



# Washington State University

College of Education, Sport and Human Sciences

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Will defend the Thesis on

**Date: April 17, 2026**

**Time: 2:00 P.M.**

**Pullman Campus: Cleveland Hall, Room 353**

*Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend*

Title:

### **A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW: INTERVENTIONS ON ECO-ANXIETY AND CLIMATE-RELATED EPISTEMIC EMOTIONS IN ADOLESCENTS**

Chair: Robert Danielson

Climate change poses significant psychological and educational challenges for adolescents, who increasingly report eco-anxiety. Eco-anxiety is defined as an intense feeling of stress, worry, and fear related to climate change. While mild eco-anxiety can motivate engagement and pro-environmental action, heightened levels may lead to disengagement or avoidance of climate information. Emerging research also highlights the role of epistemic emotions, such as surprise or frustration, in shaping learning and coping processes related to climate change. However, interventions addressing eco-anxiety and epistemic emotions remain fragmented across disciplines, and the literature lacks clarification surrounding which approaches effectively mitigate eco-anxiety in adolescents.

This systematic review systematically mapped knowledge-based and emotion-based climate interventions used with youth ages 13 to 25, examining the intervention structures, outcomes, and limitations. 5,349 studies were screened, coded, and thematically analyzed to identify patterns in intervention design and emotional outcomes. Following analysis, eight themes were identified: (1) increased eco-anxiety equals pro-environmental behavior, (2) decreased eco-anxiety through knowledge and agency, (3) mitigated though emotional expression and community involvement, (4) decreased through nature exposure, (5) nature as a healer, (6) human impact on climate change equals motivation for action, (7) emotionally responsive and connective "safe spaces", and (8) significant quantitative results surrounding all themes. Results illustrated the characteristics of eco-anxiety interventions, articulated the role of epistemic emotions in climate learning, and highlight gaps for future research directions. This review aims to support researchers, educators, and policymakers in developing evidence-based strategies that transform eco-anxiety into agency, knowledge, and sustained engagement.