Call for papers for themed edition of the Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning:

Cultural Perspectives on Experiential Learning in Outdoor Spaces

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Cultural differences within and between countries (Bentsen et al. 2009; Sandseter, 2009) offer a lens through which we can conceptualise and theorise experiential and outdoor learning, yet many articles offer predominately nationally-informed interpretations, possibly demonstrating some sensitivity to the situated nature of learning (Brookes, 2002). Nevertheless, we think there is much to be learnt from further consideration of the ways in which outdoor and experiential practice and the research studies that examine it draw on intercultural interpretations. This themed edition invites international papers that consider the role of culture within and across national boundaries in outdoor and experiential learning and its implications for theory building in the field.

Outdoor learning theory derives from several sources (for example, adventure and outdoor education, non-formal learning, geography and ecology) and the field is widely regarded as somewhat under-theorised (e.g. Humberstone, 2009; Allison & Pomeroy, 2000). Current thinking stems from disparate epistemological beliefs about learning and its cognitive, social and emotional demands (Davis et al., 2006), while place (Gruenewald & Smith, 2007) and history of place (Stewart, 2006) are being given an increasingly central focus within holistic social constructivist perspectives. It is important to give close attention to theory and practice across different cultures as some governments look to contexts beyond the classroom to fill a perceived gap in children’s learning opportunities within increasingly risk averse societies (e.g. in the UK, DfES, 2006) and performative school systems (e.g. in the US, high stakes testing). Other countries with commitment to recreation and teaching and learning in the outdoors (Bentsen et al. 2009; Aasen et al., 2009; Lugg & Martin, 2001; Zink & Boyes, 2006) may offer insight into the benefits and values underpinning such practice. Furthermore, evidence-informed comparisons internationally (Alexander, 2001) might arrest the ‘merry-go-round’ of educational policy responses to meet demands for standards and perceived failings of current practice (Waite and Davis, 2007).

Contributions are invited before 8 September 2011 and should be submitted in the usual way to the journal as they will be subject to the normal rigorous process of peer review (see www.tandf.co.uk/journals/jaol). However, those wishing to be considered for inclusion in the themed issue should indicate this clearly on their submission. It is intended to produce the themed edition during 2012. Articles of high quality that are not able to be included in the themed edition may, with the authors’ agreement, be published in other issues of the journal.
References


