

EDUCATION

Sustainability Through Improvisation

Eco-Imagining Education: 3 Parts

Video to Demonstrate:

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/1086144265>

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Introduction: This focus on eco-imagining education—*what is taught, by whom, who decides, and how*-- is in 3 parts. The 1st is a warmup to introduce the topic and begin playing with the subject in fun ways. The 2nd is a short-form improvisation based on a semi-structured set up. The 3rd is a long-form improvisation with more creative freedom for collective re-imagining. Audacious possibilities can abound in this made-up enactment of an educational setting in a post-transition (equitable, survivable, thrive-able, and post climate crisis) world. Do this 3-part activity to support your group in collectively imagining the world that they want through their interaction with education. Together strengthen your ability to imagine what you want to move towards and work for.



1) Warmup –One By Two By Bradford

- Ask everyone in the group to stand across from a partner.
- Ask each partner group to practice counting to 3 together, each of them saying one number at a time, starting over again with 1 whenever they get to 3. Give partners a chance to practice doing this.
- Then ask each group to substitute a non-verbal sound for 1. (Ex. Bop, 2, 3, Bop, 2, 3...). Each group makes up their own sound. The sound they choose should remain the

same sound they use each time to replace the number 1. Give partners a chance to practice doing this.

-Ask each group to substitute a movement for 3. (Ex. Bop, 2, *jump*, Bop, 2, *jump*...). Each group makes up their own movement. The movement they choose should remain the same movement they use each time to replace the number 3. Give partners a chance to practice doing this.

-Ask each group to substitute a sound & movement for 2. (Ex. Bop, Whoppy/*squat*, *jump*, Bop, Whoppy/*squat*, *jump*...). Each group makes up their own sound & movement. The sound & movement they choose should remain the same movement they use each time to replace the number 2. Give partners a chance to practice doing this.

-Ask each group to demonstrate doing their combination 3 times for the entire group!
**This warmup is intended to be silly and get people thinking creatively about education. It mixes up numbers with sounds and movements. It opens new possibilities for expression and representation. To reflect on this activity, ask what people noticed about themselves doing this warmup. What surprised you? How did it expand how you think about or approach education?*

2) Short Form Improv-- Graduation

Short-Form Improvisational Prompt for eco-imagining what a graduation might look like in a post-transition educational system.

-Here “post-transition” is referring to a time in the future where we mostly transitioned to an equitable, survivable and thrive-able future. Everything isn’t perfect in this future, but we did the right thing in response to the climate crisis and made some good choices for ourselves, others, eco-systems, and other species.

-All participants pretend to be co-students within this post-transition educational setting.

-Ask each student to consider what skills could be useful in this post-transition world (Examples: foraging, weaving, wood carving, repurposing electronics, clean energy systems, and beyond...). Encourage participants to discuss this and come up with ideas together especially based on their own interests and places of wonder.

-Ask for a volunteer to be the graduating student of this post-transition world. Let all the others know they are part of this improvised scene as well.

-As the facilitator tell this student, “In order for you to graduate, you need to be able to teach what you have learned.” Then that student introduces what they have learned and improvises teaching all the others that skill.

-Depending on how much time you have, you can start this prompt over several times with different volunteers as the students.

**This short form improv prompt provides a prescribed focus and given parameters. It supports groups in being creative in thinking about how education can be designed and assessed collectively and with encouragement. It gives participants an expansive experience of how valuable skills can be shared within a community.*

Once a few volunteers have tried this, reflect on the process and the performances together. What did you notice? What surprised you? What do you want to carry forward that emerged from this?

3) Long Form Improv—First Day of “School” for a *Post-Transition Climate Migrant*

Long-Form Improvisational Prompt for collective eco-imagining the first day of school for a climate migrant in a Post-Transition educational setting.

-This long-form improvisational performance is done by the entire group together.
-The setting for this improvisational performance is an educational setting in a community that has transitioned beyond the climate crisis and is living in a much more equitable, survivable, and thrive-able way as a human community and as a part of the natural world. As part of that transition, they have radically transitioned their educational settings and systems.

-One volunteer will enact being a climate migrant from a community that has not yet transitioned and has been forced to relocate due to some climate-related factor (Examples: excessive pollution, sea-level rise, frequent forest fires, floods, and beyond...). This student is accustomed to an educational setting and systems that many of us experienced in our lives. This is this student’s first day in this post-transition educational setting. The others welcome this person and help them understand how to be a part of this very different system of education.

- Before doing the scene, encourage participants to discuss what a post-transition educational system might include or do. Invite the group to come up with ideas together especially based on their own interests and places of wonder. Question every assumption underlying systems of education that you can think of (Examples: need for and methods of assessment, accessibility, goals, behavior management, predominance of the written word, timing, setting, cost, content, power, perspectives, authorship, placement, attire, and beyond).

-Everyone imagines and enacts partaking in a post-transition educational setting with the new climate-migrant student. Everyone pretends together, supporting each other’s ideas and offering their own.

-Before beginning, encourage everyone to stay committed to the improvisational eco-imagining and not “break” the imagined reality of the performance. Encourage them to be comfortable with silence, let it ebb and flow, respond to each other, and see where it goes.

-Encourage them to try and create their own ending to their educational gathering for the day, and, thus, the end of their improvisation.

**After it is concluded, reflect on this experience together sitting in a circle. What did this eco-imagining teach you? How could parts of this be brought into our lives now? What surprised you? What might you add? How did this experience make you feel about education as a holistic solution to the climate crisis? What other questions or thoughts emerge for you? What might you want to carry with you that emerged from doing this?*

(Note! Could Use the Same (1) warm up (2) short form improv (3) long-form improv format to imagine other aspects of life being eco-imagined as post transition, Ex. transportation, agriculture, energy storage, monetary systems, waste management, entertainment, and beyond...)

Contact Beth Osnes-Stoedefalke beth.osnes@colorado.edu with any questions or for support in using this with your school or community! SPIKE Center for Sustainability Education, CU