



Waikato Journal of Education

ISSN 2382-0373
Website: <http://wje.org.nz>



Wilf Malcolm Institute
of Educational Research
Te Pūtahi Rangahau Mātauranga o Wilf Malcolm
THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

Title of Issue/section: Special Issue: Research backstories: Reflexive accounts from postgraduate scholars

Editor/s: Donella Cobb and Margaret Franken

Title of article: Editors' introduction: A collaborative exploration of reflexivity as a pedagogic bridge towards publication for international postgraduate students

To cite this article: Cobb, D., & Franken, M. (2017). Editors' introduction: A collaborative exploration of reflexivity as a pedagogic bridge towards publication for international postgraduate students. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 22(2), 3–16. doi:[10.15663/wje.v22i2.562](https://doi.org/10.15663/wje.v22i2.562)

To link to this article: doi:[10.15663/wje.v22i2.562](https://doi.org/10.15663/wje.v22i2.562)

To link to this volume: doi:[10.15663/wje.v22i2](https://doi.org/10.15663/wje.v22i2)

Copyright of articles

Creative commons license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Authors retain copyright of their publications.

Author and users are free to:

- **Share**—copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
- **Adapt**—remix, transform, and build upon the material
The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.
- **Attribution**—You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use
- **NonCommercial**—You may not use the material for commercial purposes.
- **ShareAlike**—If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

Terms and conditions of use

For full terms and conditions of use: <http://wje.org.nz/index.php/WJE/about/editorialPolicies#openAccessPolicy>

and users are free to

- **Share**—copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
- **Adapt**—remix, transform, and build upon the material
The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.



Editors' introduction: A collaborative exploration of reflexivity as a pedagogic bridge towards publication for international postgraduate students

Donella Cobb and Margaret Franken

The University of Waikato
New Zealand

Abstract

Research conducted by postgraduate students is a significant source of new knowledge in universities. While it is increasingly available in digital databases, it is not frequently published, and thus accessible, in the form of academic journal articles (Kamler, 2008; Kwan, 2010; Lassig, Dillon, & Diezmann, 2013). In this article we explore the notion of an academic writing group as a pedagogical arrangement to scaffold international postgraduate students into writing for publication. We draw from our experiences of facilitating collaborative writing workshops with five international postgraduate students from The University of Waikato. These workshops provided a pedagogic space for international students and academic mentors to collectively bridge the often obscured path between thesis writing and writing for academic publication. We explain how a focus on reflexivity offered a way of foregrounding the 'backstories' of each student's research experiences and established a platform from which scholars could discuss and write. We also give consideration to the linguistic and discursive resources that supported emerging writers to foreground reflexivity in their published text. Each of the articles in this special section celebrate the outcome of this academic writing group by showcasing the published articles that have been written by the international postgraduate students involved in this collaborative writing project. We conclude this article by offering our experiences of a collaborative writing group as one way to facilitate a pedagogic bridge between thesis writing and writing for publication.

Keywords

International postgraduate scholars; writing for publication; reflexivity; writing groups

Introduction

Postgraduate theses represent a source of new knowledge production in universities. However, the knowledge created is "not widely or systematically disseminated through peer reviewed journal publication" (Kamler, 2008, p. 283). This is significant not just for universities, but also, in the case of international students, their own countries, decision making bodies and communities. The reason why postgraduate students' research and thesis work is not often shared can be attributed to a number of factors associated with external pressures arising from their research context, factors associated with



students themselves and with the level of support they get for publishing (Kamler, 2008; Kwan, 2010). In the research context, students may experience the pressure to publish as a competing demand with their thesis writing (Kwan, 2010). This may be particularly so for international scholarship students who have strict deadlines for completion and return to their countries.

Writing for publication can be a daunting process for postgraduate students. Reasons for this can include, but are not restricted to, a lack of familiarity with the publication process and the text forms required, a lack of epistemological confidence in one's research area and the specific research topic, and a lack of familiarity and fluency with academic discourse required for publication (Kamler, 2008; Lassig, Dillon, & Diezmann, 2013). Increasingly, however, there is the expectation that postgraduate students will publish as they conduct their research (Kamler, 2008; Kwan, 2010). They, like the academics who supervise them, are becoming part of managerial regimes where outputs are counted and equate to progress (Lei & Hu, 2015). Despite these expectations, Lassig et al. (2013) observe that the pathway towards publication remains elusive for many postgraduate students. There is growing recognition that students lack the necessary support during their postgraduate candidature to prepare them for the demands of academic publication (Cuthbert & Spark, 2008; Danaby & Lee, 2012; Kamler, 2008). Identifying these supportive structures is important for supporting postgraduate publication.

Academic publication has characteristically been seen and experienced as both a solitary activity and an arbitrary practice that students can pick up and 'have a go at' during their postgraduate studies. However, Kamler (2008) argues that moving from thesis writer to published author does not just happen. She explains that publication "flourishes when it receives serious institutional attention, and skilled support from knowledgeable supervisors and others who understand academic writing as complex disciplinary and identity work" (p. 284). Despite this, Kamler points to the noted lack of publication mentoring for postgraduate students, particularly in the social sciences. Danaby and Lee (2012) suggest that such publication mentoring requires academic institutions to shift away from providing postgraduate 'programmes' and, rather, move towards facilitating doctoral 'pedagogy'. They place relationships at the heart of this pedagogic shift by emphasising the importance of creating pedagogic spaces for postgraduate students and academic mentors to engage in the co-production of knowledge. This notion is gaining traction within the academic community as a number of scholars work to change the writing experiences of postgraduate students by exploring pedagogical arrangements that have collaboration and community at their core (see for example, Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2016; Kamler, 2008; Lee & Boud, 2003). Such experiences re-emphasise the importance of creating pedagogic spaces to support postgraduate students to move beyond thesis production and towards academic publication.

This article aims to build on this emerging understanding of scaffolded writing experiences by exploring the notion of a collaborative writing group as a pedagogic bridge from thesis writing to academic publication. We draw from our experiences of facilitating a writing group for international postgraduate students from The University of Waikato and we discuss how this collaborative pedagogic arrangement created a bridge from postgraduate scholar to published author. This collaborative writing group was intended to demystify the publishing process by supporting students to write an article for this special section of *The Waikato Journal of Education* while also giving them the tools, experiences and confidence to pursue further publishing opportunities from their postgraduate thesis. We demonstrate how a focus on reflexivity provided a way of bringing together the diversity of research and research experiences while fostering a shared context for collaborative discussion and engagement.

We conclude this article by showcasing the outcome of this collaborative writing project and introducing the articles and corresponding authors in this special section. Each author represents a postgraduate student involved in this collaborative writing experience and their published article demonstrates the anticipated outcome of this pedagogic arrangement. Through this publication we hope to offer an example of a pedagogical writing group arrangement that has collaboration and community at its core; and a published article as a successful outcome. The following sections provide an overview of writing groups as pedagogical arrangements, and discuss the nature of reflexivity in research and research writing.

The writing group as pedagogical arrangement

The writing group as a pedagogical arrangement to support postgraduate students has been explored by a wide range of researchers and documented by many practitioners (Lassig et al., 2013; Lee & Boud, 2003; Li & Vandermensbrugghe, 2011). The writing groups have ranged from informal and unstructured gatherings to formal and structured with required tasks. Generally their purpose has been to provide a collaborative context in which students share research and writing experiences and challenges, respond to each other's texts, contribute to solve research and writing problems experienced by others, and write (Li & Vandermensbrugghe, 2011). Writing groups can comprise of members at different stages in their thesis journey, and thus the expertise of those more experienced supports novice members to gradually come to terms with, and become more expert in, the practices associated with academic writing. In other words, writing groups provide a pedagogic arrangement where experts scaffold learning experiences for novice writers. They can also be targeted at groups of students at a similar point in their research journey, and in this way collaboration and mutual problem solving is afforded.

Lassig et al. (2013) describe their experiences of facilitating an interactive doctoral writing group and, through this process, they document the student-to-scholar identity shift that was experienced by each of its postgraduate members as a result of their ongoing engagement in the writing group. They explain that the writing group blurred the division between doctoral supervisor and student as each member, including the supervisor, took the role of being both a writer and an editor. This created an interactive and collaborative learning community where each member was actively engaged in contributing to, and learning from, the knowledge, experiences and contributions of others. Lassig et al. (2013) conceptualised their reciprocal learning arrangement as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). However, we are somewhat cautious about using this term given its overuse and resultant lack of specificity (Amin & Roberts, 2008; Lindkvist, 2005). We would prefer to use the term *collectivity of practice* (Lindkvist, 2005), as it does not imply the long term and sustained engagement in a collective outcome which Wenger (1998, 2000) maintains is an essential feature of communities of practice.

Li and Vandermensbrugghe (2011) explore the particular dynamics of writing groups for international students whose first language is not English. Their writing group had a strong textual focus in that participants gave each other feedback (using Track Changes) on each other's texts which were then shared among the group. They noticed improvements initially at the level of grammatical accuracy, but then increasingly at the discourse level as participants seemed to become more aware of thesis conventions and showed greater audience awareness. Participants also became more confident as writers and as readers of others' texts. Both Li and Vandermensbrugghe (2011) and Lassig et al. (2013) suggest that positive discursive and affective outcomes are experienced when writing groups create a collective of mutually committed participants that focuses on learning—not correcting, and on constructive feedback.

Writing groups for thesis writers are underpinned by mutual bonds through which participants support each other to achieve their own individual outcomes—their thesis. These groups can be further strengthened if participants have a shared outcome or goal such as a writing project to which all contribute. Examples may be writing for a particular publication (the planned outcome for the writing group implemented in this study). Writers working in this way could be called 'project groups', "with members that embrace a collective goal" (Lindkvist, 2005, p. 1195). It could be argued that this collectivity of practice can be further boosted by all writers contributing to the outcome, but from their own unique knowledge base. One way to do this is to have all participants share and write on their reflexive thoughts and processes (as we did in the writing group implemented in this study).

Reflexivity in research and research writing

While reflexivity provides a focus that all scholars can potentially engage in, it is a complex and multidimensional process and practice. Finlay (2002b) refers to reflexivity as a "confessional account" (p. 224), which enables researchers to critically examine their own positionality, perspectives and

responses (Pillow, 2003); it incites explicit self-analysis of one's own personal responses to the research process (Berger, 2013; Finlay, 2002b; Pillow, 2003). These conscious and unconscious reactions are encountered throughout the research process and offer a way for researchers to consider how subjective and intersubjective elements impact on data collection and analysis (Finlay, 2002b). D'Cruz, Gillingham, and Melendez (2007) suggest that reflexivity enables researchers to "locate oneself in the picture" by examining "how one's own self influences the research act" (p. 84). Because of this, reflexivity is recognised as an integral component of qualitative research (Berger, 2013).

There are different ways that reflexivity is used in qualitative research and research writing. Kuo (2008) categorises reflexivity in three ways: epistemological reflexivity, methodological reflexivity and personal reflexivity. 'Epistemological reflexivity' invites researchers to explore their ontological and epistemological position and how this informs, influences and acts upon the construction of knowledge throughout the research process. 'Personal reflexivity' engages "narratives of the self" (Finlay, 2002a, p. 211) which allows researchers to identify unconscious motivations and implicit biases that may influence each stage of the research process (Finlay, 2002b). This personal reflexivity can unmask complex ideologies and political agendas that may be concealed in a researcher's actions and writing (Richardson, 2000). Finlay (2002a) argues that such radical consciousness prompts researchers to "come out" (p. 544) by "voicing the unspoken" (p. 544). 'Outing' the researcher through reflexive analysis can empower both participants and researcher towards a more critical consciousness. Finally, 'methodological reflexivity' provides a way to examine methodological decision-making throughout the research process. Pillow (2003) explains that methodological self-reflexivity is important in every stage of the research process and includes the development of the research problem, the decisions regarding the research design, the collection and analysis of data, the presentation of findings and the conclusions that are drawn.

Reflexivity as a starting point for writing an academic article

Reflexivity brings critical consciousness to the fore, but its affordance also lies in the fact that it both draws on what researchers know—their 'personal knowledge capital' (Young, 2012)—and builds new knowledge. For this reason, it is a knowledge making process. We can think of personal knowledge capital as comprising of both 'personal and cultural knowledge' (Eraut, 2000, 2003, 2004). Personal knowledge includes "aspects of personal expertise, practical wisdom and tacit knowledge" (Eraut & Hirsh, 2008, p. 6), while cultural knowledge is "acquired informally through participation in working practices; and much is often so 'taken for granted' that people are unaware of its influence on their behaviour" (Eraut & Hirsh, 2008, p. 5). Scholars build significant and deep personal and cultural knowledge as they undertake research practices and become knowledgeable in their research field, and this level of expertise is captured in many models of postgraduate student development (see, for example, Franken, 2013; Gurr, 2001; Lee & Murray, 2013). Given this level of expertise, scholars are likely to find that writing reflexively about their research is not substantively challenging. It may also be the case that scholars have already, to some degree, codified their reflexive thoughts in the form of researcher diaries, though these reflexive accounts are rarely incorporated into the final thesis. Newbury (2001), in his explanation of researcher diaries, makes their potential for scaffolding clear:

Although a diary is primarily considered as a private document, and in fact part of its value is that it allows a licence for the researcher to record and test out on paper thoughts and reflections that may never reach a wider audience, there may be points at which the diary is read by others. In some cases the diary may be a useful vehicle for communicating the complexity of a research project. (Newbury, 2001, p. 9)

How is reflexivity textually instantiated?

Researcher diaries as informal or mostly private texts do not tend to challenge writers in terms of linguistic and discursal conventions. However, writing a reflexive account for a public readership—for publication in a way that complies with scholarly conventions—is challenging. International postgraduate students writing in English need particular linguistic and discursal resources to be able

to do this successfully. As discussed above, those resources are associated with foregrounding the self in text—the researcher’s identity/identities, their epistemological and ontological positioning, and their agency as researchers. Zienkowski (2017, p.7) talks of the writer’s “own identity, perspective, position and/or discourse in relation to the subjects under investigation”.

Ivanič’s work (1998) on writer identity is seminal. She identifies three different projections of identity in text: the ‘autobiographical self’, “influenced by the writer’s life-history”; the ‘discoursal self’, “the image or ‘voice’ the writer projects in a text”; and the ‘authorial self’, “manifested in the extent to which a writer intrudes into a text and claims responsibility for its content” (1998, pp. 23–24). In reality, these three types of identity are often interwoven and difficult to identify separately. One clear linguistic device for achieving these projections of identity, or ‘presence’ (Hyland & Jiang, 2016) is the use of first person pronouns such as ‘I, me, my, we, us’, etc. (Hyland, 2002). Hyland explains that “the use of I [is] critical to meaning and credibility, helping to establish the commitment of writers to their words and setting up a relationship with their readers” (Hyland, 2002, p. 1092). But international scholars are often unfamiliar with this device, and may be uncomfortable projecting their identities, under the impression that “author-evacuated” text (Geertz, 1988) is more objective, important and weighty (Hyland & Jiang, 2016).

In addition to projecting identity or presence in this way, writers of reflexive accounts need to express their perspective and position—and do so largely by means of attitude markers. Hyland (2005, p. 180) explains that “while attitude is expressed throughout a text by the use of subordination, comparatives ... punctuation, text location, and so on, it is most explicitly signalled by attitude verbs (e.g., agree, prefer), sentence adverbs (unfortunately, hopefully), and adjectives (appropriate, logical, remarkable)”. The challenge for writers is that, although frequently used in spoken communication, this complex array of linguistic devices is less familiar in written academic genres (Biber, 2006).

As a text genre, the reflexive account is somewhat elusive and difficult to describe, and it has received little attention from discourse analysts—other than perhaps in the form of autoethnography (Zienkowski, 2017). However, it would seem that in terms of discoursal options for reflexivity to be instantiated in text, writers can integrate this throughout a text, interspersing or weaving reflexive commentary through a more prototypical research report structured to review literature, to present methodology and findings, and to provide an interpretation of those findings; alternatively the reflexive commentary itself and the foci of that commentary can provide the macro structure of the text. This local vs global organisation is akin to Mathison’s (1996) analysis of writing a critique. But, it must be said, a point made by Mathison also, there are any number of manifestations combining elements of each of these in different degrees.

In the sections above, we have discussed the reasons for choosing to work with international scholars to write reflexive accounts, but we have also pointed to the fact that such accounts are not merely re-written researcher diaries—they represent diverse text forms and demand discoursal organisation and linguistic features that scholars may have little familiarity with or may feel uncomfortable using. For this reason we recognised the need for careful scaffolding best afforded through a collaborative writing group that operated over a number of sessions. In the following section, we describe how our collaborative writing group operated, beginning with an explanation of how we framed the initial call for proposals.

Our collaborative writing group

Framing the call for proposals

The noted success of postgraduate writing groups informed our decision to establish a writing group arrangement for international postgraduate scholars at The University of Waikato. Our aim was to provide a publishing opportunity for scholars based on their masters and/or doctoral research by facilitating a pedagogic arrangement that would reduce the gap between the students’ thesis writing and writing for academic publication. The concept for establishing a writing group originated from an international postgraduate students symposium that was held at the conclusion of 2016. We were impressed with the quality of presentations and the rich research that was being conducted by our

international scholars, and we wanted to support them to move from presentation to publication. To address this need, we invited scholars to submit a 1000 word proposal to be part of a collaborative writing group arrangement which took place during one semester in 2017. From these proposals, five international postgraduate scholars were selected to be part of this publication project.

It was our intention for scholars to write an article that would not interfere with future publishing opportunities. We felt that they should save their data for publications aligned to their particular research field and methodology. For this reason, we framed a proposal around an alternative text type that brought reflexivity to the fore. In truth, this was somewhat of an exploration for us, both in terms of process and product. We developed a proposal template with a view to providing initial guidance on a possible structure. As it included the prototypical parts of a research article, with interwoven prompts to encourage reflexive self-analysis on each part of the research process, it presented a local not global way of instantiating reflexivity in text (see Appendix 1). The focus on reflexivity was inclusive in the way that it invited participation from international postgraduate students at all stages of their research journey. This encouraged involvement from both masters and doctoral students and it also included those working at the beginning and end phases of their postgraduate research.

The workshop sequence

Following the proposal submission process, we organised a series of workshops that supported a collaborative pedagogical arrangement. We structured a learning arrangement that was collaborative, scaffolded, and provided feedback and feedforward from both peers and more experienced academics. In the remainder of this section we describe the sequence of workshops and give particular consideration to the features that we feel underpinned its success.

Workshop 1

In workshop 1 we discussed the function of the workshops and explained that the group setting would provide the opportunity for peer feedback. We sought permission from individual scholars for their work to be shared amongst the group. We also discussed the notion of reflexivity—a concept not familiar to all—and provided an opportunity for students to briefly share their own reflexive account of their research journey to-date. The group was able to listen to the varying experiences, tensions, challenges and perspectives that each scholar had encountered on their research journey. The article, *'Outing' the researcher* (Finlay, 2002b), was also provided as a springboard for discussion. We encouraged scholars to begin writing their article by expanding on the initial writing prompts, and developing areas where they had already engaged in some reflexivity during their research such as those supported by, or codified in, the form of researcher diaries.

Workshop 2

Scholars made the first draft of their articles available in a collective online folder a week before the gathering. We provided feedback on the article-in-progress by asking questions and providing further reflexive prompts. We created a self-assessment checklist as a guideline to encourage scholars to think about the layout, features and content of their articles. We discussed and collaborated on this checklist with the scholars, and amendments were made as a result of this discussion (see Appendix 2). We broke scholars up into pairs with a writing mentor to discuss their feedback. This provided an opportunity for individual and collective questions and for scholars to seek clarification about the nature and scope of the article. At this stage there were still questions about the style of writing, as writing reflexively was not familiar to some. Reflexivity required scholars to demonstrate their authorial presence and this was not yet a comfortable or familiar style of writing for all scholars.

Workshop 3

Prior to workshop 3, scholars continued to write their article in their own time and they made their draft available to all members a week before the third workshop. In this workshop they worked in small groups to provide feedback to each other based on the self-assessment criteria (see Appendix 2). At the conclusion of this workshop scholars each received peer feedback, which they used to inform and strengthen their final draft.

Workshop 4

Scholars worked to complete their draft article before the final session. Rather than meeting as a collective group, scholars met individually with the publishing mentors to discuss feedback from their draft article. This provided an opportunity for scholars to ask questions, clarify any misconceptions and seek further advice. Following this final workshop, scholars worked to finalise their articles based on this formative feedback.

Final review

We considered it important for students to also experience a blind peer review process in preparation for future publishing opportunities. The final articles were sent to two reviewers who reviewed and provided feedback on each of the articles. Scholars worked to make any final changes to their article before being submitted to the journal administrator for formatting and proofreading. Finally, the proof-reader's decisions were addressed by the authors. The entire process, from proposal to publication, was achieved within an academic year.

Towards producing a reflexive account

In focusing on reflexivity, we aimed to strengthen students' authorial identities in a way that drew specifically on their research experiences, many of which were recorded in researcher journals or diaries. Producing a reflexive account allowed scholars to draw on the notion of reflexivity from a range of different standpoints and experiences and in the context of their own research. This enabled writers to bridge the formal and prototypical with the experiential and personal. Reflexivity became a collective thread that knitted the diverse research articles together. The collective focus on reflexivity provided scholars with multiple signposts and markers to guide their way through the "perilous path" (Finlay, 2002a, p. 227) towards reflexivity. Importantly, this focus on reflexivity brought both cohesion and diversity to the collaborative writing project.

Our collaborative writing project used Kuo's (2008) reflexive categories to frame questions in the initial article proposal (see Appendix 1). It was our intention to use this as a basis to draw out the 'backstory' in each research journey. This brought hidden processes to light and helped to build writing confidence. The remainder of this section uses Kuo's (2008) categorisation of reflexivity to demonstrate the outcome of this reflexive questioning.

Epistemological reflexivity

Scholars were prompted to interrogate their own ontological and epistemological positioning. For some, this reflexive self-analysis exposed inconsistencies between their unconscious ontological and epistemological positioning and their own research paradigm. This awareness evoked a deeper level of reflexive self-analysis as scholars considered their unexamined positioning and how this had influenced their interactions, interpretations and construction of knowledge throughout the research process. Epistemological reflexivity was an important way for scholars to expose hidden beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowledge construction.

Personal reflexivity

This reflexive focus gave scholars space to examine “narratives of the self” (Finlay, 2002a, p. 211) by ‘outing’ (Finlay, 2002b) their unconscious motivations, hidden bias, preconceptions and prejudices. Without such a clear and deliberate focus on reflexivity, these agendas may have remained concealed within unconscious actions and unexamined thoughts. Some scholars acknowledged that this writing project gave them time and space to critically examine the inner workings of their own consciousness. Such process, while of great importance for all qualitative researchers, can sometimes be overlooked in the haste to meet the tight timeframes set for masters and doctoral thesis completion.

Methodological reflexivity

We encouraged scholars to refer back to their field notes and research journals as a way to shine the spotlight on their methodological decision-making. Some scholars found solace in expressing their “methodological log of research decisions” (Finlay, 2002a, p. 532) in a purposeful and meaningful space. Without doing so, the depths and complexities of this reflexive self-analysis may have remained hidden within the pages of research journals and field notes. This writing project provided a legitimate platform for scholars to explore the nuanced complexities of methodological reflexivity throughout each stage of the research process.

Towards publishing a reflexive account: Overview of the special section

Despite Kuo’s (2008) categorisation of reflexivity into a neat and contained compendium, the process towards reflexivity is ambiguous, challenging and complex (Finlay, 2002a). In fact, Finlay (2002a) describes reflexivity as a “perilous path” (p 227) that is “full of muddy ambiguity and multiple trails as researchers negotiate the swamp of interminable deconstructions, self analysis and self disclosure” (Finlay, 2002b, p. 209). Not only is pursuing reflexivity a lonely path, but few clear markers are available to guide emerging scholars in how to produce a reflexive account. Reflexive accounts are rarely explicitly addressed in academic literature (Zienkowski, 2017), and tend to be hidden within publications on methodology or research findings. We believe that the process by which we worked with scholars to build their reflexive accounts, and the diverse texts that we now have to share in this special section, goes some small way towards making this a clearer path. The remainder of this article returns to Kuo’s (2008) categories of reflexivity to introduce each author and to highlight their unique reflexive contribution to this special section.

Epistemological reflexivity

Ilavarasi’s article provides a delightful example of epistemological reflexivity. Despite positioning herself as a qualitative researcher, Ilavarasi’s reflexive account reveals the strong influence of positivism from her cultural background and previous academic experiences. By exposing and interrogating her own internal narratives, she examines this epistemological mismatch with raw honesty. Ilavarasi explores how reflexive self-analysis exposed this lingering positivist stance and how this unintentionally influenced the way she initially approached her doctoral research.

Personal reflexivity

Macam’s article provides a clear example of personal reflexivity in the way that she draws particular attention to the politics of reflexive analysis. She adds voice to the unspoken political influences that have underpinned educational reform in her country. Macam documents the shift in her own ontological and epistemological positioning by ‘outing’ her journey towards critical consciousness. Macam’s article demonstrates how reflexivity has given her voice to unveil the political and economic factors that have influenced educational reform within her country.

Methodological reflexivity

Methodological reflexivity is showcased throughout this special section and tangibly demonstrates the different ways that scholars used reflexivity to examine methodological decision-making throughout their research. Boodhoo's article provides a reflexive account of key stages and strategies encountered in the early phase of his PhD. He gives expression to a more immediate and continuing self-awareness and demonstrates how reflexive analysis is an important way to document research decision throughout key stages of the PhD journey.

Al Hezam demonstrates how she used reflexive self-analysis to address methodological challenges during her field work. Al Hezam explains how time restrictions and financial constraints inhibited her ability to conduct research interviews in Saudi Arabia. Al Hezam's "confessional account" (Finlay, 2002b, p. 224) documents the change in her research design in response to these unintended challenges.

Finally, Lee presents an insightful account of how reflexive analysis brings translation issues to the fore as she sheds light on this overlooked aspect of qualitative research. As Lee explains, translation dilemmas are rarely explored in academic literature, yet these methodological 'backstories' provide a rich platform to enhance the trustworthiness of research data. Lee encourages us to interrogate our own language biographies and, in doing so, to consider how our own social and cultural positioning influences our engagement with the translation process.

References

- Amin, A., & Roberts, J. (2008). Knowing in action: Beyond communities of practice. *Research Policy*, 37, 353–369. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2007.11.003>
- Berger, R. (2013). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 15(2), 219–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112468475>
- Biber, D. (2006). *University language: A corpus-based study of spoken and written registers*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/scl.23>
- Chang, H., Ngunjiri, C., & Hernandez, K-A. C. (2016). *Collaborative autoethnography*. Oxon, England: Routledge.
- Cuthbert, C., & Spark, C. (2008). Getting a GRiP: Examining the outcomes of a pilot program to support graduate research students in writing for publication. *Studies in Higher Education*, 33(1), 77–88. Retrieved from <http://researchbank.rmit.edu.au/view/rmit:15647>
- Danaby, S., & Lee, A. (2012). Framing doctoral pedagogy as design and action. In A. Lee & S. Danby (Eds.), *Reshaping doctoral education: International approaches and pedagogies* (pp. 3–11). London, England: Routledge
- D'Cruz, H., Gillingham, P., & Melendez, S. (2007). Reflexivity, its meanings and relevance for social work: A critical review of the literature. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 37(1), 73–90. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcl001>
- Eraut, M. (2000). Non-formal learning and tacit knowledge in professional work. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70(1), 113–136. <https://doi.org/10.1348/000709900158001>
- Eraut, M. (2003). Transfer of knowledge between education and the workplace. In H.P.A. Boshuizen (Ed.), *Expertise development: The transition between school and work* (pp. 52–73). Heerlen, The Netherlands: Open Universiteit.
- Eraut, M. (2004). Informal learning in the workplace. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 26(2), 247–274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/158037042000225245>
- Eraut, M., & Hirsh, W. (2008). *The significance of workplace learning for individuals, groups and organisations*. Oxford, England: Skope/ESRC Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance.
- Finlay, L. (2002a). Negotiating the swamp: The opportunity and challenge of reflexivity in research practice. *Qualitative Research*, 2(2), 209–230. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146879410200200205>
- Finlay, L. (2002b). "Outing" the researcher: The provenance, process and practice of reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(3), 531–545. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104973202129120052>

- Franken, M. (2013). Significant knowledge transitions and resituation challenges in becoming a researcher. *International Journal for Researcher Development*, 4(2), 86–101. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRD-04-2013-0006>
- Geertz, C. (1988). *Works and lives: The anthropologist as author*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Gurr, G. M. (2001). Negotiating the ‘rackety bridge’: A dynamic model for aligning supervisory style with research student development. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 20(1), 81–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07924360120043882>
- Hyland, K. (2002). Authority and invisibility: Authorial identity in academic writing. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34, 1091–1112. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(02\)00035-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(02)00035-8)
- Hyland, K. (2005). Stance and engagement: A model of interaction in academic discourse. *Discourse Studies*, 7, 173–192. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445605050365>
- Hyland, K., & Jiang, F. K. (2016). Change of attitude? A diachronic study of stance. *Written Communication*, 33(3), 251–274. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088316650399>
- Ivanič, R. (1998). *Writing and identity: The discursive construction of identity in academic writing*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/swll.5>
- Kamler, B. (2008). Rethinking doctoral publication practices: Writing from and beyond the thesis. *Studies in Higher Education*, 33(3), 283–294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0307570802049236>
- Kuo, Y-C. (2008). Negotiating researchers’ presence and reflexivity: Researching overseas students’ identities. *Reflecting Education*, 4(2), 51–67.
- Kwan, B. S. C. (2010). An investigation of instruction in research publishing offered in doctoral programs: The Hong Kong case. *Higher Education*, 59, 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9233-x>
- Lassig, C. J., Dhillon, L. H., & Diezmann, C. M. (2013). Student or scholar? Transforming identities through a research writing group. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 35(3), 299–314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2012.746226>
- Lee, A., & Boud, D. (2003). Writing groups, change and academic identity: Research development as local practice. *Studies in Higher Education* 28(2), 187–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/030757032000058109>
- Lee, A., & Murray, R. (2013). Supervising writing: Helping postgraduate students develop as researchers. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 52(5), 558–570. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2013.866329>
- Lei, J., & Hu, G. (2015). Apprenticeship in scholarly publishing: A student perspective on doctoral supervisors’ roles. *Publications*, 3, 27–42. <https://doi.org/10.3390/publications3010027>
- Li, L. Y., & Vandermensbrugge, J. (2011). Supporting the thesis writing process of international research students through an ongoing writing group. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 48(2), 195–205. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2011.564014>
- Lindkvist, L. (2005). Knowledge communities and knowledge collectivities: A typology of knowledge work in groups. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(6), 1189–1210. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2005.00538.x>
- Mathison, M. A. (1996). Writing a critique, a text about a text. *Written Communication*, 13, 314–354. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088396013003002>
- Newbury, D. (2001). Diaries and fieldnotes in the research process. *Research Issues in Art Design and Media*, 1, 1–17. Retrieved from http://www.wordsinspace.net/course_material/mrm/mrmreadings/riadmIssue1.pdf
- Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2), 175–196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839032000060635>
- Rath, J., & Mutch, C. (2014). *Emerging critical scholarship in education: Navigating the doctoral journey*. Newcastle upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Evaluating ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6(2), 253–255. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040000600207>
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803932>

- Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization*, 7(2), 225–246. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135050840072002>
- Young, J. (2012). *Personal knowledge capital: The inner and outer path of knowledge creation in a web world*. Oxon, England: Chandos Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1533/9781780633664>
- Zienkowski, J. (2017). Reflexivity in the transdisciplinary field of critical discourse studies. *Palgrave Communications*, 3, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2017.7>

Appendix 1

1. An introduction
 - How did you arrive at your topic? How did it change over time?
2. A literature review representing a case for research questions
 - How did you select literature? How did you determine the research questions? How did these change over time?
3. Methods used to generate data
 - How did you initially conceive of the data gathering process when you planned it and when you applied for ethics approval? Did you change or deviate from the plan? What prompted changes and deviations both in your planning and in conducting of the data gathering?
4. Findings or observations
 - What data did you not report on in your findings or observations? To what extent did changes and deviations in your data gathering impact on your observations or findings?
5. Discussion
 - How useful is this research for your own context? How has this research contributed to our understanding of conducting research in your own context?
6. Conclusion
 - What recommendations do you have for postgraduate scholars conducting research in similar areas to your own? How has this research shaped your own identity as a developing researcher?

Appendix 2: Peer Review Guidelines

Author's name: _____ Reviewer's name: _____

Article Features	Criteria	Yes	No	N/A
Title	Does the title convey the key ideas in the article? Would it ensure hits from internet searches? Is it interesting or catchy? Does it contain fewer than 15 words?			
Keywords	Does the article list up to five keywords under the abstract? Do the key words provide adequate coverage of the content of the article? Would the key words ensure hits from internet searches?			
Aims	Is there an identified gap that the article seeks to address? Does the gap relate to both the research content and the reflexive content?			
Coverage and scope	Does the article have: An abstract? (250 words) Keywords (3–5) An introduction? A literature review? A methodology section? A findings section? A discussion? A conclusion? Does the article meet the aims of the 'special section' (refer to original call for proposals)? Does the article document the research so that the reader understands what was involved? Is the research content underpinned by research and theoretical literature? Is the reflexive content underpinned by research and/or theoretical literature?			
Conceptual clarity and contribution	Are key concepts explained? Are ideas clearly expressed and does the text avoid unnecessarily complex language? Does it have something worthwhile and original to say?			
Structure	Is the structure adequately signposted e.g., by using subheadings? Does the article flow between sections? Are connections made to what has been covered and what will be covered?			

Article Features	Criteria	Yes	No	N/A
Style	Does the style engage the reader? Is there evidence of reflexive voice throughout the article? Will it be understandable to an international audience?			
Referencing	Are references used appropriately (including quotations) in APA? Are reference lists accurately compiled in APA? Do in-text references and items in the reference list match?			
Layout	Are there no more than three levels of headings? Are tables, figures and illustrations appropriately labelled?			
Surface aspects of text	Is it free of grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors? Is the article no more than 6,000 words (including references)? Is it single-spaced? Is the text Times New Roman 11 point font?			
Strengths				
Suggestions for improvement				

Adapted from Rath and Mutch (2014)