



## Editorial

by Christopher R. Stones  
Editor-in-Chief

**Special Edition on the Lifeworld Approach for Empirical Research in Education – the Gothenburg Tradition**  
Guest Editor: Jan Bengtsson

Life is filled with so many interesting twists, turns and surprises.

Late one evening in early November 2009, as I was systematically reading through the mail that had arrived at its destination – my e-mail inbox - I heard the familiar ‘ding’ sound of yet another message arriving.

Upon opening the e-mail, there was the following:

Dear Christopher Stones,

At the IHSRC in Oxford this year, I arranged a symposium on educational research based on life-world phenomenology. The symposium consisted of an outline of the methodological approach and descriptions of methodological issues in five different doctoral research projects. Would you be interested in a special issue of this symposium for the Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology? I enclose an outline of the symposium.

Kind regards,

Jan Bengtsson

After reading the symposium outline, I found myself being intellectually ‘grabbed’ by the notion of lifeworld research especially the variation of this approach inherent in what had become the Gothenburg tradition. Without too much delay, but

after careful consideration, I replied to Professor Bengtsson that the *IPJP* would gladly welcome the release of a Special Edition dealing with educational research based on lifeworld-based phenomenology.

From that point on, there was regular correspondence with Professor Bengtsson regarding the content and likely thrust of the proposed Special Edition in which he wanted to address lifeworld phenomenology research through theoretical discussion, supported by examples of how the life-world could be used in research practice. In particular, Jan was keen to report on several doctoral projects being undertaken within the Gothenburg tradition.

Jan’s own of theoretical contributions underwent the same rigorous review process applied to all submissions to the journal while Jan –as Guest Editor - took responsibility for ensuring the comprehensive and rigorous review of the papers submitted by invited authors.

It had always been Professor Bengtsson’s aim to release a thoroughly comprehensive set of papers in a special edition that would stand as testimony to the Gothenburg tradition of lifeworld research which had emerged from his many years of active, innovative and rigorous thinking around the utility of a phenomenological approach in educational research. However, very unfortunately, time was not on Jan’s side and so the decision was taken to complete the Special Edition with only two examples of lifeworld phenomenological research in the hope that these two

examples provide sufficient illustration of the value of lifeworld research, especially within an educational context.

Tragically, Jan never lived to see the publication of his Special Edition as he passed away three weeks before the release of his hard-worked-for release that focusses on the legacy he left, that of the Gothenburg tradition as a research approach for empirical research in education.

Life is indeed filled with so many interesting twists and turns.

Professor Jan Bengtsson remained true to his vision and his life's work till the end.

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### About the Author



Professor Christopher Stones, previously of Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa, joined the University of Johannesburg in 2008 as Professor of Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities. He has enjoyed a lengthy academic and research career, in the course of which he has taught in the areas of physiological, clinical, forensic, social, and research psychology. He is Vice-President of the South African Association for Psychotherapy and past Chairman of the South African Society for Clinical Psychology. Editor-in-Chief of the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* since 2003, he is also on the editorial panels of two other online journals. Using both natural scientific quantitative methodologies and phenomenological approaches, Professor Stones's research interests

are in the areas of identity, attitudes and attitude change, phenomenological praxis and methodologies, abnormal psychology and psychotherapy, spirituality and religious experience, in all of which areas he has published extensively. An Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, with which he is also registered as a Chartered Psychologist, Professor Stones is registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as both a research and a clinical psychologist, and conducts a part-time clinical practice with particular focus on adolescents, young adults and families, as well as offering long-term psychotherapy. In addition, he is regularly called on to serve as an "expert witness" in medico-legal (civil and criminal) court proceedings, and to contribute as a consultant in the field of forensic investigation.

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