



## Editorial

# Navigating landscapes of practice through collaborative writing

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We are delighted to present the 2025 edition of the *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education's* Collaborative Conference Proceedings and Reflections. Four years into this journey, we find ourselves with a publishing approach that has grown beyond our initial vision, creating new possibilities for scholarly engagement that both respect and resist traditional boundaries between presenter and audience, and between individual voice and collective understanding.

This year's collection emerges from the 2025 ALDinHE Conference, hosted by the University of Greenwich under the theme 'Currency, Creativity, and Innovation in Learning Development'. The conference invited our learning community to explore how Learning Development (LD) might meet the evolving needs of our students by refreshing our approaches, embracing creative pedagogies, cultivating cross-disciplinary collaborations, rethinking evidence in learning, critically engaging with AI and other emerging technologies, and developing innovative responses to the multitude of challenges facing higher education. These themes and the way we approach them as a community resonate deeply with the 'landscapes of practice' framework (Wenger, 1998; Wenger-Trayner et al., 2014), which provides a compelling way to understand how learning happens across professional boundaries and through collaborative knowledge production. In a moment of serendipity, this connection became clear during my podcast conversation with the Wenger-Trayners themselves (Learning Development Project, November 2025), recorded just as I was writing this very editorial. Through the lens they offer, we can see how innovation emerges not necessarily from isolated endeavour or individual brilliance but from encounters within and across the boundaries that define our complex professional terrain in Learning Development.

Indeed, Etienne Wenger-Trayner and Beverly Wenger-Trayner's (2014) concept of landscapes of practice gives us a powerful new lens through which to understand what we have been creating through these collaborative proceedings over the years. Rather than simply documenting shared ideas, we see our editorial process as a learning journey of discovery, one that reveals the contours of our shared professional landscape and the boundaries that both separate and connect our various communities of practice in LD.

Despite the shared values we unite around in our daily practice as Learning Developers (ALDinHE, n.d.), the landscape of LD is complex and varied. We work across different institutions, with diverse student populations, within polymorphous and shifting organisational structures, job titles and positionings, and through different theoretical and practical orientations. What these collaborative proceedings offer us is an opportunity to encounter each other across these boundaries, but without the need to dissolve them. Our differences remain visible and valuable, contributing to the richness of our collective understanding rather than being smoothed away in pursuit of outward unity.

The 79 articles gathered here represent not just each original session or presentation, but the waves of engagement they created throughout and beyond the ALDinHE conference. The community responses capture both immediate reactions and considered reflections, while the authors' final thoughts often reveal how their thinking has evolved through this collaborative process. What emerges is a certain mapping of our landscape of practice that helps us see where we are positioned in relation to one another and what possibilities might emerge from our connections. Through these proceedings, we thus offer our community members multiple entry points into the landscape of LD practice as it existed in 2025. Readers might find themselves reflected in familiar territory or they might discover new regions they had not previously considered. They might recognise the boundaries of their own practice or see a glimpse of pathways toward different approaches or perspectives. They might also see what is missing and what calls for keener attention.

Our editorial process has itself embodied this navigation of landscapes of practice. Working across multiple institutions and bringing together established *JLDHE* editors with international guest contributors, we have enacted and modelled the very kind of boundary-crossing collaboration that is at the heart of the Wenger-Trayners' concept. Each editorial partnership became a site of encounter, where different voices and perspectives could meet without losing their distinctiveness. We could even say that the collaborative writing format we have developed mirrors the way learning happens across landscapes of practice. Ideas originate in one location, travel across boundaries, encounter different interpretations and applications, and return transformed. The resulting articles show traces of this journey, revealing how thinking develops through encounter with others rather than in isolation.

Viewed through this lens, this year's special conference edition yet again demonstrates how our LD community embraces the opportunity for genuine dialogue and collaborative meaning-making. The landscape metaphor also reminds us that our field is not static. While new territories emerge and existing boundaries shift, these collaborative proceedings offer a way of tracking such changes. By making our practice landscape more visible, we hope to create possibilities for new forms of engagement and collaboration.

We are profoundly grateful to everyone who has contributed to this collective mapping effort, particularly our guest editors who joined us in this year's editorial journey: Amrita Majumdar, Aysha Ahmed, Becky Randles, Buxi Duan, Lisa Wakefield, Nikita Bridgeman, Rohit Warikoo, Raghda Zahran, Sarune Savickaite, Sriram Rajagopal, Suparna Ghose, Upasana G. Singh, and Vienne Lin. Their fresh perspectives and committed engagement have enriched both the individual articles and our understanding of the editorial process itself. We also thank all conference participants whose voices appear throughout.

As you read through these proceedings, we encourage you to notice not just the individual contributions but the landscape of practice they collectively reveal. Consider where your own practice is positioned within this vast and exciting LD terrain, what

boundaries you navigate, and what new possibilities might emerge from encounter with different – perhaps some still unfamiliar? – perspectives and approaches.

With best wishes,

Alicja Syska

Editor-in-Chief

On behalf of the *JLDHE* Editorial Board and Guest Editors

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