
Introduction to Special Issue on Transformative Sustainability Education

Journal of Transformative Education
2018, Vol. 16(4) 275-276
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DOI: 10.1177/1541344618796997
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In a time of integration and convergence rather than reductionism and specialization, we invite you to read this special issue on transformative sustainability education. This collection of articles examines the cross-fertilization between transformative learning and sustainability education, with significant insights for each field. While much of sustainability education aims for transformative outcomes and transformative educators often embrace the intention of a sustainable and just society, this issue teases out theoretical and practice-based knowledge related to both fields.

In the 1980s, a sustainable society was defined as a society that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability discourse has gained currency over the decades, with rising public awareness and debate. Further, the global field of sustainable practice has become immense, proliferating, and evolving quickly across disciplines, sectors, and technologies. Now, with climate realities pressing in on us, educators are discussing “teaching for turbulence” in the 50 years ahead.

The final report of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development indicates that entire education systems are straining at their edges to accommodate the needed transdisciplinary approaches and other transformations in education systems. The way forward often lays outside the strictures of formal, institutionalized contexts within nonformal and informal adult learning sites. In this polyarchy of learning edges, there are opportunities for the field of adult education and lifelong learning.

While we had limited space, we invited some leading global thinkers who could bring a variety of perspectives and contexts to the emerging theory and practice of

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transformative sustainability education. We are very pleased with the response and the new ground that has been tilled and the seed ideas within these articles. We wish to heartily thank each of the authors for their article or theme analysis as well as the reviewers and editors who worked behind the scenes to strengthen this issue and make it a reality.

Enjoy the read; may the seeds germinate,

Elizabeth and Joy

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Elizabeth Lange and Joy O'Neil for serving as guest editors for this special issue. We also thank the authors of the articles for their contributions that expand our understanding of transformative learning and contribute to the ongoing conversations in our literature.

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