

## Academic Praxis: An Editorial Note

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The recent special issue which I co-edited with my colleague, Liz Jackson, discussing dilemmas affecting the freedoms of speech, teaching and learning in the post-truth age (see Oleksiyenko and Jackson 2020), points to the importance of developing an academic praxis, in which each of us continually questions the purposes, processes and values of teaching, learning and inquiry. These days, I am increasingly inclined to think of higher learning as a journey of ceaseless introspection, which starts with the first steps in early childhood education, and intensifies with each ensuing level attained. On the way up, wider vistas open up and the notion of learning acquires a different sense of discovery. Climbing higher means seeing more, further and deeper. Those who love to explore mountain trails – Hong Kong being renowned for its myriad of scenic hiking spots – can likely immediately visualise this concept of multidimensional discovery.

Embarking on complex intellectual projects in higher education requires learners to re-examine themselves through disparate texts, discourses and imaginaries, which reveal new perspectives on the horizon, as well as unexpected depths of the explored phenomena. As

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they consider problems in their communities and societies, learners hone the mastery of asking questions, and develop more sophisticated solutions to the challenges they experience in the turbulent and unpredictable world that surrounds them.

As more experienced “mountain guides”, teachers have the privilege of playing a significant part in the process of self-discovery in higher learning, as they can suggest where to stop, slow down, or take extra caution, drawing on their own experiences of self-exploration. Good teachers tend to have a supply of rich theoretical and experiential knowledge that students can use when shaping their personal and social selves, as they climb up the steep rocks of self-discovery. Good teachers can also provide a wide range of comparative perspectives, which allow their students to engage with innovative theories and practices in learning, and to encounter new subjects of interest. By creating a mutually engaging and respectful space for self-discovery, good teachers make the academic praxis more sophisticated, rewarding and exciting.

My own higher education journey and academic praxis, as well as those described in my volume on global mobility and higher learning (Oleksiyenko 2019) reveal significant benefits from having wise companions and guides, who can point out the right direction or dissuade one from taking the wrong path. Even when the advice and narratives of the important others seem enigmatic and fail to penetrate at first (higher learning can be steep and tiring indeed), one can certainly enjoy the sense of discovery in the long run. The world gets larger and more interesting when the benefits of good companionship materialize. In my role as

international journal editor of “Academic Praxis”, I feel fortunate to invite teachers and students from diverse cultures and educational backgrounds to engage in these explorations of higher learning, and share insights derived from their disparate experiences related to self-investigation and discovery.

As Ruth Hayhoe (2021) wisely argues, good scholarship tends to emerge when we dedicate ourselves to shaping the mastery of intellectual listening and creating spaces for diverse ideas and interpretations. As we delve deeper into the ideas and self-discoveries of others, we expand and sharpen our vision and develop new layers of curiosity and a desire to explore. At the same time, we gain opportunities to learn to listen to each other better, going further into each other’s stories, seeing and understanding each other deeply. Good academic praxis emerges from sharing that encourages a rethinking of lived experiences, experimentation with a higher level of creativity, and developing the courage to discover. My hope is that this journal can provide a vibrant space for this type of sharing to occur.

## References

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