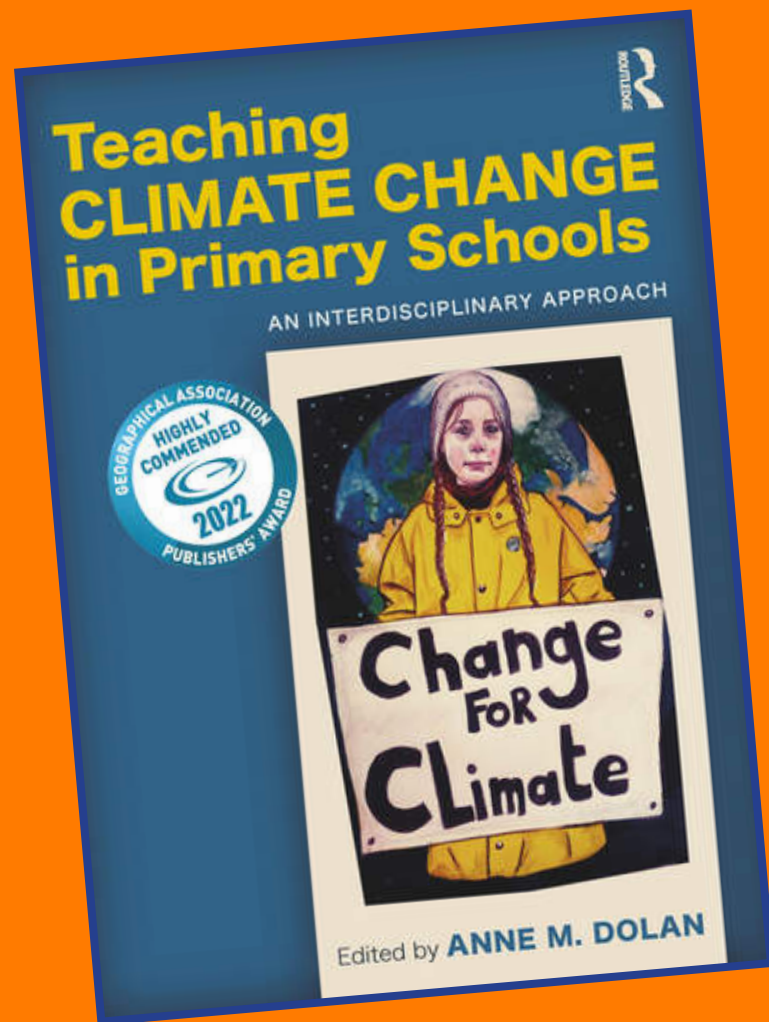


Playing music ... while the ship sinks?



Dr Anne Dolan brought together the process that led to this Routledge publication. She is a College of Education lecturer in Limerick.

We were impressed by the book and asked Anne to reflect on her experience.

“The book is proudly dedicated to the late Professor Peadar Cremin, an advocator and enabler of Global Citizenship Education in our college and further afield.”

Peadar was also involved in several Tide~ initiatives. His work is much valued.

What will it take for educators to take climate education seriously?

As the RMS Titanic began to sink in 1912 a brave eight-piece band played music. For years people have been touched and fascinated by the story of them playing to help calm passengers during the disaster, ending their set with *Nearer My God to Thee* before going down with the ship. It's the most famous disaster in the annals of nautical history, and one that is emblematic of human arrogance at its worst.

As we face the catastrophic disaster of climate change, designed and enabled by human arrogance, ignorance and misplaced superiority - how are we as educators responding? Are we playing music trying to calm our students or are we jumping ship (metaphorically speaking)?

As a teacher educator, I have spent many years teaching about climate change and climate injustice. I have taken my students outside trying to generate an appreciation of nature and a love of the great outdoors. Frustrated by the limitation of this approach, I knew a more extensive programme approach was required.

Teaching weather and climate is an obvious part of my teaching remit as a lecturer in primary geography. However climate change is bigger than geography, it is bigger than any single curricular area or discipline. With this knowledge in mind, I invited my teacher education colleagues to come to a meeting to discuss the possibility of creating a multidisciplinary resource for our students. While they were interested, many expressed concern about a lack of knowledge.

A rigorous CPD programme ensued. A group of committed teacher educators met monthly to discuss the causes and impacts of climate change. We invited guest speakers, we travelled to sustainable projects but most importantly of all we began a conversation.

Gradually we began to make connections with the social, economic, environmental and political dimensions of climate change. Each member crafted an initial idea for a chapter. These were discussed and revised before they began to write.

As activities were developed and exemplars created we became more confident. At this point we were less reliant on external guest speakers, we began to share carefully innovative ideas for teaching climate change including stories, poetry, art and games.





**“Real leadership”
- the inspiration of
Greta Thunberg
and
Vanessa Nakate**



The group grew and moved from a whisper to a confident conversation. As chapters were drafted and re-drafted. A peer review process was an important part of the process. Three years later we were proud to launch ..

‘Teaching Climate Change in Primary Schools: An Interdisciplinary Approach’.

During the process I naively believed that as soon as the book saw the light of day, climate change education would become embedded in primary schools. That of course has not happened. There is another step or two required. Hence I write to invite you to read this book, to share the ideas and use them in conversations about climate change education. **Fear of not knowing enough is not an acceptable excuse. We need to talk about climate change now.**

Last year, I had the privilege of hearing Greta Thunberg and Vanessa Nakate address climate protesters about the empty promises and pointless rhetoric from our ‘so called’ leaders. Real leadership, they argued was evident in the young people mobilizing to take a stand. Despite the stark reality of the climate situation, the effectiveness of political and economic responses has declined even further in the last year. Climate change denial is a badge proudly worn by right wing leaders. As war continues in Ukraine, major economic powers wrestle with each other in the search for fossil fuels. While the narrative of energy security abounds, the opportunity to grasp the nettle of renewable energy has yet to be realised.

With heat waves in the U.S., wildfires in Europe, floods in Asia and famine in the Horn of Africa, the summer of 2022 has demonstrated that we have already hit the metaphorical iceberg of climate calamity. **We are all on the Titanic now.** Some of us are steering the boat, some of us are ignoring the warning signs and some of us are playing music. As educators, what melody are we playing, what instruments are we using and is our music resonating with those who have financed, designed and created the ship? We cannot afford to ignore the warnings. We need to change our tune. We have to change the direction of the ship and prepare the lifeboats. **According to the UN there is a small window of time available for the world to change its tune. If we continue to play the same old song, COP26 will have been a complete waste of time.**

