

## 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26): Time to Listen to Learners

### Tina Alderson's COP26 Experience and Thoughts on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Further Education

As the author arrived at the COP26 Green Zone, the atmosphere was both 'electric' and 'hydrogen', as the state-of-the-art technology lay before attendees to absorb, which they apparently did. In fact, attendees are apparently still digesting the marvels that the scientists and engineers introduced. The challenge is how can attendees implement these in practice, as they reflect on the many exhibitors, exhibited items and events that took centre stage, as they listened, learned, and celebrated positive climate action.

The author and other attendees listened intently as they were inspired by The Global Assembly People's Declaration for the Sustainable Future of Planet Earth. They were also moved by the emotional worldwide plea of healing, unity, and hope that the climate and ecological crisis, which has never been seen in the history of mankind, is responded to as the emergency is rapidly unfolding.

The author sought solace as she looked around the auditorium, and then she realised that it is crucial to listen and learn from, and with, all voices. She realised that she needs to know what our learners think, and we all need to know what our learners think. Do you not agree that we all need to know what our learners think about COP26?

The tides are turning, and the wind is changing. It is no longer about pounds, shillings, and pence. The mindset now is in favour of a carbon currency.

Tina Alderson, Functional Skills English Lecturer, February 2022

### Key Issues

- The future is not yet written, it can be changed, our behaviour can help change our future.
- As facilitators, our gift is to share knowledge, skills, and behaviours with our learners. It is to involve our learners, to learn from our learners, and to let our learners' lead.
- Learners look to us for influence and leadership, we need to encourage the learners to look at what they value, reflect, and adapt.
- We need to keep the message simple, clear, and easy to follow.
- We need to realise that some of our learners will likely have 'only just arrived at the party'.
- We need to look from a different perspective. For example, we need to look through the learners' lens and see how we can encourage new knowledge to shape future change as learners show us the way to guide our delivery.
- Together, we can address the 'carbon battle' to reduce climate change.
- We all need to take drastic action now.
- Together, let us start to educate learners, so that they can save their and our precious planet.
- The challenge has started, the '*Race for a Better World is on*'.

### Links

- This Isn't My Field of Expertise: <https://pdnorth.org.uk/2021/10/29/esd/>
- COP26: Let's Listen to our Learners: <https://pdnorth.org.uk/2021/12/02/cop26/>
- Kendall College Climate Change Tutorial (Accessible Version): <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fpdnorth.org.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2021%2F10%2FKendal-College-Climate-Change-Tutorial-01.11.21-Accessible-version.pptx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>
- Climate Commission and Nous Group Climate Action Roadmap for UK FE Colleges: [https://www.eauc.org.uk/fe\\_roadmap](https://www.eauc.org.uk/fe_roadmap)