Climate change? Who knows? A comparison of secondary students and pre-service teachers


**Abstract**

In the context of recently published academic discrepancies between Queensland students and students from other Australian states, final year pre-service teachers were surveyed to explore their understanding and knowledge of climate change. Their responses were compared to those of secondary students to discern any significant gains in knowledge as a consequence of tertiary teacher training. Responses from a survey completed by a sample of 107 pre-service teachers and 310 grade 10 secondary students were examined for their level of understanding and knowledge, models of explanation and sources of information of the phenomenon.

Results showed similarities between the two groups, with knowledge and understanding of climate change remaining unacceptably low in pre-service teachers, including those secondary specialists citing science and environmental studies (SOSE) as their focus of study. The study highlights the need to develop tertiary science curricula to bridge pre-service teachers’ knowledge and understanding gaps of important school curriculum topics while embedding these in broader considerations of curriculum planning.

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A sample of 87 pre-service teachers participated in a survey study in the last year of their Bachelor of... Preservice Teachers and Climate Change Education. The focus of this paper is upon pre-service teacher (PST) education for climate change, because effective PST education has the potential to prepare and enable future citizens, namely those attending schools currently, to enact mitigation and adaptation actions. been empirically demonstrated in secondary school students (Skamp, Boyes & Stanisstreet. 2013) in a cross cultural study of Australian and English students. Therefore, when teachers. elaborate and discuss particular subjects like climate change through their teaching, whether.