our nose!!!

Evaluation metrics

Three questionnaires (these appended as a separate file) were administered to the participants:

1. Pre-workshop questionnaire
2. Post-workshop questionnaire (Almost identical to pre-workshop questionnaire)
3. Opinion feedback questionnaire

Out of a total of 25 respondents who completed the pre-workshop questionnaire, 3 left early and did not complete the post-workshop questionnaires.

The results of the metrics are summarized in the tables below.

Table 1: Pre-workshop questionnaire metrics

"IT'S GETTING HOT HERE!"
CLIMATE CHANGE WORKSHOP

Before we begin...

Total participants: 25

Total respondents: 25

Hey there! Tell us something ...

1. What is your full name?	
2. What is your nickname? (if you have one)	
3. What's the difference between weather and climate ?	WEATHER Wrong here: 4 Right here: 21
	CLIMATE Wrong here: 4 Right here: 21
4. There are two words that describe something that is happening to the world's climate? What are those two words?	100% said "global warming" or "climate change" (some added "pollution"; some including these, treated "global warming" as one word, "globalwarming")
5. Human beings have no effect on climate! (circle your choice)	AGREE - 6 DISAGREE - 19

As can be seen from the above metrics:

1. Most (23) of the students were already aware of the fact of human impact on climate. In those few cases (3) where they were not, two changed their view to affirm human impact on climate. Only one (1) student went the other way.
2. On the difference between weather and climate, three who got it wrong before the workshop, got it right at the end of the workshop.
3. All of them (100%) knew the terms 'global warming' and 'climate change'. Some seemed unsure that these phrases each have two words and treated them as one word, supplying 'pollution' as a second word.
4. In the post-workshop opinion poll,
 - a. 87% rated the topic as interesting.
 - b. 96% said they learned a lot from this workshop.
 - c. 83% said they learned that they could do something to help reduce climate change. (13% had no opinion on this)
 - d. 78% liked the slides shown, 9% each said they had no opinion or rated the slides as 'not bad'.
 - e. 65% rated the movie clip as interesting while 13% had no opinion and 4% said it was not bad. [Mitigating factor: the sound was probably not clearly audible to some of the students as the speakers were neither powerful nor good quality; when asked if they could understand the video, everyone said 'yes']
 - f. 91% said the workshop was interesting. 4% said it was not bad.
 - g. 78% said the workshop was fun, while 17% had no opinion.
 - h. 70% said the pace of the workshop was agreeable while 13% had no opinion, and 4% said it was not bad.
5. From the next time, the post-workshop opinion poll ratings will be worded differently:

1. = Strongly disagree	2. = Disagree	3. = No opinion	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
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6. Overall, the workshop received high approval ratings. There are several areas of improvement needed (as noted at appropriate points in the report).
7. Based on these quantitative and qualitative data, I feel the workshop was a success (with qualifications as noted).

Acknowledgments

First off, thanks to everyone at CSM for their hard work that went into the preparation for this workshop. Your support is much appreciated. Equally appreciated are the good wishes from everyone.

My thanks go also to Mrs. Manjula Raman, Principal, Army Public School and Ms. Deepa Prakash, Research Scholar and food scientist – both of them continue to give strong logistical, institutional, intellectual, and moral support to our efforts.

The students are not only bright and enthusiastic, but also honest in their opinions and proactive in their behavior. With this group, we are off to a great start and they give us hope for the future.

Some scenes from the event



Act 1 Scene 1: Master Intense, perhaps the most intense student there, speaks.



Act 1 Scene 2: Much fun was also had at the workshop.



Act 1 Scene 3: The requisite group photograph!