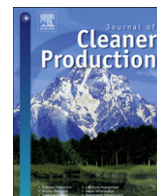




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Call for papers

## Learning for sustainable development in regional networks

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Many higher education (HE) and research institutions have contributed to sustainable development through continuous investigations and/or development of new methods and approaches regarding the interdisciplinary interface and support for interdisciplinary educational programs. This has made a considerable amount of new knowledge available for practical use in the technical sphere, management or policy making area, for nature conservation or social improvements, and has caused fundamental changes in HE institutions themselves, and in their study programs, strategies and management. These institutions are not only educating experts in environmentally (or sustainability) relevant disciplines, but are also delivering innovative and ethically relevant views on traditional practices – and thus nurturing future opinion leaders who will affect decision-making processes with respect to sustainability principles and goals. All this has been made possible by accepting (inter)disciplinary challenges in science and putting educational innovations into practice with regard to the goal of affecting a transition towards sustainability – the efforts made in this field have been explored and reflected in the literature many times.

To build upon these efforts, and to provide an insight into the further development of and (possibly fundamental) changes in science and higher education practices, this call is aimed at reflection upon ongoing practices in knowledge generation and distribution that are often subsumed under the term *learning* to stress its reciprocal character. We are seeking analyses and reviews of *processes* (rather than educational subjects and methods) in which existing knowledge is *shared* or communicated within the different types of learning environment to (or *among*) different target groups/stakeholders. Methodologically, we are focusing on information flows within networks of cooperation and existing *communication practices* among experts/teachers, learners/

students, involved stakeholders and concerned lay people. This reflection should focus on situations where knowledge acts as a “change agent” in sustainable economic, social or environmental development within a *learning community* at a local, regional or European level, with the potential to affect its transformation. We consider this meta-analysis (discussion and development of knowledge-on-knowledge) to be important from a theoretical point of view (to study how new concepts or paradigms in science or education could be useful for SD or ESD purposes), to understand what is actually going on in many HE institutions (in spontaneously emerging processes or concepts such as RCEs) and from a practical point of view (to plan meaningful practical activities or innovations in the educational field based on an understanding of “...what new knowledge is needed, whether it is feasible and what has to be done to make knowledge effective.” (Drucker, 1993: 42, in Adomssent, 2011).

Through the description of situations where knowledge could potentially become a “change agent” we hope to promote this catalytic potential of knowledge that, in fact, is the core principle of knowing (if we want to know *to do* rather than know *about*). Simultaneously, we wish to point out that *learning* (defined as dynamic processes occurring within and beyond educational settings) is an inevitable context of all sustainability oriented transitions, having the dimension of a common (social) experience, reflection thereof and finally theory built upon the previous two aspects.

## 1. Topical areas

Important topics, methodological aspects, responding to questions on challenges and developments such as:

- learning networks, their systemic character, and information and communication processes within them
- learning processes, their dynamic character, social aspects, the role of actors etc.
- sustainability knowledge (as such) & research, concepts and theories, major trends, “application” in HE
- knowledge management, generation, distribution – experiences, innovations, effectiveness
- regional innovation: from learning to transformation
- etc.

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Concrete themes:

- education versus learning: goals, strategies, methods, tools, assessment techniques
- e-learning: ditto
- RCEs: the role of universities (two-fold dimension: what role universities play within RCEs, how does their role change to be relevant for involvement in RCEs)
- breaking down barriers (disciplinary, spatial, cultural etc.)
- transfer of knowledge and/or innovation with regard to regional SD
- sustainability transition: goals, factors, learning dimension, success stories and analysis
- educational/learning strategies and policies: different levels (institutional, governmental, global, regional, ...)
- etc.

## 2. Coverage/Audience

At this moment, scientific evidence regarding learning processes for SD is still lacking.

“... It is difficult to access data on ESD processes and learning opportunities as these are rarely documented in sufficient detail in the literature.

...This relatively new field is only at the very earliest stages of generating the type of comparative and evaluative overview that provides a picture of effective processes and approaches.” (Tilbury, 2010)

The JCP Special issue would be one of the (first) steps towards a better understanding of what is going on – and what is needed – for sustainable development with regard to its learning dimension on a regional level. It should assemble useful theoretical and practical experience and analyses from and for those who are involved in diverse learning processes occurring on an individual, institutional level or on the level of society – as educators, educational policy makers, but also those who (want to) realize sustainable transitions in practice.

## 3. Tentative schedule

Contributors with proposals for papers are encouraged to communicate with the co-editors by e-mail. The following schedule will be applied:

Call for papers: March, 2011.

Submission of a 400 word, extended abstract to the Editorial Team of this Special Issue, via Elsevier's EES system by April 15, 2011.

Responses from the Special Issue Editorial Team to the prospective authors by June 1, 2011.

Authors submit 'peer-review ready' documents to Elsevier via the EES system by July 30, 2011.

Peer review/paper revision process September–December 2011. Submission of final version of all revised papers January 30, 2012

Authors informed of decisions and/or about minor changes by February 28, 2012

Deadline for revisions for Special Issue by March 30, 2012

Submission of all documents for conversion to uncorrected proofs by April 30, 2012

Authors return uncorrected proofs along with suggested corrections, to Elsevier as soon as possible after they receive them from Elsevier

Publication of Special Issue June 2012

## 4. Contributions

The research focus of this special issue is on a wide range of activities that are sustainability oriented AND have a learning dimension – it seeks relevant scientific reflection and the sharing of experience. Full papers are invited for consideration for publication in a special issue of the journal. The following types of contribution are therefore of special interest within this framework:

Original Research Papers; Educational Initiatives; Governmental Initiatives.

Other categories of articles concerned with the theme (which do not necessarily require a peer review process) are welcome as well with relevant adjustments in the proposed time schedule.

Articles in all categories should be formally adjusted to the specific requirements of the *The Journal of Cleaner Production* and should respect the editorial guidelines provided in the instructions for authors which can be accessed from the website: [http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws\\_home/30440/authorinstructions](http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/30440/authorinstructions).

Authors are encouraged to find reviewers not yet involved in the Elsevier Editorial System (EES) together with submission of the completed documents; a minimum of three independent reviewers will subsequently be selected to provide peer reviews for each document. Upon receipt and acceptance of authors' revised documents, all will be published in this Special Issue of the JCP.

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