

Celebrating JPHE: Past, present, and future

Editorial by Petra Angervall, Dennis Beach, Maresi Nerad, and Marko Turk

Our first issue, JPHE, Vol. 1 No. 1 (2019), was published five years ago. Already over a year ago we decided to mark the occasion with an anniversary issue. This has made me (Petra Angervall) think. When does a journal start to 'exist'? You could say that it is appropriate to celebrate five years of publication, but the question remains: what is the starting point of a journal? Is it when someone hatches the idea, the team is gathered for the first time, or the website is set up? As one of the original members, I could just as well say that we are celebrating six years of existence. Irrespective of what year we are celebrating, the team would like to take the opportunity to look back and see what we have accomplished.

This last year has been fantastic in terms of workflow, numbers of published issues and how we have been able to contribute to the field of higher education research. We published two excellent Special issues and three broad and creative Open issues. We initiated 'New Conversations' on our website to open for a broad dialogue with the full research field. All of this makes me very proud and amazed about what we have and can accomplish.

Still, I think we need to remember that when we published our first issue in 2019, we were an editorial team of five members: Melina Aarnikoivu, Kathleen Mahon, Marcus Agnafors, David Hoffman and myself. To get things going we had to share all the necessary work tasks: management, web-administration and layout, editing, copyediting, communication, production, and archiving. We had no funding, but a lot of fun. In retrospect, I should have expressed more gratitude to the group for their good spirits, commitment, and thoroughness in setting the scene for JPHE.

Since then, the JPHE editorial team has developed and now consists of 18 members divided into three groups: Management and administration, Copyediting, and Senior Editors (SEs). Our work is still almost entirely free of funding, even though we recurrently apply for scholarships and national funding opportunities. A small part of the work I do, as for many of the SEs, is carved out of what is called institutional 'research time'. Even so, all of us constantly need to put in extra hours each week to keep the journal alive. Although this is stressful and sometimes frustrating, we enjoy our work and feel that our mission is important. If necessary, we get good support from our Editorial Board members.

For this new issue, JPHE, Vol. 6 No. 5 (2024), we have selected seven papers that we think illustrate the core of the journal. We have also asked three of JPHE's

distinguished Editorial Board members to summarise and comment on three of the 13 issues we have produced since we started. They were invited to select one issue each. The intention is to show readers, reviewers, and authors the high quality we represent, but also the variety and creativity of the papers we produce.

To start with, the papers selected for this 14th issue are different in terms of content, context, structure, method, and research object.

The first paper by Angervall and Heikkinen is based on an interview with Professor Hannu Heikkinen from Jyväskylä University in Finland. The paper is titled: *“Nothing can grow forever”*: Working with planetary praxis in higher education. It explores aspects of praxis, and the concept of planetary praxis and its purpose for what Heikkinen calls a ‘life worth living’.

In Rost-Banik and Perrotti’s research paper, *Interrogating calls for increased national service: A political discourse analysis*, two recent US national reports that call for expanding civic education within higher education are analysed. In Johnsson, Eklund and Nyckel’s paper, *Clinical learning in times of crises: How the Covid 19 pandemic affected nursing students clinical learning and strategies*, the authors discuss how the pandemic affected parts of nursing education in Sweden. And the research paper by Florin Sädbom, *“Like stepping into a spaceship”*: Adjunct lecturers lived experiences during their initial time in teacher education programs in Sweden, concerns how teachers that are new in teacher education experience their work context.

In Åberg’s research paper, *Judgement fields and practising processes*, Åberg elaborates on how musical practice can highlight relationships between reflection and practice in art forms as in professional practices. In Jacobs and Frick’s research paper, *The praxis of cohort supervision in a Comprehensive Open Distance e-Learning University: A conceptual framework*, the authors discuss how one South African university is contextualising the need for alternative assessment and supervision practices.

And finally, in Sarauw and Frederiksen’s paper, *Do university students fake learning? Notes from the field on student learning and engagement as a performative practice*, the authors discuss whether student-centered ideals of participatory, embodied, and emotionally-driven educational engagement inadvertently foster ‘fake learning’ in Higher education.

As you can see, all these papers bring up very different questions on praxis in higher education. Further questions are raised in the reflective summaries, presented below, written by three members of the Editorial Board: Professor Maresi Nerad, Professor Dennis Beach and Associate Professor Marko Turk.

Reflections by Editorial Board members on a selection of JPHE issues

Professor Maresi Nerad, from University of Washington, USA. Comments and reflections on JPHE, Vol 5 No 2 (2023) Special Issue: From a praxis perspective. Being and becoming a doctoral supervisor.

My research passion and expertise are on doctoral education. Responding to institutional, national, and political concerns over the last 4 decades in the US¹, my work mainly focused on doctoral students, doctoral recipients, or postdocs.² Only lately did my attention shift to supervisor development, as formalised training is not common in the US. Gratefully I jumped at the opportunity to reflect on the special issue on doctoral supervision from a praxis perspective.

What intrigued me most in this special issue?

The many creative research approaches to understand the complexity of being and becoming a dissertation supervisor intrigued me most. What a splendid idea to structuring this special journal issue around a required 6-day long class for supervisor development at the University of Borås, Sweden! Exploring issues important to supervisors and the pedagogy of becoming and being a doctoral supervisor, this special journal issue engaged authors with experiences of being supervised or being a supervisor in Australia, UK, USA, Malaysia, Germany and Sweden within the social sciences, the arts, and information studies. The editorial to the issue ends delightfully: ‘we now invite the readers into the dialogue’.

The dialogue begins with reflections by Petra Angervall’s deeply honest piece on the ‘making a doctoral supervisor’ of her three-year experiences of teaching a supervisory course. Based on her own research she delves into critical issues surrounding gender and power within doctoral supervision and articulates how these dynamics shape both supervisor and student experiences. She situates this in the context of higher education, the changes in doctoral education funding, and its implications for supervisory roles and responsibilities. She reminds us that it is women who take on more caring workload and teaching (academic housework). She appeals to supervisors to be aware of how we present (‘make up’) institutions, people, and the doctoral journey, and how important it is that we talk about our values, gender, and the power structure in academia.

Trine Fosslund undertakes the essential task of evaluating the professional development of supervisors with a careful social science research approach, clean production of data, and rich data analyses of what doctoral supervisors find essential

¹ Please note US terminology: advisor for supervisor; doctoral student or doctoral candidate for doctoral researcher, faculty for professor.

² by conducting surveys, interviews, by analyzing and disaggregating national and institutional data by gender race, ethnicity, class, nationality, and disciplines.

for their professional development when attending a mandatory program for doctoral supervisors. In addition, she provides us with a history of supervisor training. This contribution sends a strong message to university administration about the relevance and possible mandatory requirements for developmental supervisor training by connecting the message to the significant personal, institutional, and societal costs when doctoral researchers do not complete their studies.

Rebecca Rouse, one of the editors of this special journal issue, presents a creative approach both on capturing the complexity of the ‘doctoral lifeworld’ and on the importance of the limitations of a single advisor’s impact by presenting narrative stories garnered from nine interviews of three generations (‘advising ancestry’): her advisors and most important other people (her parents) during her dissertation and interviewing her present advisees. This essay provides an excellent example of moving beyond a simple autoethnographically approach. She is aware of the limitation of any one individual’s perspective, the shifting nature of the self and social contexts, as well as the fact that the narrative approach (story telling) is a snapshot in time. Rouse identifies 11 overlapping advising styles within these narratives, allowing researchers to bridge individual experiences with collective understanding and becoming aware that faculty members are learning along with students and from students. Although this article contains specific humanities terms—some may call them jargon—the author explains them well, so that the reader from any discipline can easily follow her text. I certainly recommend that future and current doctoral advisors read this article.

The contribution on stressors on doctoral supervisors by Ali Padyab and Martin Lundgren is a welcome contribution to the field of research on supervision, as most studies focus on stress or well-being of doctoral students. The findings are not surprising to someone who is familiar with doctoral education, but they remind institutions to care and support their faculty in their advisor roles, since universities expect a quality doctoral education.

Doctoral supervision as and for praxis by Kathleen Mahon is another intriguing methodological approach to research the human activity (practice) of doctoral supervision. Eight years after completing her dissertation, as a supervisor and academic developer she re-examined her notes, interviews, institutional ethnography, her critical participatory action research from her doctoral thesis on the interaction between her and the 2 supervisors. Her paper is a catalyst and reflection about possible new practices in supervision and professional learning.

The special issue ends with a meta-reflection by Nick Hopwood and Liezel Frick drawing connection to existing literature from the Global South to contrast the issue’s papers coming from the context of the global North (Sweden). I found most useful that the authors encouraged us to rethink supervision practices and see

its value in educating a future generation of researchers who care about improving the societies and communities they live in.

What do I want the reader to take away?

Reading the reflective articles, one wishes to be part of the University of Borås and participate in their supervisor training. One emerges from this issue with an appreciation for the complexities involved in the process of supervision and an eagerness to follow the call-to-action for institutions to reassess their supervisory culture and support systems. They emphasise that quality supervision correlates directly to doctoral candidates' and the institutions' quality standards. In all, this issue serves as an inspiring source for academics and institutions looking to foster a more supportive and effective environment for doctoral education.

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Professor Dennis Beach, University of Gothenburg and University of Borås, Sweden has read and commented on JPHE, Vol. 6 No. 2 (2024), Special Issue: 'What is academic citizenship?'

I once planned to submit a research grant application on academic citizenship. I got some seed funding but not major grant funding, so nothing became of the application in the end. I regret this. It had a main theme found also in several articles in the special issue I have made my reflections about related to the un-evening effects on academic citizenship and how the changing forms of state investment influences the historically different goals and commitments at universities and the work of academics there. Being an academic today sits at an interface between institutionally regulated versus collegially upheld and constantly negotiated and re-negotiated ways of being and working for private economic value and accumulation or some (other non- or even anti-capitalistic) notion of a common good.

The contributions to the special issue are clear about this. But they are also very clear that without resistance, and there is little of this among institutional leaders today, economic interests will and do cut very deeply into the cloth of higher education institutions and with a massive un-evening effect there. These effects emerge in terms of working conditions between commercial and non-commercial fields and disciplines, and their presence gives us good grounds from which to suspect that university-leaders and their advisors and strategists are willing to sacrifice quality in non-technical-non-commercial (largely STEM) fields and disciplines to try to guarantee greater general income to their institutions. The articles address this from different (though largely all critical) ontological and

epistemic frameworks, and in relation to different facets and features of university life and academic citizenship for staff and students. As Feldt et al. (2024) point out in their editors' introduction, they do so not as a means to have a final defining say about what academic citizenship is, but rather to act as a catalyst for further future discussions. As a collection, they relate to the role of academics, the nature of universities, and the effects of the global roll out of neoliberal governance on democratic accountability, critical thought, and Enlightenment thinking. The concept of resilience toward and (still really) belonging (and wanting to belong) in a now fractured and dominated academia shadows several contributions, along with reflections about what to do in relation to this and the unhealthy forms of competition citizenship that predominate in the university in everyday practices there.

Academic citizenship is citizenship with connections and goals in relation to both the now and the future, and both within and beyond the university. It is about contributing to knowledge-based-discourse, to interpreting and making sense of the world, and constructing narratives and explanations for social, cultural, and natural phenomena, based on empirical evidence and logical reasoning as a researcher, teacher, public-intellectual, and academic expert. Yet the notion of the ivory tower, of higher learning and academics as distinct from and above regular society remains as a specter from the past within networks of rules that empower institutions not individuals as technologies of power and knowledge that work through and in the body. The power to decide what is civil, tolerant, and respectful ultimately lies with the institution and this power is conservative at its core. It serves to preserve the institution's inequitable status quo.

What does it take to survive and thrive in academia? How should we treat each other within it? Who is a "good" academic citizen when *academia is increasingly characterised by precarity and by neoliberal regimes* where leadership decisions revolve increasingly around "short-termism", and when stable academic positions are *possible only after many years of uncertainty (if at all)*.

The collection of articles in this special issue provide insight; food for thought to feed ongoing discussions; and some very reasonable answers to these questions as well. And, of course, they provide more than this too; more than I can tell in a few hundred words. The best thing I can do is to recommend reading them whilst thinking about academic citizenship as an alternative to the universalising, masculinising, competitive neoliberal model of higher education for academic capitalism. There are other models and concepts that help us consider resistance not just resilience and transformation instead of cultural reproduction as an outcome from living good academic lives together. The collection of articles gives a set of developing principles to live and work by that may help us fulfill some of the possible requirements for this.

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Associate Professor Marko Turk, Croatian Institute for Migration Research, Zagreb, Croatia, has read and commented on the Open issue, JPHE Vol 4 No 1 (2022).

This text reflects on four articles from the *Journal of Praxis in Higher Education*, Volume 4, Number 1 (2022), focusing on their contributions to the recent discussion about the challenges and opportunities within higher education. The papers reflect their various yet related approaches to understanding and addressing critical issues in contemporary academia. The topics that the papers have brought to us are the limitations of prevailing research methodologies, the impact of grief and loss on teaching and learning, the conditions necessary for effective academic writing, and the complexities teacher educators face.

In the editorial, Bruce Macfarlane argues that while higher education research journals increasingly prioritise quantitative empirical studies, enhanced discourse and scholarship oriented towards philosophical inquiry are necessary to address complex challenges effectively. The editor distinguishes the dominant emphasis on quantitative research with the more inclusive and dialogue-driven methodologies employed by journals such as *Universities Quarterly* during the mid-20th century. This editorial note has significantly triggered my decision to reflect upon this issue and the papers that discuss higher education teaching, the topic which has captured my interest since the time I was a master's student.

The initial article, authored by Jeanna Wennerberg and Cormac McGrath, constitutes qualitative research into the outcomes of a collegial peer review for university teachers in Sweden. The results show that the peer review has promoted collaboration, broken isolation, and improved educators' confidence and comprehension of their roles and the department's organisational structure, notwithstanding some initial uncertainties.

Jennifer Poole, Erin Willer, and Samantha Zerafa tackled an inspiring topic in their paper, *Anti-transcarceral grief pedagogy for pandemic times*. The authors examine grief management in higher education, contending that prevalent methodologies frequently reinforce carceral logic. They advocate for adopting a transcarceral framework, highlighting the necessity for compassionate and inclusive approaches to managing grief in educational environments. Furthermore, the authors emphasise the importance of recognising grief rather than attempting to suppress or manage it.

Conditions for a meaningful writing retreat: Time, space, community and transition, by Kalypso Filippou and Raakel Plamper, employs a qualitative methodology to investigate the impact of a residential writing retreat on academics' writing experiences. Their findings highlight the crucial role of dedicated time, a

supportive community, and a physical and mental transition from daily life in fostering meaningful writing praxis.

In *Teacher educators' perspectives on shaping a preschool teacher education while dealing with internal and external demands*, Katarina Ribaeus and Annica Löfdahl Hultman explore teacher educators' challenges in navigating internal and external pressures. They use interviews to highlight the complexity of commitments influencing their agency and efforts to create a student-centred learning environment. The authors emphasise the interconnectedness of various demands and the fragility of the overall teacher education programme.

Finally, *A thousand tiny feminisms: An interview about writing retreats for academic women and feminist praxis in academia* presents an interview with Barbara Grant, who discusses women's writing retreats as a form of feminist praxis. Grant's insights emphasise the retreat's role in supporting women academics to overcome societal pressures, develop their writing, and encourage community amongst their peers. The interview also presents the challenges and opportunities women face navigating the complexities of contemporary academia.

JPHE, Vol. 4 No. 1 (2022) examines higher education through diverse methodologies and theoretical lenses. While emphasising empirical research's importance, the issue acknowledges its boundaries and actively encourages reflection, discussion, and critical engagement with scholarly considerations. This issue represents a notable change from a largely positivist approach, suggesting a more participatory understanding of higher education's complexities and the challenges inherent in promoting real and meaningful change. Including a qualitative approach alongside traditional quantitative studies demonstrates a commitment to methodological pluralism, enhancing the analytical scope. Furthermore, the issue highlights the impact of contextual factors, particularly gender and power dynamics, on academic experience and shaping educational practices. In this sense, it represents a valuable contribution to the evolving field of higher education studies, pushing limits and driving vital discussions that are both convenient and relevant.

Overall reflections and future

Some of the main points in our contributions for this issue certainly raise questions about where we as a journal should go from here. What would it mean for JPHE if we more eagerly focused on issues and actions related to planetary praxis? Could we do more to highlight the emerging eco-crisis? Should we engage more in resisting the current developments of economic and administrative ruling that is

controlling higher education today? Could we open for new and fresh research design, topics, or forms of dialogue?

As a journal without the support from a publishing house, we can't expand our numbers. We have already tried, and it is not doable or worthwhile (overwork, stress, frustration, time etc.). However, we can expand our thoughts, ideas, themes and creative pathways since we do not have a publishing house that may restrict us.

One of our core interests concerns creating dialogue. Therefore, we have discussed the possibility of expanding the format of our website to also include sound or images. We have also debated on including students, doctoral researchers, independent researchers or civic engagement representatives in our team. This to broaden the space for new questions, collaborations, and initiatives. We have talked about a multi-language approach, podcasts, various conference engagements etc. We would very much appreciate more suggestions on forms of dialogue but also other developmental possibilities from our readers.

Before I finish, let us not forget that this is a 5-year anniversary issue. I hope we will be able to continue JPHE for another 5 years at least. I hope we continue to grow in terms of the dialogue we enable, to explore new paths, to move beyond what we think is possible, to challenge the truth, and last but not least, to have fun.

Finally, I want to thank our guests for being part of this issue and editorial: Professor Hannu Heikkinen, Professor Maresi Nerad, Professor Dennis Beach, and Associate Professor Marko Turk. I really appreciate your wise, subtle, and interesting reflections on our journal. I also need to express my gratitude towards all our readers, authors, and reviewers, not only because of your participation in the dialogue, and/or contributions to the peer-review processes, but because, when we called out to you, as a new, unknown, journal with a yet-to-be-established scientific reputation, you answered. On behalf of the JPHE team, I am so grateful for that.

References

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