

Climate change in the classroom

Abstract:

Knowledge gaps and biased beliefs concerning both climate change and climate policy represent a major obstacle to the decarbonization process. Climate education may represent a scalable solution to address such biased beliefs. In the context of a nationwide reform of the secondary school curriculum in Italy, we built a course on climate change and climate policy and implemented a field experiment training thousands of teachers on climate change and policy in a staggered fashion. At baseline and endline we collected survey data on teachers, students, and parents to examine starting knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, perceptions, and preferences and how such outcomes vary following exposure to climate education. Our study highlights important initial knowledge gaps and provides evidence on the ability of climate education to address biased beliefs at scale.

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