

**Carmen Sippl**

University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria, Campus Baden

**Ioana Capatu**

University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria, Campus Baden



# CNL text-image narrations

## Finalizing WP 4

### Summary

The newsletter summarizes the work on Work Package 4 (WP 4), the CNL text-image narrations.

*CultureNature Literacy, Anthropocene Competence, Cultural Sustainability*

The CNL project has the objective of developing teaching and learning materials for educators that enable them to actively foster Anthropocene competence in school and higher education. The focus is on raising ecological awareness in the sense of cultural sustainability: *CultureNature Literacy* (CNL). Cultural education has a particular role in this, as it focuses on languages, literatures, and images as ecological forces within culture, in order to rethink human–nature relations in the Anthropocene and to shape them in a future-oriented way. The *CNL manual* (WP 1) established a conceptual foundation for the transfer between theory and practice (Sippl & Wanning, 2023). On the *CNL Platform* (WP 2), a wide range of CNL learning scenarios are available, offering examples for educational practice. The *CNL MOOC* (WP 3) brings the CNL concept from theory into practical application in both school and higher education contexts. The thematic modules can be completed in teacher training and professional development as well as through self-study. The *CNL Narrations* (WP 4) have translated selected Anthropocene narratives into different media formats in a creative and artistic way.

## The requirements for WP 4 according to the project proposal

Work Package 4 comprises the development of CNL text-image narrations (scheduled for the period April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025). For this purpose, selected narratives of the Anthropocene are translated into various intermedial formats in a creative and artistic manner. The specific objective of this work package is the identification of suitable Anthropocene narratives and their creative-artistic translation into text-image narrations in order to promote Anthropocene competence and cultural sustainability through cultural education. This work package builds on the contents of the CNL manual. It has further contributed learning scenarios to the CNL Platform as well as examples for chapters in the CNL MOOC.

The CNL project partners have established the following premises as quality criteria for CNL text-image narrations:

- 1) *Sustainability*: Narratives of the Anthropocene are selected in such a way that the focus of the storytelling is not on catastrophe scenarios, but on positive visions of the future.
- 2) *Inclusion*: The CNL text-image narrations take aspects of diversity and plurality into account and provide inclusive design possibilities.
- 3) *Digitality*: CNL text-image narrations are created in intermedial formats so that they can be used in digital learning environments.
- 4) *Target-group orientation*: The CNL text-image narrations are tailored in content, language, and form to the target groups of teachers, school principals, students, educators, and researchers in teacher education, teacher training, and professional development.

Qualitative indicators for achieving the objectives of Work Package 4 are the four quality criteria mentioned above. The quality of the CNL text-image narrations is ensured by a double non-blind peer review. The decision in favour of the non-blind procedure was taken in order to guarantee maximum transparency, respect, and trust in the cooperation among the CNL project partners. Each partner contributes their respective disciplinary perspective from the environmental humanities, subject-related didactics, and pedagogy.

## Steps towards the realization of the CNL Narrations

### Selection & Collection

The kick-off for WP 4 took place on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 in an online project meeting, during which the CNL project partners contributed and discussed a wide range of ideas for possible topics, text types, and media within the framework of children's and young adult literature.

At the third TNP, held as an in-person autumn meeting from 18 to 20 October 2023 and hosted by project partner LMU Munich (Uta Hauck-Thum, Christian Hoiß), Carmen Sippl and Ioana Capatu (PH NÖ), the WP 4 leads, presented a thematic collection by author Melanie Laibl: over 30 ideas for literary short texts within the CultureNature context. These ideas represented a mix of text types, ranging from fables and fairy tales to classical (short) stories,

lyrical texts, and purely factual instructional texts. The work with shifting perspectives added a refreshing diversity of viewpoints.

In working groups comprising all CNL project partners, participants engaged with provided text examples and carried out their collaborative artistic transformation, such as converting texts into different genres, staging scenes, or rewriting and expanding the content. In the subsequent plenary session, the results of this test phase were discussed with respect to the project's quality criteria, and the suitable narratives were finally selected for development as CNL text-image narrations.

In the following academic year, a first set of CNL text-image narrations was produced based on the selected narratives. They were developed by primary school teacher education students within courses led by Ioana Capatu and Carmen Sippl (PH NÖ). The students created their own stories, addressing human–nature relationships from unusual perspectives, and realized them artistically and intermedially, e.g., as stop-motion videos, story cubes, picture books with activity booklets, Kamishibai, audio plays, arrangement videos, and image cards. Additionally, they developed CNL learning scenarios for exemplary classroom use of the text-image narrations, combining science and art in aesthetic practice.

Moreover, two video clips were created within the framework of the CNL narrations, illustrating human–nature relationships from the perspectives of spiders and household pets. The clips are narrated in simple language suitable for primary school students and include English subtitles, provided by project partner University of Maribor. The clips are available online on the project website.

The CNL text-image narrations were presented to the CNL project partners in an online presentation format. Acting as Critical Friends, the project partners accompanied these presentations and evaluated the potential implementation in teaching and classroom practice. They also assessed whether and to what extent the narrations meet the project's quality criteria. The associated CNL learning scenarios were made available on the CNL Platform after undergoing peer review according to the criteria established for the procedure. The intermedial CNL text-image narrations and video clips comply with the defined quality criteria: sustainability, inclusion, digitality, and target-group orientation.

### Visual Development & Publication

In addition to these CNL narrations for primary education, CNL narrations for secondary level 1 were created in collaboration with the author Melanie Laibl. These were first published in the anthology *Ökologische Kinder- und Jugendliteratur* (Mikota & Sippl, 2024) and presented at the book launch. Furthermore, stories by well-known authors from the Ganymed Bridge project were adapted for use in secondary level 2. These CNL text-image narrations were compiled, translated by the CNL project partners into English, Estonian, French, Romanian, Russian, Slovenian, Ukrainian, and Hungarian, and were provided with a glossary for German

as a second/foreign language, respectively, before undergoing a peer-review process by the CNL project partners.

The layout and illustrations of the CNL narrations were created by graphic designer and artist Julia Stern. Attention was given to typography appropriate for school and university contexts, aiming for maximum accessibility and readability. The watercolor-style illustrations are restrained, leaving ample space for individual creative interpretation. The 209-page CNL reader was published as an e-book (digital picture book) on the project website and in the PH NÖ repository in open access (Sippl & Capatu, 2025). It meets the established quality criteria: sustainability, inclusion, digitality, and target-group orientation.

## Accompanying Research

The accompanying research planned for this work package was carried out and published in the open-access journal *R&E-Source* (Vol. 12, No. 1, 2025; Capatu & Sippl, 2025). Selected CNL narrations by author Melanie Laibl were tested in a 2nd-grade class of secondary level I. Their suitability derived both from the challenging content (e.g., perception of time, human–animal relationships, life cycle of a plant) and from linguistic features. Additionally, the tasks could be linked to the curricular requirements of German lessons (secondary level I), particularly in free and creative writing as well as in working with multimodal texts. The aim was to promote perspective-taking, text comprehension through transfer tasks, and creative adaptation in the students' own style—always with a focus on non-human protagonists.

To examine the impact, two surveys (pre- and post-intervention) were conducted, based on the four-level model by Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006). Reactions, learning experiences, attitudes, and possible behavioral changes regarding interaction with nature were recorded. The results showed that the CNL narrations, with their perspective shifts, have the potential to foster empathy and raise awareness of the connection between culture and nature. Thus, this example proved significant for promoting *CultureNature Literacy* (CNL) and ecological awareness in the sense of cultural sustainability. Notably, the students appreciated the literary stories despite generally low reading motivation (Capatu & Sippl, 2025).

At the TNP in Maribor, the CNL project partners were presented with a guideline for Anthropocene reading of the CNL text-image narrations, developed by Carmen Sippl (PH NÖ) and Berbeli Wanning (Uni Siegen), which was tested in working groups. The corrected and revised version was published on the project website (Sippl & Wanning, 2025). The guideline, consisting of guiding questions for an Anthropocene reading of CNL text-image narrations, can be used by teachers—not only in literature and media-didactic settings—from a cultural-ecological perspective to raise awareness of the redesign of human-nature relationships in the Anthropocene through literary reading. Through this process, the CNL project partners were involved in every step of Work Package 4.

Carmen Sippl |  
Ioana Capatu (Hrsg./Eds.)

# CultureNature Literacy (CNL)



Figure 1: The CNL narrations in the CNL Reader are literary stimulus texts for reflecting on human–nature relationships in school and higher education. The anthology is available in open access (Sippl & Capatu, 2025).

## Conclusion

The overarching aim of the CNL project is to present *CultureNature Literacy* (CNL) as an inclusive educational concept for societal transformation in line with SDG 4, and to provide teachers, school leaders, students, instructors, and researchers in initial, continuing, and further teacher education with teaching and learning materials that foster Anthropocene competence and cultural sustainability: the ability to respond to the uncertainties of climate change in a fact-based and solution-oriented manner. Cultural education, with its creative potential, plays a key role in the sustainable rethinking of human–nature relationships in the Anthropocene. The creative approach through language, literature, and art offers an inclusive diversity of possibilities for effective science communication. Through visualizations and narrations, complex material cycles and the interactions between humans and nature, culture, and technology are made comprehensible. This understanding is an essential prerequisite for shaping the future collectively and sustainably for everyone. It counteracts future anxiety and climate concern by highlighting the possibilities for individual and collective environmental action. The CNL text-image narrations (WP 4) illustrate exemplary approaches to cultural sustainability.

## Literature

CNL-Text-Bild-Narrationen im Open Access auf der Projektwebseite: <https://cnl.ph-noe.ac.at/cnl-narrationen>

Capatu, Ioana & Sippl, Carmen (2025). Mensch-Natur-Beziehungen im Perspektivenwechsel reflektieren. Mit Literatur zu *CultureNature Literacy*. *R&E-Source* 12 (1), 4–18, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53349/re-source.2025.i1.a1357>

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Sippl, Carmen & Capatu, Ioana (Hrsg./Eds.) (2025). *CultureNature Literacy (CNL). Literarische Impulstexte zur Reflexion der Mensch-Natur-Beziehungen in Schule und Hochschule. // Literary reader for reflecting on the humankind-nature relationship in schools and universities*. Baden: Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich/University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53349/oa.2025.a2.190>

Sippl, Carmen & Wanning, Berbeli (Hrsg./Eds.) (2023). *CultureNature Literacy (CNL). Schlüsselkompetenzen für Zukunftsgestaltung im Anthropozän. Ein Handbuch für den Theorie-Praxis-Transfer in Schule und Hochschule. / Key competences for shaping the future in the Anthropocene. A manual for theory-practice transfer in schools and universities*. Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich/University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53349/oa.2023.a1.210>

Sippl, Carmen & Wanning, Berbeli (2025). Lesen für CultureNature Literacy. Leitfaden für die anthropozäne Lektüre von CNL-Narrationen. In: *CultureNature Literacy für den Unterricht. Next-Practice-Beispiele für Schule und Hochschule*, <https://cnl.ph-noe.ac.at/projektvorhaben/lernszenarien>

## Authors

**Carmen Sippl**, HS-Prof. Mag. Dr.

Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair in Learning and Teaching Futures Literacy in the Anthropocene, Professor of Cultural Semiotics and Plurilingualism, and Head of Centre Futures Literacy at the University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria, as well as a lecturer at the Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies at the University of Vienna. Her teaching and research focuses include: Anthropocene & Literature, Literary Didactics & Cultural Education, Futures Literacy, and Academic Writing.

Contact: [carmen.sippl@ph-noe.ac.at](mailto:carmen.sippl@ph-noe.ac.at)

**Ioana Capatu**, Mag. phil.,

works at the Centre Futures Literacy and the UNESCO Chair in Learning and Teaching Futures Literacy in the Anthropocene at the University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria and teaches in the field of diversity. Her focus is on the Anthropocene, plurilingualism, German as a foreign language/German as a second language, theater and drama pedagogy as

well as creative writing.

Contact: [ioana.capatu@ph-noe.ac.at](mailto:ioana.capatu@ph-noe.ac.at)

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**Project lead:** Univ.-Prof. HR MMag. DDr. Erwin Rauscher, [erwin.rauscher@ph-noe.ac.at](mailto:erwin.rauscher@ph-noe.ac.at)

**Project management:** Prof. Dr. Michaela Tscherne, BEd MBA MSc, [michaela.tscherne@ph-noe.ac.at](mailto:michaela.tscherne@ph-noe.ac.at)

**Scientific lead:** HS-Prof. Mag. Dr. Carmen Sippl, [carmen.sippl@ph-noe.ac.at](mailto:carmen.sippl@ph-noe.ac.at)

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