Editor's Introduction
Reflections on the JPPP5 Special Issue

Arpit Jindal, Areesh Fatmee, Clarissa Muller-Kosmarov, Alisha Rodgers, Usoro Akpan, Adila Fazleen Che Manan, Meifang Zhuo

Warwick Postgraduate Teaching Community

From top left to right: Arpit Jindal, Areesh Fatmee, Clarissa Muller-Kosmarov, Alisha Rodgers; from bottom left to right: Usoro Akpan, Adila Fazleen Che-Manan, and Meifang Zhuo.

Team Description

This year's *Journal of Postgraduate Pedagogies and Practice (JPPP)* Issue 5 editorial team is led by **Arpit Jindal** (Chemistry/Life Sciences) and mentored by **Meifang Zhuo** (Applied Linguistics), supported by a dynamic group of Post-Graduate Research Teacher Champions from across the University of Warwick: **Areesh Fatmee** (Warwick Medical School), **Clarissa Muller-Kosmarov** (Philosophy), **Alisha Rodgers** (School of Engineering), **Usoro Akpan** (Warwick Medical School), **and Adila Fazleen Che Manan** (Education Studies). Together, the seven-member team brings a rich range of disciplinary expertise, cultural

backgrounds, and lived experiences, reflecting the inclusive spirit of both the JPPP and the *Warwick Postgraduate Teaching Community* (WPTC). United by a commitment to inclusivity, innovation, and the advancement of PGR teaching and learning, the team works collaboratively to produce a journal issue that amplifies diverse voices while strengthening the visibility and impact of postgraduate teachers across the university.

Introduction to Journal of Postgraduate Pedagogies and Practice

The *Journal of Postgraduate Pedagogies and Practice* was founded to champion the voices of Postgraduate Teachers/ Graduate Teaching Assistant (PGTs/GTAs) and to recognise the breadth of knowledge, experience, and pedagogical insight they contribute to higher education. Across its previous four issues, the journal has evolved alongside the shifting realities of postgraduate teaching. Early editions examined the formation of teaching identities, inclusive pedagogical approaches, and creative methods of assessment and facilitation. Later volumes expanded into conversations on the emotional labour of teaching, interdisciplinary and collaborative practices, digital innovation, and the complex professional identities GTAs navigate as scholars, educators, and pastoral supporters.

Together, these contributions demonstrate how postgraduate teachers draw upon their lived experiences, disciplinary traditions, and reflective practices to cultivate meaningful, student-centred learning environments. JPPP remains committed to creating a space where these voices are not only heard but critically engaged with- foregrounding research-informed, reflective, and praxis-oriented perspectives from the PGR teaching community. As the journal continues to develop, it seeks to remain responsive, innovative, and dialogic- constantly reimagining what teaching, learning, and belonging can look like within an ever-changing academic landscape.

Success Story of JPPP so far

Across its first four volumes, the Journal of PGR Pedagogic Practice has traced the evolving landscape of postgraduate teaching from the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to broader questions of inclusion and space in higher education. The pilot launch issue (Vol. 1, 2021) centred on "*Postgraduate Pandemic Pedagogies*," foregrounding reflective accounts of teaching during the Coronavirus pandemic, with subthemes including navigating digital inequalities, experimenting with online and hybrid teaching practices, and cultivating a pedagogy of care amid disruption. Vol. 2 (2022), "*Virtual, physical or somewhere in between: Postgraduate pedagogies in the wake of the pandemic*," extended this focus into the post-

pandemic transition, with contributions on online engagement, hybrid teaching, GTA identity and wellbeing, decolonising the classroom, and lessons drawn from teaching beyond standard undergraduate settings. Vol. 3 (2023), *"Breaking Barriers and Embracing Voices: Advancing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in Postgraduate Pedagogies,"* shifted the lens explicitly to EDI, highlighting subthemes such as dismantling structural and classroom barriers, fostering inclusive learning environments, and navigating intercultural communication in diverse educational contexts. Most recently, Vol. 4 (2024), *"Re/De-Constructing the Teaching Space Piece by Piece,"* focused on how GTAs shape and reimagine teaching spaces, with subthemes around deconstructing traditional classroom formats, expanding GTA influence beyond perceived limits, and showcasing the growing international reach of JPPP as a global platform for GTA-led pedagogical innovation.

JPPP5: The First Special Issue marked with First ever Conference

The special issue of JPPP emerges from the *Warwick PGR Teacher* Conference 2025, which marked a key moment in consolidating and celebrating the growing visibility, expertise, and leadership of postgraduate teachers at the University of Warwick, while also extending the conversation to postgraduate educators across higher education institutions nationally and internationally. Organised as part of wider institutional efforts to recognise GTAs' pedagogical labour and professional development, the conference created a dedicated, transdisciplinary space where postgraduate teachers could share practice, build networks, and articulate their experiences as educators in their own right. The decision to develop *Issue 5* as a conference-linked special issue reflects a commitment to extending those conversations beyond a single event, offering contributors the opportunity to deepen and disseminate their ideas in written form while showcasing the breadth and quality of postgraduate-led teaching scholarship at Warwick.

Anchored in the theme *"Evolving Experiences in Postgraduate Teaching: Navigating Changing Landscapes, Practices, and Technologies,"* the conference foregrounded the rapidly shifting conditions under which GTAs work and learn. The thematic strands, positionality and teacher identity, the evolution of GTA teaching, navigating technological shifts (including AI), cross-cultural and international perspectives, and balancing wellbeing and professional growth, were selected to capture the complexity of contemporary GTA roles and to make visible dimensions of practice that are often marginalised in mainstream pedagogical discourse. Together, these themes invited participants to interrogate how structural change, institutional cultures, and personal histories intersect in postgraduate teaching, and to generate critical, practice-based insights that could inform both local enhancement and sector-wide conversations.

The 2025 conference was a notable success in terms of engagement, diversity, and participation. It brought together a substantial number of GTAs and staff from across faculties, with a strong presence of international postgraduate teachers whose contributions highlighted the global and intercultural dimensions of teaching and learning at Warwick. The programme featured parallel sessions,

workshops, and panels that enabled participants to engage with topics such as AI-enabled teaching tools, inclusive assessment practices, and strategies for sustaining wellbeing alongside research and teaching commitments. This high level of participation, along with the quality and variety of contributions, underlined the appetite for a sustained platform, such as this special issue, for reflecting on and disseminating postgraduate pedagogical practice.

The 2025 *Warwick PGR Teacher Conference* attracted around 60 registered participants from across all three Warwick faculties and central professional services, including several external attendees, demonstrating strong institutional and cross-sector engagement. The programme featured just over 20 presentations and workshops delivered by GTAs and early-career educators, covering a wide range of disciplines and pedagogical topics. The full programme is available online at https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academic-development/pgrteachers/conference/programme/. The attendee list reflects substantial international diversity, with many presenters and participants bringing backgrounds and teaching experiences from regions such as East and South Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa, contributing to genuinely global perspectives on postgraduate teaching practice. A screenshot of the conference webpage is provided below for context, and readers can explore further details at: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academic-development/pgrteachers/conference/
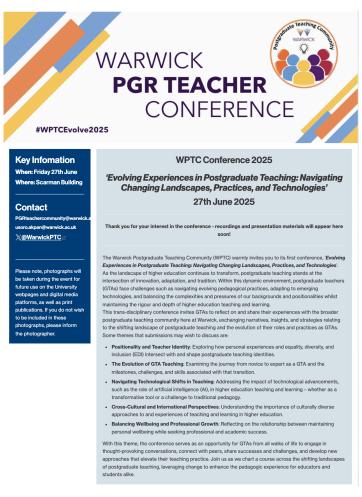

Figure 1 Screenshot of conference webpage

JPPP5 Motivation and Themes

A key motivation for selecting this year's theme for JPPP Issue 5 is that it addresses areas that have not been the primary focus of previous issues, particularly the intersection of AI, positionality, and wellbeing in the lived day-to-day realities of GTAs. Whereas earlier issues have tended to centre more established topics in higher education pedagogy, this special issue foregrounds emerging questions about how technological disruption, shifting labour conditions, and increasingly diverse student and staff populations are reshaping what it means to teach as a postgraduate. By focusing explicitly on "evolving experiences," this issue moves beyond static accounts of good practice to explore change, uncertainty, and adaptation as central features of postgraduate teaching, thereby filling an important gap in the journal's existing portfolio.

Within this special issue, the published pieces collectively map multiple facets of contemporary GTA practice. Contributors examine, for example, how doctoral researchers negotiate their dual identities as students and teachers; how Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are being critically and creatively integrated into seminar design, feedback processes, and student support; how cross-cultural experiences shape classroom dynamics and understandings of authority; and how GTAs develop strategies to protect their wellbeing while meeting the demands of research, teaching, and career planning. Other contributions trace the developmental trajectory from novice to more expert teacher, highlighting the role of peer communities, mentoring, and institutional support in fostering confidence and pedagogical innovation. Taken together, these articles and reflections offer a rich, situated account of postgraduate teaching as a site of both challenge and possibility. The thematic composition of JPPP Issue 5 published this year is as follows.

Our first thematic area on *Positionality and Teacher identity: The intersection of experience and Equality/Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)* generated a significant interest, resulting in four compelling submissions for inclusion in the issue. The first paper, **'Two Voices, Many Languages': A Duoethnographic Look at Multilingual Identity in Teaching Spaces in a UK University**, by Dr Yanyan Li and Kaiqi Yu, critically examines how multilingual Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) navigate and negotiate their evolving linguistic identities within the English-dominant environment of UK higher education.. The authors use duoethnography to reveal tensions around native speakerism and the emotional labour involved, arguing that multilingual identity is simultaneously a pedagogical asset and a site of struggle. The second submission, **In the Seminar Space: Navigating Graduate Teaching in Undergraduate Legal Education** by Hadijah Namyalo-Ganafa provides a reflective exploration of a GTA's evolving pedagogical role within a law department, focusing on seminar facilitation. This paper explores the complexities of cultivating student voice and balancing relational teaching with institutional demands, demonstrating how the GTA's identity is shaped by both institutional positioning and critical relational aspirations. The third paper, **Evolving as a GTA: Teaching, Performing and Identity** by Rebecca L. Colquhoun, offers a critical reflection on how the author's identity and performance shaped their journey from a novice to an expert GTA. Using personal vignettes, the author discusses moving from an inauthentic

"neutral" performance to an authentic teaching style, arguing that evolution requires recognising how lived experiences, including queer and disabled identity, enrich teaching practice. The final submission, **Spaces within spaces: Teaching French culture from a British-Mauritian perspective and its relationship with GTA liminality and identity** by Adam Agowun**,** seeks to offer a more positive outlook on the notoriously difficult subject of GTA liminality. The author argues that personal liminal spaces, such as being a British-born Mauritian teaching French culture, can be used as an asset in navigating the "ambiguous, neither here nor there" space of the GTA role.

Our second theme on the *Evolution of GTA Teaching: Snapshots from the PGR Journey* attracted considerable interest, resulting in four submissions that capture diverse experiences and theoretical perspectives on the GTA development trajectory. The first paper, **Opening the Bandura's Box of Experiences: Exploring GTAs' Sense of Plausibility about ESL Teaching** by Akshay Kumar explores N.S. Prabhu's construct of teachers' sense of plausibility (TSOP) as a tool for reflective practice among Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). The case study with seven novice GTAs indicates that their TSOPs are rooted in themes like sustainable education and student agency, validating TSOP as a valuable reflective practice tool. The second submission, **"Dear Former GTA-Self": Reflections from the Final Chapter of a Graduate Teaching Assistant Journey - from Novice to More Experienced Educator** by Alisha Rodgers, takes the unconventional form of a reflective letter to the author's past self after concluding their doctoral journey as a GTA. This personal account revisits formative moments and interrogates assumptions, foregrounding the complexity of learning to teach critically and affirming the value of adaptability and care within institutional constraints. The third paper, **Teaching unfamiliar content can lead to brilliant teaching: Data-led reflections** by Junjie Li and Xinran Gao, explores the challenges faced by novice practitioners when teaching unfamiliar content and argues that this can, counterintuitively, lead to effective teaching. Using peer dialogue and reflective writings, the authors highlight three strategic themes, including taking a humble stance and fostering a bottom-up awareness of students' perspectives. The final submission, **From Clicks to Connections: Applying Activity Theory to Multimodal Materials Design for GTA Development** by Paula Villegas, addresses the limited formal training GTAs often receive by detailing the design and evaluation of asynchronous multimodal professional learning units. The author uses Activity Theory to analyse the tensions and affordances of the intervention, arguing that this framework enhanced engagement and agency through personalized, community-oriented tasks.

For the critical theme, examining the intersection of technology and pedagogy, we received one dedicated submission. The paper, **Pause, Reflect, Dialogue: AI as a Reflective Partner in GTA Teaching Practice**, by Azadeh Moladoost details a Graduate Teaching Assistant's (GTA) journey in transforming their teaching practice through a structured, time-bound strategy called the Five-Minute Reflection Rule. The author then integrated AI tools (such as ChatGPT and Grok) not to generate content, but to serve as non-judgmental, dialogic partners for critical self-inquiry, arguing that this low-stakes dialogue can help early-career educators build sustainable habits of reflective practice.

For our next theme, *Cross-Cultural and International Perspectives on PGR Teaching*, focusing on global and cross-cultural dimensions of postgraduate researcher (PGR) teaching, we received one submission. The paper, **Curriculum from the Margins: Experience of Building a Dalit-Feminist Business English Programme as an untrained facilitator,** by Nisha Kumari offers a critical reflective account of designing a business English curriculum specifically for Dalit, Bahujan, and Adivasi women learners in India, collaborating with a grassroots NGO. Rooted in a Dalit feminist pedagogical standpoint, the paper details how the curriculum was developed to foreground English not just as an employability tool, but as a site of dignity and resistance, while examining the ethical and emotional labour of negotiating intersections of caste, gender, and class within language education.

The crucial theme of Balancing Wellbeing and Professional Growth in Teaching, which focuses on the sustainability and care required within the Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) role, resulted in four submissions. The first paper, **Exploring the complexity of GTAs' co-teaching experience through zine-making: a collaborative self-study**, by Meifang Zhuo and Suji Ko, investigates the co-teaching experiences and evolving identities of two GTAs where one experienced, one novice using zine-making as a reflexive data collection tool. The study identifies key themes like identity negotiation and emotional labour, concluding that zine-making is a powerful methodology for articulating the complexity of co-teaching dynamics. The second paper, **From Burnout to Balance: Embedding Wellbeing in the Professional Trajectory of GTAs**, by Nikita Goel, traces the author's shift from professional strain toward a more sustainable, balanced approach to the demanding GTA role at EFLU, Hyderabad, India. The reflection outlines four interconnected, proactive strategies, including structured feedback windows and peer support networks, arguing that wellbeing strategies are essential for the long-term sustainability of GTAs. The third submission, **Intentional Re-framing of Self-Care as an Institutional Priority in Postgraduate Teaching**, by Emmanuel Lucas Nwachukwu, takes the form of a review arguing for the critical necessity of shifting self-care from an isolated individual responsibility to an institutional priority. The paper advocates for deliberate approaches, such as developing comprehensive mental health policy frameworks and establishing structured, preventive wellness programs for educators to combat burnout. Finally, the paper **Building Resilience: Promoting Mental Well-being in Graduate Teaching Assistants Through Structured Institutional Support**, by Usoro Udousoro Akpan, proposes that institutions can transform the GTA experience from one of vulnerability to one of resilience and empowerment by adopting a comprehensive approach. This includes combining structured mentorship, robust pedagogical training, and equitable, policy-driven support systems to embed mental well-being across every facet of institutional culture.

For the theme titled *Personal Narratives: The Changing Landscape of Teaching*, we ultimately did not receive any article submissions. Therefore, although quite important and timely, it is regrettably not represented in the current issue.

Looking Forward

Journal of PGR Pedagogic Practice (JPPP) journey started in 2021 with the *Warwick Postgraduate Teaching Community* (WPTC) as a testament to the dedication, innovation, and resilience of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). As we publish this fifth issue, it's a fitting time to reflect on our achievements and layout the exciting course for the future. Since, its pilot launch JPPP has become an inclusive and international platform for the GTA. What began as an "unknown dive into postgraduate pedagogies at the University of Warwick" has grown into a well-founded formula celebrating its fifth birthday. We have broadened our horizons, including:

1) **International Reach: Attracting contributors beyond the University of Warwick.** For example, Issue 3 celebrated its first international submissions from the National Institute for Nigerian Languages in Nigeria and Ateneo University in the Philippines. Issue 4 attracted the highest number of international contributors ever: 30%.

2) **Thematic Relevance:** WPTC has consistently tried to resonate the journal themes with the pressing issues GTAs face, including "Postgraduate Pandemic Pedagogies" within Issue 1, "Virtual, physical or somewhere in between" from Issue 2, and "Advancing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)" from Issue 3. The latest issue continued this by focusing on GTAs' (Re/De) Constructing the learning and teaching space, including timely themes like Crossing Disciplinary Boundaries and seeking submissions on the Impact of AI.

Looking ahead, WPTC is excited to build a strong foundation, enhance the impact, and raise voices of GTA to master the importance in higher education. To widen our GTA community both nationally, and internationally we hope to see: 1) Expansion of reviewer and editorial board to bring wider perspectives for the GTA community; 2) Prioritizing GTA-led submissions of evidence based original research; and 3) Focused mapping of the journal theme selection based on the GTA interests and needs. WPTC is thereby committed for peer-learning, professional growth, and dialogue through the yearly publication cycle of JPPP. We aim to foster the sustained peer dialogue through Seminar and Reading PGR Group series.