

Spaces for Difference: opening doorways for challenges to the hegemony

Geof Hill, The Investigative Practitioner, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5775-9972>

Eva Heinrich, RMIT University, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4210-5444>

Jo-Anne Kelder, Jo-Anne Kelder Consulting, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8618-0537>

Michelle Picard, Flinders University, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3087-7407>

Prue Laidlaw, Charles Sturt University, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5104-0991>

Recommended Citation

Hill, G., Heinrich, E., Kelder, J.-A., Picard, M., & Laidlaw, P. (2025). Spaces for Difference: opening doorways for challenges to the hegemony, *Advancing Scholarship and Research in Higher Education* 6(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.59197/2vcyr577>

Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief: Professor Eva Heinrich, RMIT University, Australia

Editor: Dr Geof Hill, The Investigative Practitioner, Australia

Editor: Dr Jo-Anne Kelder, Jo-Anne Kelder Consulting, Australia

Editor: Professor Michelle Picard, Flinders University, Australia

Editor (Social Media): Associate Professor Prue Laidlaw, CSU, Australia.

Publication

Received: 16 Dec 2025

Accepted: 16 Dec 2025

Published: 17 Dec 2025

Spaces for Difference: opening doorways for challenges to the hegemony

Geof Hill, Eva Heinrich, Jo-Anne Kelder, Michelle Picard and Prue Laidlaw

Abstract

As ASRHE marks its fifth year of publication, this editorial reflects on the journal's evolution and announces significant changes to both our editorial team and publishing arrangements. We farewell Dr Geof Hill, whose expertise and energy have been instrumental in establishing ASRHE as a space for diverse scholarly voices in higher education research. This moment of transition invites deeper reflection on what it means to create genuinely inclusive research publication spaces. Through critical examination of our editorial practices, particularly encounters with Indigenous scholars whose epistemological approaches challenged traditional Western research writing conventions, we have recognised how journal practices can inadvertently create barriers to publication. This recognition has prompted us to reconsider what counts as research in an era of evolving paradigms, technologies, and ethical commitments. In response, ASRHE now welcomes a new submission format: poster-based research-in-progress papers that combine scholarly poster content with reflective commentary on the experience of developing and presenting research in this mode. This format acknowledges posters as legitimate scholarly communication while creating space for methodological innovation and diverse cultural approaches to knowledge sharing. Additionally, we announce ASRHE's move to the Open Access Publishing Association (OAPA), a transition that aligns with our commitment to diamond open access publishing and strengthens our position within an independent, society-owned publishing ecology. These changes reflect ASRHE's ongoing commitment to challenging hegemonic practices in research publication and creating authentic spaces for difference in higher education scholarship.

Keywords

Inclusive research practices, open access, critical reflection, editor

Foreword

ASRHE opened its doors in 2020. Five years later it is time to reflect and announce the first major change in our editorial team. Dr Geof Hill is leaving his editorial role at the end of the year to focus on exciting new research projects and publication ventures. Geof has been a tireless contributor to the development of ASRHE. Drawing from a deep knowledge base, Geof has substantially contributed to collaborative practices, resulting in the identification of reviewer and researcher capabilities. He was integral to the editorial team discussions in articulating

how to ensure academic rigour while being open to novel publication formats and research methodologies. We will sorely miss Geof's positivity and endless energy, but rest assured that he will remain a loyal supporter of ASRHE.

This editorial unfolds in three interconnected parts. Having farewelled Geof Hill and acknowledged his contributions to ASRHE's development, the editorial engages in critical reflection of topics close to Geof's heart—the development of our editorial practices, particularly in response to encounters with scholars whose work challenged traditional publication conventions. Finally, we announce ASRHE's transition to the Open Access Publishing Association, a move that aligns our publishing infrastructure with our values. Throughout, our collaborative writing process mirrors the peer review model that has become ASRHE's hallmark.

Reflections

A journal not only has obligations to ensure continuance of quality and academic rigour of its research publications. As gatekeepers and reflective practitioners, journal editors also need to be mindful of unwarranted barriers to research publication. There can be times when a journal continues to expect authors to meet codified expectations and follow editorial guidelines, believing that continuity assures academic standards and editorial expectations and quality. But, sometimes, this continuance of quality is also functioning as a barrier to innovation.

Recognising that one's practice has elements of discrimination involves drawing on critical reflection as a threshold in the broader practice of research publication. Applying critical reflection to a journal practice invites consideration of both the paradigms that underpin current editorial practices as well as the traditional practices that can be at odds with an emergent inquiry paradigm. As ASRHE editors we have interrogated our assumptions in relation to the impact of epistemology on research dissemination. We have also discussed how conference dissemination modes of plenary talks and posters can be augmented to suit journal publication.

The first of two opportunities for improving our journal practices arose in the context of a submission that was written in a non-Western culture's epistemology. Aligned with the ASRHE review ethos of working respectfully with authors, this drew attention to the ways in which some journal practices assumed to assure quality in fact created unwarranted barriers for indigenous writers publishing their research in ways that aligned with their epistemology. Through reflection and discussion, the editorial team opened their thinking to the broader idea that different cultures might approach research writing in distinctly different ways to how a Western journal approaches research publication. Consequently, we explored our journal's ways of evaluating submissions and made these more open to a range of different epistemologies. As editors, this invited going beyond the identified troubling about a particular sentence, claim or paragraph and asking ourselves how a particular epistemological view might be dominating an assessment of what an author is attempting to communicate. This critical experience

illuminates the thought processes that feed into review decisions and enable providing submitting authors with a very clear rationale underpinning such decisions.

Alongside the first opportunity, and impacting on the same practices and conclusions, we developed a sense of obligation in recognising that what counts as research writing—to cite Stenhouse's (1981) iconic paper titled '*What counts as research?*'—has undergone significant change over the years of journal publishing. New paradigms, new technologies and new ethical agendas all feed into new ways of thinking about research.

Amidst this plethora of catalysts for change is the emergence of new ways of presenting research, and particularly the rise of the poster as a conference presentation. Posters are often seen as the second order level of conference contribution, used to boost the number of conference delegates. Yet, posters are emerging as a mode of communication in their own right. Often the poster is used as a form of sharing research in its infancy. Still, producing a poster requires an author to marshal the knowledge about what is currently known about the issue or practice that is at the heart of their inquiry, to select suitable research steps, to analyse and synthesize. Recognising this, we contemplated the introduction of a new way of thinking about research-in-progress contributions.

This resulted in the second opportunity for re-evaluating both the position of the journal and the practices of peer reviewing, engaging with multiple poster submissions following ASRHE's initial call for poster-based articles. We asked authors to write about the content of their poster, the inquiry it represents, and their experiences and learnings from presenting the poster at a conference. The first submissions allowed us to reflect on the essential elements of research/inquiry papers that explore not only the content of the poster but also evaluate the experience of sharing those findings in a poster setting.

We now see how our journal's research-in-progress category can draw on the very experience of constructing and exhibiting one's inquiry in poster mode.

- What were the factors that influence the shape and appearance of the poster?
- What conversations did the poster promote?
- What new relationships emerged with poster readers as they individually made sense of how the authors described their inquiry?

Such innovations in submission formats and research representations reflect our commitment to removing epistemological and methodological barriers to publication. However, creating genuinely inclusive publication spaces requires addressing structural barriers as well. The formats we accept and the infrastructure we operate through must work in concert to challenge hegemonic practices in research publication. This recognition has guided our second major announcement.

The move to the Open Access Publishing Association

The commitment to removing barriers extends beyond submission formats to our publishing infrastructure. Just as traditional research writing conventions can exclude diverse epistemologies, commercial publishing models constrain whose voices are heard and who can access scholarly knowledge. Creating genuinely inclusive publication spaces requires not only welcoming diverse voices but also developing the infrastructure and capabilities to support those effectively.

The ASRHE journal has joined the Open Access Publishing Association (OAPA, 2023), founded in 2023 to challenge commercial publishing models. ASRHE is now hosted via OAPA's Open Journal Systems platform and receives publisher support from the association, while remaining owned by HERDSA and continuing the mission of supporting research and researchers in higher education.

We have made this move based on the value we place on diamond open access publishing—free to read and free to publish—and the trust we place in OAPA's commitment to open and just academic publishing. OAPA establishes a publishing ecology that provides society-owned and independent journals with development and support services without paywalls or interference by commercial publishing houses. Beyond infrastructure, OAPA builds scholarly community and capability through professional development programmes for editors and peer reviewers. Several of our reviewers have accessed these programmes this year, strengthening their capabilities to contributing to the collaborative practices that underpin ASRHE's distinctive peer review model. These opportunities, alongside monthly seminars and Special Interest Groups, demonstrate how operational structures can actively support rather than constrain the inclusive scholarship we seek to enable.

ASRHE enters its sixth year amid changes—farewelling Geof from the editorial team, publishing and innovating with the Open Access Publishing Association. What remains constant is the editorial team's ongoing commitment to critical self-examination. We continue to ask: Whose voices are centred in scholarly publication? What counts as legitimate research contribution? How can infrastructure embody rather than contradict values of openness and inclusion? These questions shape not only this editorial but ASRHE's continuing evolution as a space genuinely open to difference in higher education scholarship.

References

- Open Access Publishing Association. (2023). About. <https://open-publishing.org/about-us>
- Stenhouse, L. (1981). What counts as research? *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 29 (2), 103-114.