



Doctoral Journeys-Beyond the Doctorate: Researcher Voice, Insight, and Identity

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Abstract

Doctoral Journeys – Beyond the Doctorate: Researcher Voice, Insight, and Identity is a reflective blog and podcast exploring doctoral journeys and academic identities. Through interviews with researchers, each episode addresses the question “What does the doctorate mean for you?” and connects personal narratives with literature introduced by the guest. Interview topics include researcher motivation, academic well-being, and post-doctoral growth. Written reflections deepen links between lived experience and theory. This multimodal platform explores the integration of podcast and blog formats to illuminate what it means to become and continue becoming a researcher within the academic landscape in language and international education.

Keywords

1. Doctoral education
2. Researcher motivation and identity development
3. Academic well-being
4. Continuous professional development (CPD)
5. Academic blog and podcast

AI Declaration

No artificial intelligence elements were used in the preparation of this blog post.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the content of this blog post.



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Introduction

Doctoral Journeys—Beyond the Doctorate: Researcher Voice, Insight, and Identity is a reflective blog and podcast series that highlights conversations with researchers and educators about their doctoral paths and evolving academic identities. Each podcast episode traces personal stories from doctoral journeys to current academic practices, featuring literature tied to the guest's academic field and concepts relevant to language and international education. Written blog reflections by the host deepen connections between experience and theory.

Each podcast episode responds to the question, “What does the doctorate mean for you?”. The series explores how academic identities continue evolving after degree completion—emphasising researcher development, scholarly motivation, and professional meaning-making. While teacher development is widely documented (Borg et al., 2022; Maggioli, 2020; Vadivel et al., 2021), researcher growth, motivation, and academic identity remain underexplored (Åkerlind, 2008; Clegg, 2008). This initiative amplifies marginalised voices and invites storytelling around the emotional, philosophical, and professional dimensions of academic work. Published via St Andrews Journal of International and Language Education (SAJILE), this series connects guest experiences and host reflections to illuminate transformative moments in language and international education.

Why Academic Blogging?

Academic blogging supports evolving scholarly practices by creating a reflective and accessible space beyond traditional formats. While peer-reviewed journals focus on objectivity and institutional standards, blogs encourage dialogue, researcher voice, and personal experience (Kirkup, 2010). Scholarly blogging, as Gregg (2006) notes, can be a form of conversational scholarship that connects academic work with wider audiences. It complements podcasting by offering space to reflect, rethink, and grow—linking literature with lived experience and highlighting researcher agency in language and international education. It invites thinking academically without always writing academically.

Why Podcasts?

Podcasting enables learning anytime, anywhere. Many top universities use it to share educational content beyond enrolled students (Yoo, 2010). Podcasts also offer a unique experience with diverse content found in traditional media such as books (Rime et al., 2022). When integrated with academic blogging, scholarly podcasting extends this reflective space through voice, deepening engagement with lived experience and broadening access to academic dialogue.



Methodological Background to This Initiative

Grounded in *narrative inquiry* (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) and *reflective interviewing* (Clegg, 2008), this methodology combines personal storytelling with reflection. Narrative inquiry views experience as storied, inviting researchers to share moments that shape their academic identities. Reflective interviewing supports this by offering structured prompts ahead of each podcast recording, allowing participants time to consider their journeys, transitions, and key readings. These dialogues form the basis for blog entries that draw out recurring themes such as motivation and identity while honouring the uniqueness of each voice. By linking individual narratives with ongoing conversations in language education, the series cultivates insight and connection across media. For reference, Table 1 outlines the structure of each podcast episode, and Table 2 details the academic blog format.

First Guest Announcement

I am delighted to welcome Professor Sin-Wang Chong as our first guest. Share your story or comment. Your voice could be our next guest.

**Table 1***Segment Plan for a Podcast Episode: “Doctoral Journeys: Beyond the Doctorate”*

Segment	Duration	Description
Opening & Introduction	1:30 min	Welcome and guest introduction: name, current role, field of research
Doctoral Journey	7 min	Motivation for pursuing doctoral studies, timeline, challenges, mentorship, and personal growth
Research Foundations	3 min	Original research focuses on language education, research context/populations, and theoretical frameworks
Influential Readings (Then)	2 min	Key books, articles, or scholars that shaped doctoral thinking and remain influential
Post-Doctorate Pathway	5 min	Transition into professional life: pivotal moments, career shifts, early steps
Anchor Reading (Now)	2 min	Current text or thinker inspiring the guest’s ongoing research
Sensing the Pulse of the Field	3 min	Strategies for staying informed about trends—through reading, teaching, collaboration, or academic networks
Field Evolution	5 min	Reflections on changes in language education: priorities, frameworks, inclusivity
Recent Projects	4 min	Highlights of recent initiatives or publications reflecting evolving research interests
Trends & Debates	4 min	Key discussions or controversies in the field; thoughts on future directions
Challenges & Vision	4 min	Present challenges, future goals, sources of motivation, and reflections on balancing academic life and well-being
Advice & Message	5 min	Insights for doctoral students and hopes for the next generation of language education researchers
Closing	1–2 min	Final thanks and invitation to the companion SAJILE blog post

Note. This segment plan serves as a narrative framework for podcast episodes centered on language education and international researcher development.



Table 2

Planned Structure of the Academic Blog: “Doctoral Journeys: Beyond the Doctorate”

Section	Content Focus
Introduction	Guest profile: name, current role, field of research; brief personal answer to “What does the doctorate mean to you?”
Doctoral Journey	Motivation, challenges, turning points, and key literature that shaped doctoral thinking
Professional Journey	Overview of research focus, changes in the field, important texts guiding current work, and recent publications
Closing Reflection	Advice for doctoral students, thoughts on future goals and contributions, and reflections on work–life balance in academia

Note. This table presents a concise academic blog structure for reflecting on doctoral and professional development in language education, integrating a guest profile, key literature, recent scholarship, and personal insights.



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