This is the published version of a chapter published in *Connecting history of education: Scientific journals as international tools for a global world*.

Citation for the original published chapter:

Nordic Journal of Educational History (NJEdH) (Sweden).
In: José Luis Hernández Huerta, Antonella Cagnolati & Alfonso Diestro Fernández (ed.),
*Connecting history of education: Scientific journals as international tools for a global world* (pp. 151-158). Salamanca: FahrenHouse

N.B. When citing this work, cite the original published chapter.

Permanent link to this version:
http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:umu:diva-106833
1. Background and scope of the journal

The Nordic Journal of Educational History (NJEdH) is a novel, interdisciplinary, biannual e-journal in the field of education history. Its first issue was published in the spring of 2014.

The initiative to launch this journal was taken during the fifth session of the standing Nordic Conference on the History of Education that was hosted by Umeå University in September 2012. The conference has been held regularly (1998, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012), and its next session will take place in August 2015. The intention was that selected conference papers would contribute to building up a stock of articles for forthcoming journal
issues. Most of the articles in the first two issues were revised papers from the conference held in 2012. In the short run, the journal replaced a possible conference report, but in the long run it will provide researchers in the history of education in the Nordic region with an arena for communicating their results with colleagues in Scandinavia and beyond. Although all conferences have been held in Sweden, the Nordic character of the conference has been increasingly prominent. The journal mirrors this situation and aims to further support the scientific dialogue between scholars interested in the educational past of the entire region. Geographically, the «Nordic region» refers to the nation-states of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden as well as political and geographical entities including the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Sápmi, and the Åland Islands.

The area of educational history covered by the journal is understood in its widest sense and involves the historical study, irrespective of disciplinary affiliation, of topics related to the diverse range of human practices aimed at framing, planning, and transmitting cultural and social heritage (knowledge, skills, values, behavioral patterns, social relationships, etc.) as well as the ideological, linguistic, material, spatial, visual, emotional, and sensory conditions these practices require or sustain.

The journal welcomes submissions related to the Nordic area, and comparative studies of different parts of the Nordic region are particularly welcome. Articles from established scholars as well as doctoral candidates with any disciplinary affiliation will be considered.

2. The structure and management

The journal is managed by an editorial team within which the editorial responsibilities shift. The editorial team consists of three to five members, and because it strives to include scholars from all over the Nordic region the editorial team also encourages guest-editors to join the editorial team and to take part in the editorial work for more than one issue. However, the editorial responsibilities have so far been handled by one or two persons at a time (see box below). The editorial board (an advisory board) consists of sixteen highly regarded scholars in the field, eleven of whom are from the Nordic region.

The journal is normally divided into three sections: editorials, original articles (peer-reviewed), and book reviews. Special issues also have a non-peer-reviewed introduction, often written by the (guest) editor of the spe-

---

1 An overview of the Nordic research collaboration and conferences is given in: Broady, D., Larsson, E. & Westberg, J. (2010).
cial issue, and concluding remarks (also not peer-reviewed) written by an invited renowned scholar who comments on the issue as a whole (Caruso, 2015). When the editor of an issue also participates as an author of an original article in the same issue, another member of the editorial team mediates the contacts between the author and the reviewers in order to maintain the integrity of the peer-review process. This is also one of the upsides of having this kind of management team. The journal publishes articles in English and in any of the Scandinavian languages. The editorial is always, and the book reviews are generally, in English. Out of the fourteen articles published in the first three issues (2014–2015) eight have been in English, four in Swedish, and two in Norwegian.

The book review section is regarded as an integral part of the work to maintain the Nordic scope of the journal. Books that are reviewed are generally written by Nordic scholars, with the exception of reviews in special issues that are generally on books within the theme of the special issue. To promote inter-Nordic debate on research concerning the educational past of the Nordic countries, reviewers are generally recruited from another part of the Nordic region than where the author of the work being reviewed comes from.

The journal is indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and Google Scholar. An application to be included in the European Reference Index of the Humanities and Social Sciences (ERIH plus) will be made when the journal meets the requirement of publication over two consecutive years. Like many other journals, the NJEdH has kept a sort of hybrid form, publishing digitally but in separate issues (two per year). The two issues are also printed in a joint paper volume at the end of each year. Special issues may also be printed separately for marketing and proliferation. All published material is licensed under the terms of Creative Commons CY-BY 4.0, and no fees are charged for either publication or subscription.

The NJEdH also has a twitter-account (NJEdH, @NordJournEdHist) where calls for papers and news about new issues are tweeted. As for other social media, the journal is part of the Nordic Educational History Network, and news about the journal is frequently published on the Network’s Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/groups/111340355594505/) and in its newsletter.

3. Challenges and problems to be overcome for the editorial management

Securing a sustainable financial basis for the NJEdH is one the most urgent challenges in the coming two years. Thanks to various types of in-
ternal and external funding – and a lot of non-salaried work – the situation for the initial period of four years can be characterized as satisfactory. In the longer perspective, however, the journal will need a long-term funding solution. From the very beginning, the editorial team has paid considerable attention to this issue. Among other things, this means that no efforts have been spared to maintain high scholarly standards in order to secure positive evaluations in ranking systems. Inclusion in ranking lists, in turn, gives the journal better chances of receiving funding from various financing bodies, including Nordic scientific agencies.

To launch a new scientific journal is always a risky enterprise because the future of the journal is totally dependent on the confidence that the scholars in the field have in the journal and their subsequent willingness to use it as a publishing channel. Again, to uphold high standards from the very start is the only way to gain confidence among the community of scholars, and the sooner the journal is recognized in ranking lists, the easier it is to attract new submitters of manuscripts. Of course, part of the problem concerns marketing. It simply takes time to make a new journal known and to get scholars to consider a new publishing channel. Consequently, the editorial team will continue its efforts to advertise the journal in order to reach prospective readers and authors. A special concern is the Nordic foundation of the journal. It is essential to the credibility of the journal to attract scholars from all over the Nordic region. The inter-Nordic character can easily be enhanced in the review section where reviewers are invited to write book reviews, but it is equally important to work for a broad representation from the various parts of the Nordic region in the articles section.

Starting up an e-journal in the changing academic and technological climate of today is indeed an ambiguous experience. On the one hand, it is highly inspiring in the sense that new and accessible technology enables fairly small groups of researchers to administer and maintain scientific journals without the involvement of big publishing houses or other profit-seeking agencies. This helps to secure a close relation between scholars and the technical infrastructure for research – i.e. the whole process of publishing becomes an integrated part of the craft – as well as the direct and free access to scientific inquiries for the public. It is also inspiring in the sense that researchers are given the opportunity to become more actively involved in contributing to enhancing the research infrastructure to support a specific field and to guide it in new directions. In the case of the NJEdH, this has meant providing the community of researchers with a multi-disciplinary, multi-lingual, and transnational journal in an area where previous journals are characterized by disciplinary, linguistic, and national restrictions.

On the other hand, it is also in many ways a complicated and time-consuming enterprise, not only because the startup of a journal in itself
requires considerable effort from the people involved - the most crucial of course being related to the work of gaining confidence and scientific credibility among the community of scholars - but also because of complications in its management due to system changes currently taking place in higher education and research.

The first of these complications arises from policy changes concerning the funding of journals. The main Swedish research council recently decided not only to call for open access of all research they are funding, but also to cancel all of the financial support for scientific journals. This means that the costs of managing a freestanding journal must be granted from local universities, various smaller funds directed towards the specific area of interest, or - which is becoming more common - paid for by the authors themselves. This change in financial administration means that a journal in the future will have to handle a complex situation of fundraising to cover various costs (including new indexing agents that need to get paid). Consequently, a journal will certainly have a more extensive economic administrative body, which in turn adds to the costs and workloads.

The second major complication is the transition towards an academic climate increasingly characterized by short and temporary appointments for researchers, an endless struggle for funding, and a reliance on an expanding array of validation systems that convert published articles into credits that are crucial to researchers in applying for new funding and securing their own existence. This latter requirement means that a journal must be able to actually transform its products into valued credits, and it must do this as fast as possible. In starting up a new journal, the first demand is somewhat of a Catch-22 situation because in order for the journal to become registered in relevant credit-giving lists it must first manage to demonstrate a broad publication rate during its very first years without the authors of the articles getting any credits. This calls for dedicated authors. The second demand is connected to researchers’ need to quickly give account for their scientific production in applying for new grants. This puts a lot of pressure on the editorial team and reviewers to work quickly and efficiently.

The third complication is that the same validation systems that convert scientific articles into credits do not acknowledge editing a scientific journal as being a work effort or a scientifically meriting experience at all. This means that the incentives for researchers to get involved in the editorial process are reduced.

All in all, the current situation can be seen as creating conditions for journal management that, rather than working to support efforts of a journal becoming a truly inventive and progressive medium, fuels the risk of
making it just another instrument for validation. Fortunately, there are other and more fundamental scientific values intrinsic to the community of researchers that provide hope for journals like the NJEdH, values that are not easy to measure or to tie to indexes.

4. References


5. Cataloguing Data

**Title of the journal:** Nordic Journal of Educational History (NJEdH).

**Publishing institution:** Department of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies, Umeå University.

**Present Editor:** The NJEdH utilizes an ambulatory editorship within the editorial team which consists of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr David Sjögren</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uppsala University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Björn Norlin</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Associate Editor</td>
<td>Associate Editor</td>
<td>Associate Editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umeå University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Henrik Åström Elmersjö</td>
<td>Associate Editor</td>
<td>Associate Editor</td>
<td>Associate Editor</td>
<td>Editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umeå University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assoc. Prof. Anna Larsson</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Associate Editor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umeå University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assoc. Prof. Johannes Westberg</td>
<td></td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Associate Editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uppsala University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequency: 2 issues per year.
Used languages: scandinavian languages and english.
In print or electronic: Principally electronic, but so far all issues have been printed.
ISSN: 2001-9076 (online), 2001-7766 (print).
Access Policy: Golden open access, no fees for publication or subscription, all articles are licensed under Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0.
Sections: Editorials, Original Articles (peer-reviewed), Introduction for Special Issues (not peer reviewed), Concluding Remarks for Special Issues (not peer reviewed), Book Reviews (not peer reviewed).
Index: DOAJ.
URL: http://ojs.ub.umu.se/index.php/njedh
Twitter: @NordJournEdHist