



Guest Editorial:
Evidence-Based Approaches and Practises in Phenomenology: Evidence and Pedagogy

by **Kathleen Galvin and Sally Borbasi**

In bringing together this special edition we wish to contribute to a conversation concerning the meaning of 'evidence-based practice'. We are nurses and phenomenological researchers interested in lifeworld approaches and in the many ways of knowing that are relevant to everyday caring practice. In the context of the ever-increasing specialisation of knowledge, we wish to widen the embrace of current notions of evidence and point to ways of knowing that are inclusive of the 'head, hand and heart'. This wider embrace of evidence does not excessively exclude kinds of knowledge that include the aesthetic, empathic, embodied and relational dimensions of understanding.

In particular, this special edition aims to attend to the ways in which phenomenological inquiry can facilitate embodied relational understanding within a pedagogical context. The term 'embodied relational understanding' has been used to refer to ways of knowing that have often been neglected in traditional educational contexts, and includes embodied and relational dimensions of understanding. A current challenge to phenomenology concerns its contribution towards facilitating a range of pedagogical strategies that may empower this more inclusive form of knowing. For example, we can ask how narrative, poetry, mythology, film and literature can be drawn upon in a phenomenologically sensitive and rigorous way in order to facilitate lived understandings in others (our students, our clients, our professional colleagues). We can also ask what pedagogical approaches should guide practice in education, psychotherapy, health and social care, media studies,

ecology, cultural studies, and other disciplines that benefit from understandings of 'what it is like'. Finally, we can ask how we can teach and communicate existential issues in ways that facilitate 'touched understandings'.

This edition of the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* provided an opportunity to bring together contributions that approach these concerns from a number of different philosophical, aesthetic and disciplinary perspectives. Several of the papers in this edition are philosophical contemplations of kinds of knowing and kinds of evidence, while others are empirical illustrations of how to facilitate lived understandings in others of 'what something is like'.

Russell Walsh explores the role of evidence and argument in phenomenological research. Through recalling the features of original argument, he proceeds to consider what counts as evidence in phenomenological research. Walsh names more than one approach to evidence and knowing, and contrasts rhetorical, demonstrative and dialectical approaches to argument, exploring proposed parallels to first, second, and third person perspectives. In the words of one reviewer, "Both the spirit of Husserl and Gadamer are honoured for different reasons and held in creative tension" in this thought provoking paper. The paper offers a deeply thoughtful explication of the evidence-based nature of phenomenological research.

Nigel Rapport offers a nourishing and 'ticklish' philosophical paper that is a masterful integration of

literature, epistemology and concern for humankind. Based on Nietzsche, Rapport offers refreshed ground for the *IPJP* readership, providing a distinctive integrative discussion of science, individual existence and culture. In the first part of his article, Rapport contemplates the ways in which ‘shy’ and ‘ticklish’ truths can be made part of (his) human experience and offers twelve ‘truths’ of the moment: The constant movement of the world and its contents; the fullness of each moment; the ontogenic nature of experience; the uniqueness of things; the mystery of things; the ambiguity of symbols; the parochialism of habit; the recourse of myopia; the recourse of the banal; the ethics of partiality; the norm of personality; and the complexity of reality. In the second part of the article these truths are considered in the context of modes of human knowing, both scientific and artistic. We are reminded metaphorically of the importance of ‘the flower’ and the ‘roots’ of the world, the complexity of fleeting glimpses of a world that we experience as unique individuals here in this moment. At the heart of his paper is a more nuanced call for ‘respect’, an openness to the ‘ticklish’, a ‘subtle evidencing’ and ‘appreciation’ that sets a tone for a wider view of evidence-based practice. In our view, this is a very refreshing approach for our field.

Linda Finlay contributes an excellent phenomenological account of the pain she experienced following a devastating fall that severely damaged her shoulder. Finlay theorises the writing of her account to demonstrate the ways in which it is truly phenomenological rather than a piece of naive self-absorption. Producing narrative of this quality takes skill. Finlay’s rigorous multi-layered and reflexive process results in the production of a really useful piece of work that demonstrate what makes good autobiographical phenomenology while at the same time providing powerful insight into the lived experience of pain. To quote one of the reviewers of this text:

The ‘tour de force’ of this paper is the decanting of raw, lived experience, the retrospective analysis from life-world themes and the subsequent enrichment of the first-person narrative that is brought to life vividly through words which follow an earlier stated objective – ‘to speak to the imagination, heart and soul’:

- The author interrogates herself “What does this mean? Can I endure this another minute, hour, day, week, month, year, years?”
- Re-viewing her experience through multi-sensory cues which tease out the visceral texture she writes of ‘screeching-sheering, red-black pain’.
- Grappling with body-world disunity she

observes – ‘...slowly, I returned to life.’

Furthermore, the act of writing is placed centre-stage. Non-professional engagement in the creative ‘ebb and flow’ of the arts is proposed yet the author also acknowledges the inevitable struggle to move beyond traumatic, embodied memory triggered by this reflexive enquiry. It is to be hoped that this creative template and process will inspire others to commit to provide educationalists and clinicians alike with the invaluable resource of first-person life-writing through which to deepen our knowledge and understanding.

In their article, Ulrica Hörberg and Lise-Lotte Ozolins draw on the writings of Merleau-Ponty in the context of using film as pedagogy in caring science. Their study explores how watching films that illustrate human existential conditions, health and suffering can bolster reflection and understanding in students studying nursing. Data analysed through a reflective life world approach generated a number of themes suggesting a transformation in students’ thinking following exposure and follow-up support. The authors’ findings call for educators to adopt lifeworld portrayals as a powerful medium for student development and produce several strategies for structuring optimal learning support.

Moving from film to literary fiction, Jennifer Schulz advocates literature as a vehicle of, and for evoking, immediate experience. She suggests that literary fiction provides a window into the human condition. Drawing on her own reflections of initially being a psychotherapist and now a literary teacher in pursuit of better understanding of the meaning and lived experience of neuroses, she explores the dialectical relationship between these two fields. Using first-hand accounts of leading reading literature classes in psychology, Schulz introduces the notion of the lived experience of reading literary texts, which she describes as ‘evocation’. In describing the impact of evocation on her own practice, Schulz gives voice to the experiences of reading literature as well as of sitting with clients, and through this she goes on to contemplate the ways in which these quite different experiences can inform each other.

Mical Sikkema writes a compelling piece on the power of meeting ‘heart to heart’. Drawing on the work of Buber and Gendlin in addition to fictive narrative philosophy, and through descriptions of moments in her life that have ‘touched’ her, the author explores the nature of meeting ‘heart to heart’ and of ‘being in the moment’ to articulate the centrality of love in ‘transformative’ moments of life. In addition to skilfully arguing her use of the word love to illustrate the phenomenon, Sikkema’s rich

descriptions of deep encounter and authentic meeting clearly demonstrate their transformative power in a world in which such moments are rare. Through carefully considered insight and scholarship the author has succeeded in writing a lived experience text that has powerful pedagogical potential in psychotherapy and related disciplines.

Kate Galvin and Les Todres's article describes how poetry and phenomenological research can come together to increase shared understanding of human phenomena through an attempt 'to awaken presences'. They consider how embodied or palpable knowing is particularly important in facilitating shared understandings by reflecting on a process where participants engaged in co-operative poetry writing through Renga (Japanese interactive writing). The paper draws out the epistemological implications of phenomenology as embodied knowing and sharing, and makes a case for a definition of evidence that is intimately intertwined with first and second person perspectives.

Kevin Krycka invites readers to consider the role that embodied intelligence can play in social change; he focuses on new ways of speaking about embodied processes, what he calls 'peacebuilding from the inside'. Using Gendlin's process model, Krycka clearly articulates the distinctiveness of change where 'bodily recognition' has a different form and function than 'a change of mind' and makes a case for a different mode of knowing necessary to successfully contribute to a just and sustainable world. He calls our attention to phenomenologically oriented understandings of social change that begin in the lived body and that are not bounded by structure. 'Peacebuilding' here comprises an inward space and is a seamless process, referencing the lived body and leaning forward into sociality. The body is not an instrument but 'an instance of the in-dwelling and becoming processes involved in thinking and behaving'. As such, embodied 'change from the inside' is highly generative and holds an important

place in the realm of evidence-based practice.

Using philosophy and poetry, Finn Hansen offers a deep consideration of the distinction and relationship between poetic dwelling and philosophical 'Socratic' wonder. His paper is written in an enquiring spirit that controversially challenges the phenomenological community. Finn's draws upon Socrates, Heidegger, Gadamer and Kierkegaard, and offers philosophical consideration of wonder as distinct from investigation. He points to a kind of philosophical openness, a felt practice or a presence of something, and further argues that this presence cannot be apprehended directly through research methods. He also particularly expresses concern about a research vocabulary that is 'loaded with psychological language'. Hansen contends that it is through the concrete lived experience of 'doing Socratic dialogue' that we will hear that poetic dwelling and Socratic wonder are not the same. Poetic dwelling helps us to resonate with being, but Socratic Wonder helps us to find our response to this calling.

This edition of the *IPJP* contains a coherent and novel collection of papers that contribute to a wider view of evidence that hopefully offers a movement towards the 're-enchantment' of knowledge. It is our hope that this special edition stimulates and adds weight to the debate concerning the role that aesthetic, embodied and shared understandings may have in generating, using and learning from evidence that begins in the life world. In addition (so as to not create an ending but a beginning), this journey and these life worlds hold up innovative ways of pressing into the world. The *IPJP* and the Editor-in-Chief, Chris Stones, have given us an opportunity to exchange in alternative conceptualizations and practices of research in early childhood education. We thank them from the depths of our hearts and minds. Re-searching the phenomenon, the experience, the situated meaning takes us into an unconventional paradigm; one we hope to engage, enact, interrogate, and challenge to grow rhizomatically.

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About the Authors



While nursing, Kate undertook a doctoral study concerning the evaluation of nurse-led practice using conventional research methods. Ironically, this drew her towards qualitative approaches and reminded her of her formative literary-rich education in Ireland and what had been lost in her specialized nurse education: a 'nourished' scholarship that incorporated the literary traditions, story, poetry and reflections on experiential meaning.

Observations in clinical practice at that time sensitised her to the reductionist nature of practice in contrast to the depth and detail of what people go through in suffering and in illness. Kate came to realise that knowing what to do in practice as a nurse didn't always come directly from a technical perspective; rather it came from somewhere deeper and she became fascinated with this 'deeper' could mean. This led to conversations with colleagues about existential issues and phenomenology, and to the work of the human science community.

The world of phenomenology opened a path to the fullness of her earlier experiences, and how poetry and written language are able to convey something richer than science and which is palpably present. This journey culminated in the development, with Swedish colleagues, of a lifeworld led approach to education which, later, was used by Kate when leading two innovative curricula developments at Bournemouth University: a professional doctorate and a set of lifeworld-led undergraduate education materials.

Kate has been pursuing interests in phenomenological research, existential philosophy, and poetry in a number of concerns in Health and Social Care, particularly regarding the meaning of 'what it means to care'. With Les Todres, she has written papers on the humanisation of care, a more contemplative approach to education for caring practices, and a developing theory of well-being. This work is to be published (2012) in a book called 'Caring and Well-being: A Lifeworld-led Approach'.

Kate is currently Professor of Nursing Practice at Faculty of Health and Social Care, University of Hull, UK.

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Professor Borbasi is a registered nurse and has extensive teaching and research experience in the tertiary sector. She has an acute-care background and her research interests cover a wide range of issues around health care delivery.

An academic with over 23 years' experience in nursing education, Sally has co-ordinated and taught many undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across a number of universities in Australia, including the University of Sydney (NSW), the University of Adelaide and Flinders University (South Australia).

In June 2010 Sally was appointed to the position of Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching (Faculty of Health Sciences) at the Australian Catholic University (Brisbane campus).

Professor Borbasi has been involved in various qualitative and quantitative research projects and has special expertise in qualitative methodology, particularly phenomenology. Moreover, she has been invited to speak on research matters at differing forums both within and outside of the academy on numerous occasions. Sally has also supervised a number of higher degree-by-research students to completion, and serves as a reviewer for several journals.

Sally's current research interests include acute care, aged care and disability, and, more recently, the scholarship of teaching and learning in the Higher Education sector. Sally is co-editor of a research text for undergraduate nursing students that is now in its third edition.

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