

Editorial, 1 page, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39n4editorial>**Editorial: The neo-liberal economic revolution and education****Guest Editors: Charl Wolhuter  and JL (Hannes) van der Walt **

For approximately the past thirty years the creed of neo-liberal economics has wrapped itself around the globe, affecting virtually every human endeavour and every societal sphere. In the process it has become a dominant shaping force in education as a formative process, and in the construction and functioning of education systems. Education systems in all their manifestations have, for some time now, been confronted with challenges by this capital and market-dominated ideology, or revolution – challenges to which they need to respond in a reasoned and critical manner. The following count among the aspects of education that are being challenged: the perceived objectives of education (schooling), the ways of providing education (schooling), which educational leadership and management strategies and practices should be employed, the management structure of education, education systems' accountability to stakeholders and role-players, modes of financing education, educational legislation and policy, and curricula and assessment regimes in education. Among others, this revolution has brought the profit-motive into education, schools, and classrooms; a culture of performance management and measurement, and regimes of business-like quality control. Regarding education scholarship, this revolution has introduced a new research agenda that privileges research into themes such as quality, quality control, efficiency, performance, and human and social capital, thereby displacing themes more appropriate to the domain of education such as equality in education, or equal education opportunities – themes that, for decades prior to the advent of the neo-liberal economic revolution, formed the central concern of education scholarship. This special issue of the *South African Journal of Education* provides scholars from all educational disciplines with an opportunity to unpack, interrogate, and assess the impact of neo-liberal economics on education.

In the first article, Charl Wolhuter and Hannes van der Walt depict the neo-liberal economic revolution and the creed of human rights as the two philosophies (which may be too weak a word) or ideologies (which in turn may be too strong a word) that currently seem to drive the global education project. In the second contribution, Nontsha Liwane and JP Rossouw focus on how agency has been affected by the neo-liberal economic revolution, and how the South African legislative framework (based upon the creed of human rights) could soften the impact of the neo-liberal economic revolution on education. In the next two articles, Erika Kruger and Lynette Jacobs and Kevin Teise shift the focus to the effect of the ideology of neo-liberal economics on the deprofessionalisation of the teaching profession in South Africa. In the final contribution, Daniella Coetzee expands on this theme by examining managerialism which has resulted in South African education as a result of the impact of the neo-liberal economic revolution.

This selection of articles is offered to readers and scholars in the field of education in the hope that it will make them – actors in the field of education – aware of the impact, and indeed the possible threat to the essence of education, of the neo-liberal economic revolution, and that it will stimulate further research and discussion aimed at keeping at bay the discontents that arguably could rise from the unmitigated import of the principles of neo-economic liberalism into the education sector.

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