

Introduction

This anthology is the result of a partnership between us, the editors, in developing higher education pedagogies over the last few years, with a focus especially on teacher education. Our collaboration started immediately after we first met each other at the International Conference of Philosophical Practice in Bern, Switzerland, in 2016. The collaboration has resulted in several co-facilitated Dialogos philosophical practice workshops (Helskog, 2019; Weiss & Helskog, 2020) inside and outside teacher education, as well as several co-authored articles (see e.g. Helskog & Weiss, 2021a; Marcussen, Weiss & Helskog, 2021). Up until now, our joint work has circled around research in our own teaching practice, with the aim of gradually influencing teacher education to seek inspiration from and place itself in the humanities rather than in the social sciences (see Helskog & Weiss, 2021b). Our stance is that teachers, who now need a master degree in order to qualify as teachers, need to develop practical wisdom and ethical and existential sensibility in addition to theoretical and evidence-based knowledge. This goes also for those who work as teachers in higher education in general, educating professionals such as nurses, social workers, therapists, soldiers, police, or other teachers.

When initiating the present anthology, we took our collaboration one step further. We now created an interdisciplinary research group with members primarily from the University of South-Eastern Norway. Some having participated in the inter disciplinary phd-course Pedagogical Competence Development and Educational quality led by Guro in the years 2018-2023, others having collaborated with Michael on Folk high school pedagogy, and others with us both in the field of philosophical practice or in general teaching and research work in higher education. In the context of this anthology, the research group have worked closely together in the phenomenological, hermeneutical and epistemological exploration of pedagogy in higher education, thus edifying each other through reflecting upon our teaching practices and contributing to the further development of reflective practice research. This research approach, which focuses on developing practical knowledge, was initiated at Nord Universitet in Norway by Professor Anders Lindseth and colleagues. The approach takes its point of departure in experiences from professionals' concrete practices, which are then reflected upon critically and theoretically, gradually leading towards deeper and more universal levels awareness of, for instance, existential and ethical aspects of one's educational actions. Hence, all the contributors of this anthology take their point of departure in concrete examples or cases

from their own practice as educators in higher education. Some of the cases are so-called *experiences of discrepancy*, that is, experiences of failure, unsatisfied expectations or the intuition that something is not quite right in one's practice. Others are experiences of wonderment and awe, or of being existentially moved. The overall aim of the contributions has been to give *expression* to something that has made an *impression*, as Lindseth (2015, p. 247) puts it, and further, to investigate themes emerging from these experiences, reflecting upon them in more general, theoretical and philosophical terms. Since all the authors take their point of departure in experiences from practice, the natural choice of writing genre is the essay (Lindseth, 2020, see also Weiss, 2015, Helskog, 2017). The contributions thus roughly follow this structure:

1. Concrete and original reflection, where the experience is narrated "straight from the heart."
2. Critical reflection, where 2-3 core themes are drawn from the experience guided by the question, "What is at stake in this narrative?"
3. Theoretical reflection, where the themes are reflected upon in more general terms, drawing on philosophical as well as theoretical perspectives and research literature.

Facilitating the reflection and writing process

The process-oriented writing structure was inspired by the work with the anthology project "Creative academic writing", which Iben Brinch¹ was editor for together with Norunn Askeland in the period 2017-2019 (Askeland and Jørgensen, 2019), in which Helskog contributed with an essay about essay writing (Helskog, 2019). We invited professor emeritus Anders Lindseth to be part of the research group, also giving him a guiding role with us in the writing process. Hence, the writing process itself was an experiment in reflective practice research.

Having roots across a variety of primarily USN study programs, but also in other higher education contexts such as gestalt therapy and military education, this book shows the potential of reflective practice research as a way to develop both professional practice, teaching practice and research practice, as illustrated through the following 12 chapters:

In chapter 1, Helskog and Weiss challenge the currently dominant approach of so-called evidence-based practice and research by means of a concrete experience of discrepancy during a workshop in teacher

¹ Iben Brinch changed her last name from *Brinch Jørgensen* to Brinch during the years between the two anthologies

education. As an alternative, reflective practice research is suggested in terms of a relational and dialogical *methodos*, which opens up for a kaleidoscopic multi-perspectivism without falling prey to relativism while simultaneously fostering practical wisdom in terms of phronesis.

Chapter 2, by Siv Merethe Kapstad, discusses the characteristics of a student-centred learning environment and the basic pedagogical assumptions that might lead to success in such an environment. In the discussion, it is argued that when there is a change in the roles of the actors involved, the framework of the education must also change to enable the incentives for all parties to be linked to the premise of learning as a journey.

In chapter 3, Johan Lövgren describes a teaching experience of a university class for which he did not have time to prepare. With several years of experience as a folk high school teacher, he ended up with a session based on a *Bildung*-pedagogy with the focus on dialogical processes and reflections involving the whole person of the student.

Chapter 4, by Johan Bergh, examines the concept of role models in a Norwegian military context. Through a reflective practice approach, the author puzzles over two particular significant personal experiences that made everlasting impressions on him. In the course of the chapter, he concludes that as defenders of liberation, military leaders and teachers must engage in liberating, not oppressive actions as something crucial both for personal and institutional development.

In chapter 5, Pål-Erik Eidsvig reflects on his own practice as a math teacher in order to learn and develop as a researcher. By sharing a concrete situation from his time as a high school teacher, he examines what it means to see the individual pupil and how the theme of self-efficacy can be related to that.

In chapter 6, Kristin Støren and Anne Liv Kaarstad Lie use two narratives from participants at a conference for school leaders, reflecting upon how school leaders might have gained new understanding. They discuss the use of reflection as a pathway to explore the association between the use of rich data sources and the deep learning process. In the discussions, the interpersonal relations are linked to assumptions in the national core curriculum.

The starting point of chapter 7 by Iben Brinch is an experience of trying out the practice of writing place- and material-based texts with a group of PhD students. The author asks if and how this type of writing can be used pedagogically not only to motivate the scholar for writing but also to promote transformation both of the scholar and the students, getting closer to a theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of place- and material-based writing as a discourse, social practice, and form of rhetoric.

Chapter 8, by Camilla Angelton, explores signs that bring life to the good dialogue, reflecting upon one example of a teacher-student dialogue in teacher education that did not go so well and another example where the dialogue created a bobbling, energizing feeling in the author.

In chapter 9, Vikram Kolmannskog reflects upon his experience of facilitating the workshop ‘Buddhist Practices and Gestalt Therapy’, in which the theme of *death* appeared suddenly and unexpectedly. The author describes and reflects upon the exploration of the phenomenon, identifying the core themes of “daring to explore death”, “looking deeply and directly at death”, and “dialoguing about death”. The author argues that reflecting on such themes can be enriching and a resource for continued teaching practice.

In chapter 10, Shari Bloom presents compiled vignettes reflecting her own and her students’ experiences with Dimensions in Testimony, an interactive digital storytelling app where students can virtually dialogue with a pre-recorded real-life Holocaust survivor named “Pinchas.” The reflections raise concern about ethics and the possible somatic and liminal void that emerges in relation to interactive “inquiry-based” artificial intelligence technology that turns humans into digitized humanish chat-objects.

In chapter 11, Sebastian Rehnman and Anders Lindseth – two philosophical counselors and professors of philosophy in higher education – reflect on their experiences of seeking to deepen not only their understanding of themselves but also their understanding of understanding ourselves in confidential conversations. They argue that conversing confidentially is neither “inner” nor “outer”. The text is written by Rehnman.

While chapter 11 focuses on conversing, chapter 12 focuses on individual journaling, where Sebastian Rehnman explores the relationship between the diarist’s experience and the diary, arguing that the connection between writing and experience is conceptual, and that well-being is about leading a worthwhile life.

Summing up

Altogether the 12 chapters provide a variety of perspectives on the theme *higher education pedagogies*, in line with the kaleidoscopic epistemology outlined and argued in chapter 1 by Helskog and Weiss (2023). While Thorsted and Hansen (2022) use the word epistemology only about Husserl-inspired phenomenological research, we argue that since research, in one way or another, deals with generating new knowledge or insight, there is not really a way to escape epistemology even when it comes to writing phenomenological research texts. The writing down of research will

always be about sharing insight, whether one chooses what Thorsted and Hansen call a first order factual approach, a second order existential being-approach, or a third order revelational mystery approach to experience. All three approaches are relevant to reflective practice research, as all three approaches will generate insight derived from a practitioner's experience.

The editors

Michael Noah Weiss and Guro Hansen Helskog

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