

Call for Proposals for a Special Issue of *Environmental Education Research*

Environmental Education in the Neoliberal Climate

Special issue co-editors: David Hursh, Joseph Henderson, and David Greenwood

1000 word proposals due March 1, 2013

Since the 1970s, neoliberal ideologies, politics and practices have increased in prevalence across a wide range of contexts. Writing from the field of critical geography, David Harvey (2005) broadly defines neoliberalism as:

A theory of political economic practices which proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. (p. 2)

In the United States, neoliberal policies have had significant effects on educational processes, including increased standardized testing, narrowing of the curriculum, the intensification of teachers' work, and decreased educational funding (Hursh & Henderson, 2011). Neoliberal ideas also tend to situate environmental concerns within the logic of economic growth, resulting in conceptualizing environmental education as instrumental to dominant educational policies focused on creating *economic* development through new skills, technologies and markets, often at the expense of other concerns (Gruenewald & Manteaw, 2007).

However, countries other than the United States have resisted wholesale adoption of neoliberal policies and, therefore, have the potential of creating and researching different types of environmental education programs. The dominance, and subsequent contested nature, of neoliberal ideas requires that we examine how various neoliberal forms and processes impact how environmental education is conceptualized and implemented in formal, informal and non-formal contexts, and across scales, from the local to the global (McKenzie, 2012). Such an analysis can help us understand the forces currently shaping environmental education and the possibilities of developing alternative theories and practices. As neoliberal discourses and practices circulate through multiple social, cultural, ecological, and spatial environments, continuing to track and understand the impact on environment and education is vital, as is strategizing how to respond to its shaping power.

Some examples of the effect neoliberalism has on the environment and education include:

- (1) the ways in which neoliberalism promotes markets above all else, resulting in valuing nature only for its instrumental market utility
- (2) the reinscription of people as entrepreneurs and consumers rather than as citizens of larger social and environmental communities
- (3) changing educational relationships between individual and broader conceptions of community within neoliberal ideologies
- (4) the dominance of privatization schemes and enclosure of the commons
- (5) the diminution of government other than to serve economic growth and corporate interests
- (6) the adoption of environmental and sustainability policies that function as institutional greenwashing
- (7) the professionalization and institutionalization of environmental work such that it discourages alliance building among diverse groups with environmental concerns (such as Indigenous groups, social justice and civil rights groups, and health advocacy groups)
- (8) the frequent lack of economic critique and critical socio-ecological analysis in environmental education research, policy and practice

The goal of this special issue is to interrogate the impact of neoliberalism on environmental education research and practice, including both the promise and limitations of EE within the current policy climate. We aim to understand the relationship between neoliberalism(s) and environmental education, and develop implications for critical research and practice in an increasingly stressed world.

Therefore, we invite submissions that investigate the relationship between neoliberal ideologies and environmental education research, policy and practice within and across local and global contexts. We are interested in original research papers that examine the impact of neoliberal ideals and processes on formal, informal and non-formal environmental education contexts.

Call for Proposals

Proposals (1000 words, plus references) for manuscripts to contribute to this special issue should address the educational, environmental, methodological, and/or theoretical importance of neoliberalism, and use the findings of original research to deepen, extend, and expand the complexity of its influence on environmental education research and practice.

Accepted proposals should examine the neoliberalization of environmental education through a focus on, for example, but certainly not limited to the above examples. We are broadly interested in understanding how forms of neoliberal ideology and neoliberalization practices impact environmental education theory, research, policy, practice and context at all levels. Due to the global influence, we encourage empirical submissions that speak across boundaries and highlight the relationship between local and global contexts.

EER Proposal and Manuscript Guidelines

Final manuscripts will be 5,000 words, excluding references. Accepted proposals will be those that are likely to:

- make a useful and/or significant addition to the literature
- have appropriate focus and contents
- have coherent research method, arguments and conclusions
- be understood by an international audience

Consult [the following for guidelines](#) for manuscript preparation. The reference style is [Chicago](#). Manuscript templates will be available for accepted proposals and are highly recommended.

Tentative Submission Timeline

March 1, 2013	1000-word proposal due
March 22, 2013	Notification of acceptance
April 26, 2013	Optional writing & planning session prior to annual AERA meeting .
July 1, 2013	Full manuscript due
August 1, 2013	Reviews of manuscript returned
September 1, 2013	Second draft of manuscript due
October 1, 2013	Second review returned
November 1, 2013	Final manuscript due - notification of final acceptance to issue
December 2013	Tentative Publication Date

Submission Details

Send your proposal to David Hursh dhursh@warner.rochester.edu, Joseph Henderson joseph.henderson@warner.rochester.edu and David Greenwood greenwooddavid@gmail.com by March 1, 2013. Please contact us with questions, and be sure to include all co-editors in your correspondence.

For further information about the journal, visit <http://www.tandfonline.com/EER>.

References

- Gruenewald, D., & Manteaw, B.O. (2007). Oil and water still: How No Child Left Behind limits and distorts environmental education in US schools. *Environmental Education Research*, 13(2), 171-188.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hursh, D., & Henderson, J. (2011). Contesting global neoliberalism and creating alternative futures. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 32(2), 171-185.
- McKenzie, M. (2012). Education for y'all: Global neoliberalism and the case for a politics of scale in sustainability education policy. *Policy Futures in Education*, 10(2), 165-177.