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Quality in Postgraduate Research: personal journey and institutional imperative

Michelle Picard, The University of Adelaide

Alistair McCulloch, University of South Australia

Back in 2007, Catherine Manathunga and Justine Goozee reminded us to avoid 'the dual assumption of the 'always/already' autonomous student and effective supervisor' (Manathunga and Gozee, 2007:309). The papers and extended abstracts in these proceedings once again show the complexity of the intellectual and emotional work involved in the doctorate and the personal challenges involved in moving individual research students towards autonomy and effectiveness as early-career researchers. The 'quality' of the conference title refers to this work as much as to the setting up of quality systems for managing candidature and for the development of publication skills and timely completions. Our three keynotes highlight the fact that the doctorate is evolving, but as noted by Gill Clarke, the purpose of the doctorate remains the same – the development of independent researchers producing high quality research. Both Thomas Jørgensen and Joe Luca note the need for a 'quality culture' that takes cognizance of diversity and suggest good practice frameworks for the development of this culture at national, institution, department, supervisory team and student levels. Our papers, on the other hand, focus more on the individual experiences of doctoral education and the diversity of options within the modern doctorate. In the first paper, Claesson and Strandler contrast the doctoral students' expectations of the award with the reality of a marketized, regulated university environment. This is also the theme of Myers' paper where she takes the literature on students as consumers versus students as learners in undergraduate contexts as applies it to the postgraduate research context and in Sarlow's paper, where he provides advice for students and institutions on dealing with the 'irony' inherent in doctoral study. The complexity of being a doctoral student/ candidate is addressed by Smit who describes the 'boundaryless' nature of academic career-paths' and by Caryannopoulos and Pearson who describe the challenges of research in the networked era. In the third paper, Goward, addresses the challenges of the methodology in Humanities and Social Sciences and explains her personal intellectual struggles with this part of the thesis, while Hill turns the whole thesis genre on its head and explores 'cabaret as academic discourse'. Grant, Kelly, Mitchell, Okai, Burford and Xu similarly describe issues of diversity in methodology, but also in theory and student cohort in the extended extract of their symposium on 'new research in doctoral education'. Tuovinen, Williams, Buxton, Spence and Wescombe-Down in the final paper address diversity in terms of the institution and show how private non –profit doctoral awarding institutions negotiate the duel challenges of retaining their unique ethos and purpose, while achieving global recognised 'quality' benchmarks for doctoral education. Northcote and Williams suggest one institutional response to provision of doctoral education in their online resource for postgraduate students, while Hardy describes the individual negotiation between HDR student and supervisor and Scott in our 2nd last paper, suggests that disciplines need to understand their unique academic discourses in order to effectively 'socialise' research students. We hope that these proceedings will provide readers with a taste of the myriad of perspectives reflected in the Quality in Postgraduate Research 2014 conference and encourage participants in the 2016 conference.

Reference:

Manathunga, C. and Goozée, J. (2007) Challenging the dual assumption of the 'always/already' autonomous student and effective supervisor. Teaching in Higher Education. 12:3, 309-322.

Evolution of the doctorate: a UK perspective on an international qualification

Gill Clarke

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Abstract of oral presentation

This talk addresses several themes relevant to the quality of doctoral degrees. It raises the question of the PhD as a global brand, the impact of structured programmes on the doctoral experience and its outcomes, including consideration of different subjects and models, and also considers standards and outcomes. The session also touches on some of the policy and guidance frameworks for postgraduate degrees and the sustainability of doctoral education. In addition to these general topics, the presentation focuses on two separate UK research projects relating to postgraduate education, as follows:

- International comparisons in postgraduate provision, funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and involving a survey of postgraduate education in eight countries, including Australia. The project focuses on three themes: Quality, Fair Access and Impact in Employment and is part of a suite of inter-related research initiatives funded by HEFCE.
- A study of how examiners judge the achievement of PhD candidates in the final examination: perspectives, process and outcomes, a PhD research project. This part of the presentation includes discussion of a related jointly authored paper about the concept of originality as interpreted by doctoral examiners.

Keywords: sustainability of doctoral education, provision, assessment

A recording of the full presentation can be found at: http://www.qpr.edu.au/?page_id=6972

Introduction

What is the purpose of the doctorate? This question introduces some topical themes relevant to doctoral degrees in the 21st century: evolutionary factors; the PhD: a 'global brand'; UK models of structured doctoral training; the quality of doctoral outcomes; and doctoral assessment models. The doctorate is now primarily considered as preparation for employment, yet it remains unique among higher education qualifications because of its research core and originally was intended only for those entering academic careers. Recent changes in doctoral programme structures reflect an increased emphasis on professional development while in parallel, the trend in many subjects is for candidates to publish on route to the doctoral qualification. The juxtaposition of research and individual development in doctoral programmes is finely balanced: while learning how to conduct out independent research candidates are also expected to acquire a range of professional attributes that prepare them for employment in many spheres, including academia. A change of focus is emerging as a result of these developments, with the typology of doctoral programmes becoming less significant and graduate attributes of greater consequence. Doctoral qualification descriptors reflect this (AQF, 2013; FHEQ, 2008). Doctoral researchers remain an important part of universities' research effort and some countries emphasise this perspective (Moreno-Navarro, 2010; Ostriker et al, 2010).

Evolutionary factors

Mass higher education, political interventions, funding challenges, needs of the professions, prioritisation of the student experience and employer demands, all contribute to the doctorate's evolution. The paper explores the first two factors in more detail, but also notes the impact of:

•   professional needs in the development and growth of professional and practice-based doctorates;

•   the role of the student in shaping his/her experience, with student views influencing programme structures and other aspects of postgraduate education, as evidenced by the Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ) in Australia and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) in the UK; and

•   employer demands, which now feature large in the political discourse, particularly in Australia and the UK, and are challenging universities to ensure that postgraduates acquire a range of professional skills during their programme.

Mass higher education

Increased numbers of higher education graduates have meant a corresponding growth in doctoral candidates in many countries, but with some northern European countries making a conscious decision to cap numbers. In France and Germany, for example, numbers of doctoral degrees remained broadly stable between 1998 and 2006 (QAA Scotland, 2012), yet in Australia, the numbers of students enrolled in advanced research programmes almost doubled between 1998 and 2011, from 25,178 to 49, 973, and grew by over 200,000 in the US during the same period, from 291,740 to 492,345 (OECD, 2013).

Political intervention and funding sources

The potential of postgraduates to contribute to the economy and society affects policy and government interventions in higher education, which are often linked with funding initiatives. As noted by Halse and Mowbray (2011), '… the effects and benefits (impact) of the doctorate have become high-stakes games that universities cannot afford to ignore'.

Funding sources

Worldwide, sources of funding for postgraduate education continue to diversify, linked with several factors including a reduction in public funding for higher education and growing student numbers. As shown in a report by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2013), in the UK, doctoral education is funded by government (including the Research Councils), charities, institutions (including bursaries and scholarships), industry (placements, sponsorship) and postgraduates themselves (through bank loans, part-time work or other sources).The range of funding sources demonstrates the challenges faced in sustaining and growing current numbers of doctoral and other postgraduate degrees.

The PhD: a global 'brand'?

Considered as a global 'brand' for over a century, the PhD has been understood for many years as a qualification gained by doing and learning about research and therefore has currency as an entry qualification for academic careers internationally. However, increasing numbers of graduates, disciplinary shifts, introduction of

the professional doctorate and diversification of universities have led to most doctoral graduates entering non-academic careers, with a corresponding need to define doctoral graduate attributes that are recognised by a range of employers. Internationally, universities are competing for doctoral candidates and in many countries international students have become a critical feature of maintaining doctoral programmes. Global similarities in doctoral programmes include: credit values do not normally apply to the PhD (Germany is one exception); full time doctoral candidates are normally expected to complete in 4-5 years; assessment criteria are rooted in research and the concept of 'originality'; and where differences occur, they are often between, occasionally within, disciplines or fields.

UK models of structured doctoral training

Doctoral training models have evolved in response to institutional environments, with numbers of staff and students affecting the size of graduate schools and whether they are at university or subject level (UKCGE, 2011). Some of the UK universities with larger numbers of research students have introduced the concept of the doctoral college, designed to promote effective management of doctoral education and to establish a particular identity for students. Many models exist, but increasingly doctoral training partnerships (DTPs) and centres for research training (CDTs), whether Research Council funded or independent inter-institution initiatives, are playing a part in creating larger networks within which cohorts of doctoral candidates develop research and other professional skills (Lunt et al 2014). UK models are influenced by Research Council policies and funding, with RCUK aiming to influence doctoral training generally and not only in the universities receiving Research Council funding, through its expectations for the content and structure of the doctoral training environment.

Most doctoral candidates have a structured year (at least) at the beginning of their programme, whether or not it is a PhD or professional doctorate, often as part of a cohort. The extent to which the candidate's autonomy increases as they progress varies, depending on the form of doctorate, the field of study and their own preferences and needs. Institutions face challenges in providing an equivalent experience for all doctoral candidates irrespective of funding sources and in integrating centres for doctoral training with existing graduate schools whether at university or discipline level. Other challenges include the sustainability of doctoral partnership funding and if through inter-university collaborations, how to overcome geographical barriers to provide opportunities for candidates based at different sites to interact. Changes to doctoral training are widely thought to be beneficial but as yet there is little empirical research on whether increased structure benefits all candidates and how it affects outcomes.

The quality of doctoral outcomes

Intended doctoral outcomes are enshrined in qualifications frameworks in many countries, including Australia and the UK and across Europe. The purpose of such frameworks is to define levels of achievement in different education qualifications and demonstrate equivalence across universities and subjects through stated expectations of graduate attributes. Frameworks help universities to articulate for non-academic sectors, including different employer groups, the professional skills that graduates at various levels should possess. They also support institutions in maintaining standards and consistency. Australia and the UK, whose frameworks include doctoral qualification descriptors, do not differentiate between levels of achievement in the PhD and in professional doctorates, although the Australian AQF offers an elegant distinction between 'research' and 'professional' doctorates. In Europe, the so-called 'Dublin' descriptors form part of the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, 2005). Other policies intended to help maintain high standards and quality in doctoral education include the Graduate

Research Good Practice Principles developed by the Australian Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Schools (DDOGS, 2014) and the section of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education on research degrees (QAA, 2012) which includes guidance on the final examination; in all countries this constitutes a peer assessment of the candidate's achievement and the quality of research.

Doctoral assessment models

Doctoral candidates are required to provide evidence of progress during their degree, usually at pre-set milestones when their work is reviewed by faculty independent of the supervisors. The final examination process often includes: evaluation of the candidate's thesis or equivalent by at least two examiners; a requirement for the thesis to show originality or a contribution to knowledge; an oral examination of the candidate on the thesis content, sometimes a public defence. Thesis structures now vary considerably according to subject, with some remaining in the traditional monograph style, others in the form of a portfolio, including a collection of published papers , or an artefact (e.g. fine art, film, play) accompanied by an analytical commentary and literature review. In some subjects examiners expect but do not require candidates to have published during the programme and for one or more publications to form chapters in the thesis, acknowledging any co-authorship. The 'private' nature of doctoral assessment in the UK has been criticised for a lack of transparency; however, it is increasingly common for an independent chair to attend the oral examination, or for it to be recorded, to assure procedural adherence. In Australia an oral examination is not a requirement in most cases but three examiners, rather than two in the UK, are appointed. Criteria used by examiners to evaluate the thesis and the candidate's performance in the oral examination are explored, including the question of how 'originality' or a 'contribution to knowledge' are defined and interpreted (Clarke and Lunt, 2014).

Conclusion

The paper demonstrates that the doctorate remains a qualification which prepares graduates to undertake independent research and that it is evolving in response to the 21st century environment into a degree during which candidates develop significant personal and professional attributes that qualify them for a wide range of careers. Positive developments in the structure and outcomes of the doctorate nevertheless create tensions and some believe that expectations of doctorate holders mean it is a challenge for candidates to develop both breadth and depth of knowledge and a range of professional and personal skills within a three- to four-year programme, as expected by many institutions and sponsors. The level and standard of the doctorate as a globally understood qualification does not appear to be in question; however, global trends in doctoral education often develop at discipline or field level, e.g. changes in thesis format and structure, and qualification descriptors formulated in general terms require interpretation by subject experts. The paper concludes by recognising that, even though challenges exist for institutions and countries in maintaining doctoral quality and numbers, the doctorate is flourishing in universities around the world, with more doctoral graduates contributing to society and the economy than ever before.

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About the author: Gill Clarke has had extensive involvement in doctoral education and related policy development: at a practical level in a research-intensive UK University and at policy level nationally and internationally. During a part-time secondment to the UK QAA's development and enhancement group from 2003 – 2008, she chaired the working group responsible for revising section 1 of the 'QAA Code of Practice: Research degree programmes' (2004). This publication helped to bring about significant changes to the delivery and management of research degrees throughout the sector and has now been subsumed into Chapter B11 of the UK Quality Code about research degrees. Gill is currently involved in the work of other sector-wide organisations, including the UK Council for Graduate Education (vice-chair), QAA, Research Councils UK, and Vitae's Impact and Evaluation Group). She has previously contributed to European and Bologna-related doctoral (third cycle) events, including EUA and EuroDoc conferences and seminars. Other professional interests include the assessment of students and quality assurance in higher education. Gill is currently a DPhil student in the Department of Education at the University of Oxford; the working title of her research project is: 'The final examination of the doctorate: a study of how examiners assess the PhD'.

European doctoral education, a silent revolution

Thomas Jørgensen

Head of Unit, European University Association-Council for Doctoral Education

Abstract of oral presentation

During the last 15 years, European universities have invested heavily in modernising doctoral education. The traditional master-apprentice model with little or no institutional backing is being replaced by a system of procedures and structures to embed doctoral education in a more formal framework to ensure the quality of research as well as the efficiency and relevance of programmes. The main vehicle for this development has been the establishment of doctoral schools as strategic management units. Such units have enabled universities to identify problems and meet them in a systematic manner at the institutional level. This trend towards professional management has ensured that European countries have been able to manage a steep increase in doctoral candidates while at the same time keeping completion rates and time to degree at reasonable levels.

The presentation summarises this development and looks at the types of procedures and structures in place as well as outlining the challenges ahead in terms of developing a specific quality culture for doctoral education, and what that means for a culturally and economically diverse region like Europe.

Keywords: procedures and structures of doctoral education

A recording of the full presentation can be found at: http://www.qpr.edu.au/?page_id=6972

About the author: Thomas Ekman Jørgensen is responsible for the European University Association's Council for Doctoral Education. His specific work areas are the training of researchers, development of doctoral schools, doctoral programmes and researcher careers. He has also worked on global trends in doctoral education including issues such as capacity building and global research collaborations.

Dr Jørgensen studied History and German Studies at the University of Copenhagen and the Free University Berlin. He received his PhD in History and Civilisation from the European University Institute in Florence in 2004 and worked as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Copenhagen and at the Université libre de Bruxelles before coming to EUA. As an historian, he has worked on student and left-wing movements around 1968. He has also published on youth movements during World War I.

Research training excellence in Australia: a good practice framework for Higher Degrees by Research

Joe Luca

Dean of the Graduate Research School, Edith Cowan University

Abstract of oral presentation

Over the last decade, the Australian Government has tabled a number of reports targeting improved doctoral education in Australia. They are keen to promote world-class research training and also ensure that our doctoral candidates are supported and fulfilled in their careers. This is placing Australian universities under increased pressure to review and assess their approach to research training, as well as promoting quality and timely research training outputs.

Developments in this area are being informed by a greater role for common reference points in defining and evaluating quality, with a move toward a standards-based approach to regulation and quality assurance. Among recent initiatives in this area is the development of a Good Practice Framework for research higher degrees. Its aim is to inform and guide excellence in research training by identifying a set of consistent Dimensions, Components, quality assurance processes and guidelines that can be used by any institution to help review, evaluate and benchmark their research training activities.

This plenary presentation provides an overview of the development and use of the Good Practice Framework and its role as a resource for institutions in assuring and enhancing the quality of doctoral education.

Keywords: good practice framework for doctoral education

A recording of the full presentation can be found at: http://www.qpr.edu.au/?page_id=6972

About the author: Professor Joe Luca is the Dean of the Graduate Research School at Edith Cowan University in West Australia. His professional and research interests are focused on promoting the quality of research and research training, supervisory practice, online learning, graduate attributes and project management. In these fields he has written over 100 refereed journal, book chapter, book and conference publications.

In 2011, Joe was awarded a grant from the Australian Government to develop a Good Practice Framework for HDR Training Excellence in Australia; he is also part of an inter-university team to win a grant to develop a toolkit and framework to support new postgraduate research supervisors in emerging research areas.

Joe has been recognised for his work in teaching and learning and was awarded a national award for Teaching Excellence in 2008 (Australian Awards for University Teaching), an Australian CAAUT Citation Award in 2007 and Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2006 & 2001.

Social network analysis and research collaboration: bridging the divide

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Abstract

The research and development sector in higher education faces extreme pressures in an era of fiscal austerity. Within this context there appears a significant yet perhaps underdeveloped study of how collaboration occurs in universities. For the purpose of this paper, collaboration can be viewed across three key domains: grant funding, publications and higher degree research supervision. This paper presents an overview of the conceptual framework of Social Network Analysis (SNA) and argues it can be used to better understand research collaboration. It provides a link between SNA and understanding quality research training environments for research degree candidates.
Keywords: Research Collaboration, Social Network Analysis, Research Training Environments

Introduction

The higher education sector faces increasing challenges in a time where fiscal austerity at both the government and corporate level has emerged as a catch phrase. These pressures coupled with moves towards highly proscriptive and normative views of what research excellence should be such as Excellence Research Australia (ERA), means that universities are now placed in a position where there is little space to move with regards to research performance. Within this context there remains an important, if yet underdeveloped understanding of research collaboration. In many instruments such as the university research compacts, institutions are asked to quantify and elaborate on the number and nature of collaborative research arrangements that they have in place. Most commonly these cover the key areas of; grant funding, publications and higher degree research students. There does however appear to be a vacuum in the lack of analysis which can be undertaken on the nature and scope of these collaborations and understanding the layers of research relationships which may exist within and across universities. It is perhaps the case that such a vacuum is caused by the lack of an overarching analytic framework which can be used to analyse research collaboration in the key domains of publications, grants and research students. This paper will present an overview of the benefits of using Social Network Analysis (SNA) as a means to analyse research collaboration data and the importance of doing so to achieve a deeper understanding of the way research collaboration works and its importance in terms of providing quality research training environments. It begins by providing an overview of the key policy frameworks and benefits which underpin research collaboration and the e-research agenda before providing an overview of SNA and linking the two concepts. The paper then presents an example of SNA in action and reflects on the importance of such analysis on research training environments before concluding by posing questions on the ways that institutions currently conduct analysis as well as providing future directions for the use of SNA to inform research training environments.

Research Management

Research management is an increasingly important part of the research strategy and development sector. Universities remain under significant pressure to improve their performance and ranking in an era where there has been a relative decline in research funding available (Larkins, 2011). It is also evident that the financial pressures related to research i.e. that direct funding rarely covers expenses associated with the conduct of research and/or research training activities place even further pressures on the sector. There is also increasingly an understanding that research collaboration is critical to research impact in a given field where multi-disciplinary centres are now becoming the norm (Charles Perkins Centre at the University of Sydney in Obesity, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease) and across the sector through schemes such as Collaborative Research Networks (CRNs).

As a result of the above, in many ways research management and administration retains problematic characteristics given that 'research is an intensely personal activity, strongly dependent on the ideas and imagination of individuals or groups of individuals. . . . there are constraints that require the application of some sort of management framework' (Taylor cited in Johnson, 2012, p. 16). It has been noted that in terms of research management 'risks are amplified when dealing with the execution of strategy in the university sector, where strategies and change are notoriously difficult to implement due to cultural, leadership, diversity, scale, and governance factors' (Donoghue and Kennerley cited in Johnson, 2012, p. 30). It is also evident that there remain an increasing number of compliance and reporting activities within the research management domain including: Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC), Student Reporting and other initiatives such as ERA. These reporting activities remain significant in terms of the costs rendered to institutions as well as the implications on how the reporting and measurements may be used i.e. it is conceivable that ERA rankings could be tied to Research Training Scheme (RTS) or Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) scholarships in order to tie research excellence to research student training.

Research Collaboration

At the heart of understanding research management and performance is an understanding of how collaboration works across the research sector. Research collaboration often occurs when researchers are jointly named on a successful research grant, publish together or share student supervision. There is often interplay between these elements where collaboration in one of these areas flows across to the other areas as part of the research lifecycle. In recent years however there has been increasing pressure on researchers to obtain research funding, particularly with respect to Category One funding and most notably through the Australian Research Council (ARC) or National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Indeed research funding at a national level is increasingly becoming harder to obtain with funding in real terms struggling to keep pace with inflation and as a result a decline in success rates has occurred. An example of this is NHMRC project grants where success rates have declined from 27% to 17% over a five year period (NHMRC, 2014). A similar pattern has also been evident for ARC funded grants. As a result it is clear that the crucial tier of research grants is likely to face further pressure and impact on the nature of other collaborations including publications and research student supervision.

It is also evident that institutions themselves are also competing more globally on an international stage for both reputations and through international rankings in a more competitive market place 'because of increasing expectations and challenges institutions need to assess and clarify their missions, goal and priorities, carefully defining their profiles' (LH Martin Institute, 2013, p. 9). These reputations and rankings at least anecdotally seem to influence the choices of candidates regarding where to pursue their study and hence the impact can be seen

in the quality of applicants that may be attracted to an institution. Within this metric based approach to analysing research performance there can be at times an inherent tension between researcher's intensions or wishes and that of the research institution that they work for. The capacity to therefore collaborate is dependent on the researchers having the support, capacity and funding as core components before any networking with others can occur. Institutionally however drivers may be different, related to productivity return, funding obtained and targets met.

Research collaboration is a highly sought after and integral part of the Australian higher education system. It is increasingly clear that collaboration only seems to occur when there are mutual benefits for both (or more) parties. Key advantages of research collaboration include:

- Brainstorming leads to a more robust solution to problems that may require a multidisciplinary approach.
- Work planned tends to more structured and coordinated, as there are multiple parties involved.
- Each party leaves with a broader understanding and increased knowledge through a knowledge transfer environment.
- Can lead to ongoing relationships through the building of trust and reciprocity.
- Research students and researchers are immersed in a research intensive environment compatible with good research training.

In terms of research collaboration one of the major advances in recent times has been the emergence of the e-research agenda in order to promote and facilitate increased interaction amongst researchers. E-research is loosely defined as information technology tools designed to help support research. As information technology has increased so has the capacity to undertake research and to answer questions across interdisciplinary lines with the vast amounts of data available to researchers. In Australia in 2004 the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (Department of Education, 2014) was formed to encourage better collaboration between researchers, government agencies and industry and to help support and develop world class research within Australia. One of the outcomes from e-research is the use of geospatial analysis taking advantage of geographical information systems (GIS) for more disciplines and companies (or similar).

Reporting and analytics in the higher education sector

Due to the ever increasing competitive nature of research, the advancement of tools and technologies has led to more complex mapping of research management information. Whereas once a standard matrix of research information was adequate, now more complex analysis and greater understanding of research data is necessary to advise research leaders of research potential particularly with references to the expanding e-research agenda.

There have been a number of national drivers which have impacted on research performance. In recent years within the Australian context ERA has led to a real focus on research and research performance. This perhaps unwittingly at times has been used to measure research success and performance in a way that it was not intended. An example of that was the ranking of the journals in ERA 2010. The second example is the increased use of the international ranking systems. Many of the larger universities within the Australian context (Go8) are trying to use these rankings as a measure of their reputation from an international perspective. More sophisticated modelling is now required to better understand possible research strengths and weaknesses within and between institutions given imperatives in the sector and as such the below section will provide an overview of social network analysis and its usefulness in mapping complex research networks.

Social Network Analysis

Given the imperatives surrounding research collaboration established above, it is apparent that the analysis of research collaboration would benefit from a framework or tool that allows a deeper level of analysis to be undertaken. SNA is a conceptual framework which has developed from the study of complex systems. It has been suggested that the use of social network analysis is consistent with the increased emphasis on relationships in understanding complex systems or indicative of the 'relational turn' which has occurred (Lubell, Scholz, Berardo, & Robins, 2012, p. 351). Social network analysis can then be seen to be 'the study of structural relationships among network members-individuals, organisations etc. and how these relationships produce varying effects' (Varda, Forgette, Banks, & Contractor, 2009, p. 15). It is argued that it is an effective tool to study relationships at different levels and that 'studying society from a network perspective is to study individuals as embedded in a network of relations and seek explanation for social behaviour in the structure of these networks rather than in the individuals alone' (Cheliotis, 2013). That is to say that the key unit or level of analysis is that of the relationship between two or more actors. A network is then 'represented as a mathematical graph with actors represented by nodes (or vertices) and relational ties by edges' (Robins, Lewis, & Wang, 2012, p. 377). These relationships can be both directed or undirected and further weightings can also be added based on the strength of the relationship between actors e.g. an actor may be asked to make an assessment on strength and frequency of contact (1=little contact, 2=every few days, 3= daily, 4= once or twice a day, 5= continuously). A final key measure is that of degree, how many relationships point to or from a particular actor or group. More in-depth analytic tools in the SNA suite allow for range of ways to analyse data related to the strength and centrality of a network including 'centrality metrics to determine the most active and important network members and cluster analysis to find patterns of association within the network' (Lubell et al., 2012, p. 351). One of the key benefits of this approach is that 'two classes of characteristics can be elicited; the entire network structure and features regarding the network's position of particular nodes' (Ward, Stovel, & Sacks, 2011, p. 246).

There are strong benefits in using social network analysis to understand relationships between individuals and between organisations, as social network analysis allows for instance a researcher to question 'whether the informal communication network within an organisation aligns with the formal organisational hierarchy' (Robins et al., 2012, p. 384). In an applied sense this can then lead to a stronger understanding of how relationships function and from a research analytics perspective who is collaborating and how are they doing this. The following section provides a more in depth review of the nexus between research collaboration and SNA.

SNA and Research Collaboration

SNA has increasingly been used as a tool to understand and analyse research performance in the higher education sector, multiple studies have 'made exemplary use of social network analysis to study the collaboration networks of researchers in several major fields in science including physics, computer science, medicine, mathematics, and neuroscience' (Yeung, Liu, & Ng, 2005, p. 145). It has been suggested that the SNA framework 'in addition to uncovering generic properties of real networks, signals the emergence of a new set of modelling tools that considerably enhance our ability to characterize and model complex interactive systems' (Barabasi et al., 2002, p. 591).

In terms of higher education the use of SNA has most typically been by studying a 'variety of statistical properties of our networks, including numbers of papers written by authors, numbers of authors per paper, numbers of collaborators that scientists have, existence and size of a giant component of connected scientists, and degree of clustering in the networks' (Newman, 2001; Noma, 1982). Given the above, SNA would appear to be able to

be feasibly used in order to understand the nature, scope and depth of relationships between researchers and students that may exist within a research network. It provides a tangible means in which to understand the cross-over and integration between researchers by placing the individual within a broader context and looking to understand whether silos exist or whether the nature of research collaboration is more horizontal in its approach. The benefit of SNA is that it provides an analytic tool for 'data hungry' administrators who are keen to conduct further analysis and better understand the nature of interactions between researchers and HDR candidates. This provided in a pictorial sense allows for quick assessment and understanding of the issues at hand.

SNA in Action (The Wills Review of Health and Medical Research)

There are a number of pertinent examples in the higher education sector at the moment which illustrate the importance of SNA as an analytic tool to understand research performance and capacity. One such prominent example is the Wills Review of Health and Medical Research at the University of Sydney. Broadly speaking the purpose of the review was as follows (University of Sydney, 2013, p. 9):

The review was undertaken to ensure that, in a time of tightening research budgets and significant government reform in health and in research more broadly, Sydney is well placed to advance its interests and maintain its strong position. The review has focused on how Sydney can optimise the comprehensive resources of its health and medical research over the next 10 years.

The Wills review made a number of higher level recommendations regarding health and medical research at the University, including the establishment of four key priority research area pillars, as well as a number of key horizontal cross-cutting themes crossing over against the designated priorities. Critical to the recommendations and the analysis which was undertaken as part of the review was the use of SNA. Figure 1 below provides an overview of the clustering of cancer researchers by geographical school/clinical school location. In the case of the dataset provided in the figure below, this is primarily based on grant income, this could feasibly be integrated with publication and HDR student completions/load to gain an overall picture of the network. It is envisaged that publications, grant income and student load would in most likelihood be mutually reinforcing and that similar patterns may be seen across the three categories of research productivity. The example cited below indicates that across the Sydney Medical School network of cancer research there is strong collaborative clustering and that most researchers are part of collaborative research group arrangements. This is consistent with the anecdotal evidence regarding cancer research which suggests that it is the largest and most mature of research clusters at the University and that generally, researchers and research students are well connected through this network bearing in mind the geographical spread of students and researchers:
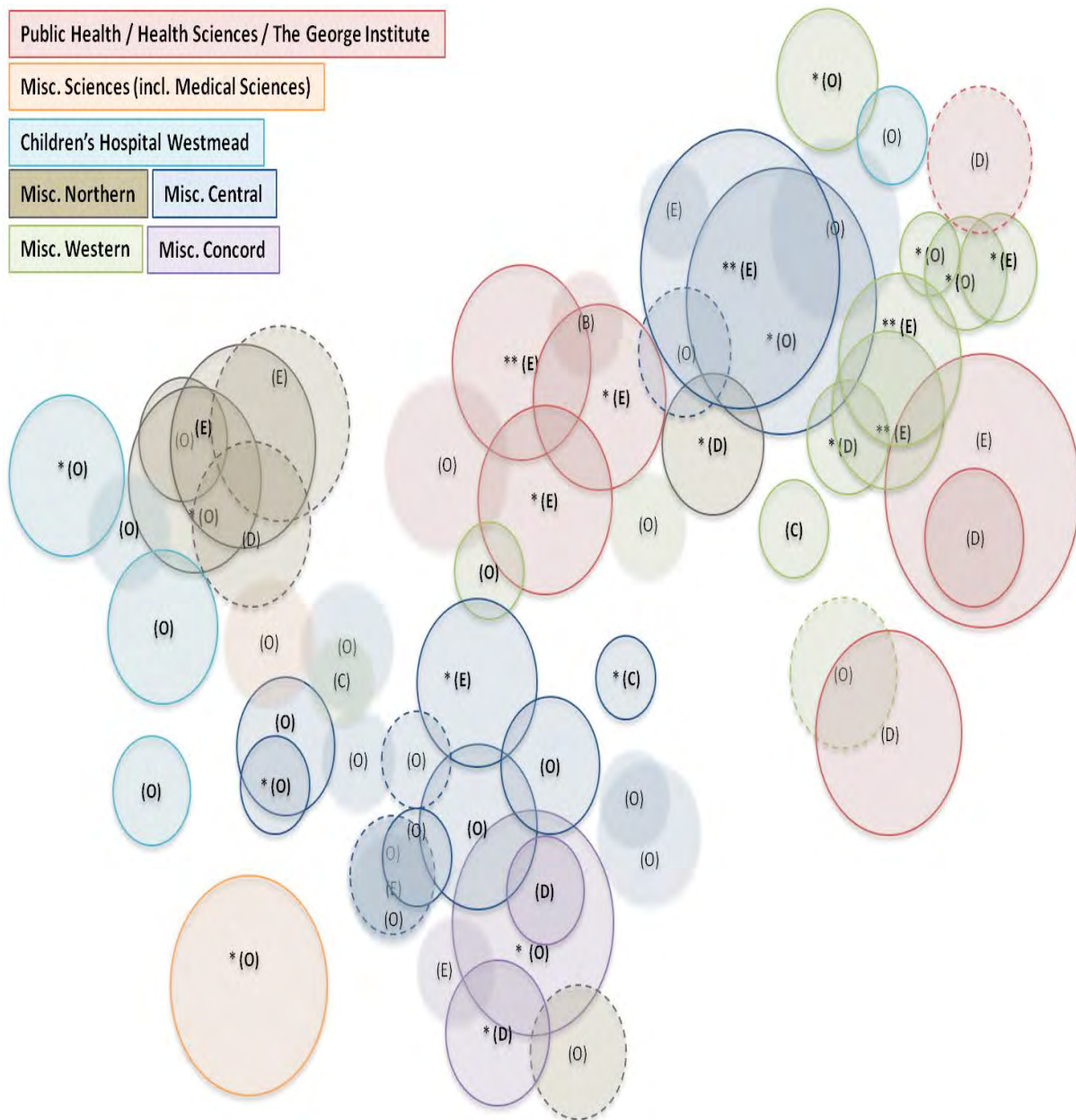
Figure 1: Clustering of Cancer Research Strength by geographical location.

SNA and Research Training Environments

This paper has considered the potential impact that the use of SNA may have in identifying patterns of research which can be strategically used to support research endeavours in the higher education sector. The following section synthesises this with respect to HDR training and quality research training environments.

It has been universally accepted that the quality of a research training environment can mediate and be influential in the success and experiences of HDR candidates. It has been noted that a strong creative research environment is critical to HDR's because 'graduate education is about producing the knowledge workers who ensure the ultimate success and survival of all the major institutions of society, by preserving, creating and developing the ideas, information and technology necessary for them to persist and advance' (Lovitts, 2005, p. 140). A key part of this is the ability to work collectively with others in advancing research design and implementation and across disciplinary lines. According to Weidman et al. (2001) graduate student socialisation is "the processes through which individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful entry into a professional career requiring an advanced level of specialized knowledge and skills" (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001). It is critical to note that 'related to the position that different socialisation exists between graduate departments is the argument that students trained in departments where productive scholars are able to serve as role models will be more productive than students educated at institutions where less successful scientists comprise the graduate faculty' (Clemente & Sturgis, 1974, p. 288). There are strong arguments to suggest that integration across networks of researchers can be considered as part of the "rites of passage' where many research candidates learn the language not merely of the subject area but of graduate research study, and learn to 'act' as a graduate researcher with the rigour and conceptual levels of thinking that is expected of them' (Kiley, 2009, p. 293).

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) in its list of doctoral degree skills provides that graduates with doctoral qualifications should maintain 'expert skills to design, implement, analyse, theorise and communicate research that makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge and/or professional practice' (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013, p. 17). The Good Practice Framework for HDR training devised by Luca and Wolski (2013) provides an example of this by outlining that a research training environment should be 'a dynamic and inclusive research culture within academic units and across the institution, including formal and informal activities and opportunities for engagement with other researchers, academic peers, industry and candidate support areas' (Luca & Wolski, 2013, p. 23).

To this end, SNA represents a powerful analytical tool to understand whether the research mentors who may be guiding HDR candidates are themselves perpetuating successful collaborative practice or whether they remain in more of a silo arrangement where their research is isolated from other collaborators. Hogan's study (1981) was an early study tying research productivity to the graduate environment. 'relationships between quality of faculties and the publishing performance of PhD's' (Hogan, 1981, p. 403). It provided an early attempt to hi-light the importance of mentoring and environment on graduate outcomes given that this has been highlighted as critical to the development of research candidates (Stacy, 2006). Critically it is now accepted that providing a well-connected research environment is critical to research candidates given that disconnected and isolated candidates faces risks with regards to attrition (Lovitts & Nelson, 2000).

Future Directions and Conclusion

This paper has sought to link research collaboration with the conceptual framework of SNA to provide the option of a deeper level of analysis related to the kinds of research environments in which HDR candidates and researchers are embedded. It has been suggested that the use of this analytic tool may be useful towards understanding the strength of a research network as an indicator of potential success for a candidate, given that strong research environments have been cited as a critical factor for success for HDR candidates. Following on from the concepts presented in this paper, there are as a result a number of key questions which can be posed

regarding how institutions may currently conduct this type of analysis and how research and research training are linked:

- What kinds of analytic tools are currently available for Deans, Directors of Graduate Studies/Administrators in your institution to gauge the strength of research networks and collaborations?
- How does your institution currently measure the quality of the research environment in which candidates are embedded?
- Does Social Network Analysis represent a viable means in which to analyse the quality of research training environments within your institution based on the characteristics of a research network?
- How important is understanding clusters of research strength to your institution in terms of identifying appropriate supervision and mentoring activities?

As a result there are a number of key future directions which could be undertaken to further test and expand upon the concepts presented within this paper, these include:

- An in-depth analysis of a department or faculty collaboration map: It may be possible for a department or faculty within a University to undertake a mapping exercise of research strengths using the three main markers of research productivity both within and across institutions; publications, grants and HDR load/completions. This network could then be used as a reference point to understand whether the most embedded or supported networks are producing the best outcomes for research students- which would be the suggestion based on the literature regarding quality research environments being critical to research training outcomes.
- Triangulating collaboration data against perceptions of collaboration: It may be possible to undertake further qualitative work to map individual perceptions and understanding of collaboration against the data which can be extracted through the use of SNA. This would allow for an exploration of the validity of SNA as a tool within the research training sector to indicate whether the type of analysis which is created matches individual's perceptions.

In conclusion, this paper has suggested that given the current trends in the higher education sector surrounding research performance and collaboration there is an imperative for institutions to understand the strength of research networks and clusters in what may be a more nuanced way to the analysis which has been conducted in the past. It has been suggested that the strength of an integrated research network can be judged through the use of social network analysis to assist to identify a suitable environment for research training along with other more qualitative mechanisms which may currently be in place.

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Acknowledgements

A tacit dream-world confronted by a regulated life-world

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Abstract

An obvious dimension of European universities of today is the rules, regulations and objectives that students as well as PhD students are framed by. Another, quite different and tacit dimension is the dreams and hopes of PhD students. The interest in this paper has to do with dreams-worlds of doctoral students in relation to the life-world of the university with focus on supervision. The phenomenological life-world is here contrasted to Schütz description of the dream-world, which we can go into - and out of. In this study, the interview data was originally collected for a project, *advice for doctoral supervisors*, at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, with a total of 32 interviews with supervisors and PhD students from all faculties. This data were reanalysed and resulted in this paper. The result here shows that students can dream of changing things outside the academy, in the community, but also they might have dreams about their own careers, within or outside academia. It also appears that there is a great tension between doctoral dreams and the power they encounter from their supervisors. In this study a couple of strategies to maintain the dream are mentioned: to 'keep a straight face' or 'to sneak'.
Keywords: dream versus reality in doctoral education

Introductory background

In today's education, there is a trend that teachers, students, PhD-supervisors as well as PhD students are expected to be explicit and clear about their goals. The idea behind this notion is that people should be able to reason things out, and to initiate a process of progress. This emphasis on clarity is not least apparent when it comes to supervision of doctoral students (Wisker, 2012). In Sweden, PhD doctoral training has become regulated in line with the European, Bologna implementation in recent years (Adkins, 2009). The main reason behind these changes regard questions of quality and quality assurance, but it has also changed what it means to be PhD students. Instead of being completely free intellectuals, they can rather be considered as students in a specific training with economic considerations, rules, objectives and time frames. In this paper, the explicit expectations, frames, rules, and regulations, confronts a tacit dimension. This paper focuses on when 'dreams' of doctoral students meet the life-world of universities of today.

The dreams as outlined in this paper can be looked upon as 'tacit knowledge' (Polanyi, 1962). However, in this paper tacit knowledge is compared with the world of the university of today. Therefore, tacit knowledge is here regarded as inherently of a kind, which can be illuminated by means of the phenomenological tradition. A central concept within the phenomenological movement is life - world (van Manen, 1990; Claesson, 2011). In the concept of life-world, an ontological standpoint, it is stated that life and world are intertwined and inseparable. However, it is not only life and world that are intertwined, but also body and mind. Another important point to

make here is that things are taken for granted when discussing the supervision relationship. Alfred Schütz who was a part of this tradition had a special interest in the social world, which (in line with supervision) is a social activity (Wagner, 1970). Schütz & Luckmann (1972) writes that the social world appear to be meaningful in its entities, and that, in our way of thinking, we focus on the future, on what should be done.

Schütz' interest in the human social world led him to describe more dimensions than the dimension of the life-world, stating that there are others, different worlds that we can go into - and out of. One such world is the dream-world; the world of daydreaming or of fantasy. Schütz uses the figure Don Quixote as an example from literary where Don Quixote completely lives in a Dream-world. However, in this paper dreams are not regarded as a hindrance, the dream might as well open up and give access to prosperity. The character of a dream is that it is independent of time and space. Schütz also argues that the dream-world is complex; it can be shared with others, but still, most often, it is something the individual keeps to him- or herself. The difference between awake dreams as described here, and dreams when sleeping, is primarily that you are able to associate freely and have some control the former, which is not the case in a dream at night (Gordon, 1985; Globus, 1987). The dream could be about almost anything, and is unique to each person and to each situation. The dream can include the contents of a thesis, the actual process of writing up a thesis, the context, the results, or a combination of these. This study aimed at exploring the 'awake dreams' associated with PhD study and how they relate to the regulated reality PhD students negotiate.

Method

The interview data of this study was not originally collected for the purposes of this paper. However, in the data it was possible to discern how students as well as tutors directly or indirectly touched on the theme relating to dreams, which were confronted by the university life-world of today.

In a project, entitled 'Advice for doctoral supervisors, at the University of Gothenburg', in 2010, both PhD students and supervisors of all faculties were interviewed. A total of 32 interviews, lasting between half an hour and two hours, were transcribed and formed the basis for analysis and the result was presented (Claesson, et al, 2012). The interviewed persons were from all faculties: Humanities (H), Science (S), Social science (Ss), IT faculty (IT), Educational science (E), Art (A) and the Faculty of Medicine (M). The doctoral students (ds) and the supervisors (su) told about their experience in the interviews. The framing questions were about good experiences as well as failures in the process of a thesis, how to meet and how to construct a personal relationship.
A new reading of the interviews resulted in this paper. The theme of dreams which is often vaguely alluded to in the material is here contrasted with the respondents' expectations of the Bologna-process. This aspect can be extrapolated from the interview data as a whole rather in individual quotes.

Results

The results are here described under the three headings: The dream, dream-world in opposition to life-world and strategies. Under the first headline, the results from the interviews are presented, focused on dreams relevant for this paper. Thereafter, we describe the life-world that those dream are confronted with, followed by some strategies that the PhD students use in order to hold on to their dreams.

The dream

Many PhD students hold an exalted view of what science means in society, consequently they might think that a thesis is a good way to bring about change in society, as suggested in the following extract:

There is a problem with various PhD educations. Students start full of confidence, because they think they are about to change the world and they feel that they can do a lot. (A, su, 2)

The desire to change society and be innovative can also lead to conflict with standard expectations of the supervisor and institution:

Then ... then the student tries to be innovative, it does not always come on fertile ground, and is not in line with what the senior researcher wishes. So it is clear there is an inherent tension. (A, su 2)

Some PhD students have a dream to change the society outside academia. For example, they may wish to change the school system as below:

I think that a lot of doctoral students are writing their thesis because they want to influence the school system. (E, su, 2)

Also, the students' dream could involve them coming to terms with others' and their own religious beliefs, as below:

 If somebody comes with very essential views on religion I'll put a stop. (H, su, 3)

If the students' dream is to get a job outside academia, the process of writing a dissertation might become less important for the PhD student than developing skills for the job-market.

They just want to do a little, well; they're looking for a good job and watch the labour market. They fiddle away just to get finished. (A, su, 1)

One supervisor explicitly points out the tension between students achieving self-realization and the process of conducting a scientific project.

You have to be able to realise the difference between a PhD as a scientific work and to perform a project of self-fulfilment. (H, su, 3)

A career as researcher can also be about the lack of dreams, of fear; for example, a supervisor in physics expressed this as 'fear of life'.

- It is essential that the student has an interest in and is curious about the physics and the world and universe.

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Then, I also believe that there may be little fear of life as well.
- In what sense?
- When students attended a course and look for a job ... 'No, I do not know, I think I will continue.' It is safe'. So there is a deal, you do not dare to take the plunge. Since I think many see it career-wise. (S, su, 2)

Dream world in opposition to life world

The empirical data clearly shows how spoken as well as unspoken rules and structures influence the process of research. For example, it can be hard to speak about dreams if you feel you are treated as a child, as one student noted:

For truly I am a child who can nothing, I cannot, I don't have any power ... (A, do, 1)

The supervisor has supreme power and this is shown through simple gestures of acceptance or rejection. He/She can, for example, nod in an affirmative way, when she or he wants something to be developed:

You sit and confirm, or 'that looks interesting '. So it affects the way the PhD student work. (Ss, su, 3)

Supervisors may also affect the doctoral students so that they completely change the focus or topic:

Two pieces of work I know that I have changed quite considerably, in comparison to what they wrote when they started. (Ss, su, 3)

There is also pressure from the supervisory group on the PhD student as indicated by the student and supervisor comments below:

I think it may be the case that as a doctoral student you might feel that all supervisors gang up on you. (Ss 3)

'It is always convincing when several people say the same thing' (Su3)

Some students feel that the reality involves their supervisor and department taking advantage of them, as suggested by this quote from an IT faculty member who expresses concern related to the practices of other supervisors:

PhD students are supposed to outsource their very first, perhaps awkward, attempts, putting them on the table - and in that moment the supervisor is supposed to say something. / ... / ... And there he is, an old sour type, and he only uses the student as a tool. You know, it 's like that! (IT, su, 1)

On the other hand, in contrast to the student's dream, supervisors may find the students stubborn and intractable:

... sometimes you encounter some very stubborn persons who absolutely does not want to abide, just do it in their very own way. (H, su, 1)

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Certain supervisors have achieved a high status and are elevated to 'god-like' proportions by their universities and their students. This, informal power, even more than managerial and work-world pressures can cramp the innovation and dream of the student. One supervisor tells about an American university and a famous researcher and supervisor, Arthur.

How do you do when you raise children? In fact the children will grow up and become like their parents. / ... / I remember, at my favourite place, Stanford, an American scholar, Arthur Kornberg, who won the Nobel Prize, led the research group. He was an extremely interesting person, prominent biochemist with the ability to create unique research environments. A colleague said, 'they all come out like little Arthur.' As the student takes after the supervisor. (M, su, 1)

Strategy

So how do PhD students retain their dreams in the midst of all these pressures? One supervisor says she can feel that the PhD students often repress their feelings:

Yes, it's probably more common to keep a straight face. I usually think it is all right, but there is a risk that they say something else, when they are with someone else. (Ss, su, 2)

However, keeping their feelings inside can be difficult in the long run. Another supervisor noted:

I have seen students break down. / ... / For the students are anxious to keep up their feelings inside, they do not want to appear as someone who is weak in front of the supervisor. / ... / It is most common to pretend that things are going well 'I will manage? ' (A, su, 2)

However, even keeping your feelings inside can rebound on the student as because of the intimate relationship between these parties, the supervisor can suspect that all is not said.

My supervisor thinks I'm sinker. That I do things without telling. (Sc, do, 5)

The interview data shows that the students' dreams often are greater than the mere completion of a thesis. The PhD student might want to be innovative, achieve self-realization, or change a system. One's own career may also be the subject of dreams. However, the dream of getting to do something specific fades when the supervisor encourages certain things and not others. This can be done subtly, or more openly, as when one supervisor describes students using the concept of 'balky' (or refusing to proceed like a 'balky horse'). This suggests that in this supervision relationship there are little or none on-going negotiations, but rather instructions. Another supervisor highlights the student's situation as 'vulnerable'. Finally, the result also focuses a divine researcher and supervisor with very high status and who was worshiped. Strategies from the student's side were to hold on to the dream by holding keeping their feelings inside and or to sneak around behind their supervisor's back. Sadly, all these strategies suggest unequal power relations and a lack of honesty in the supervision relationship.

Discussion

This reanalysis of the data using the metaphor of the 'dream' has indicated that there is a silent dimension in the process of supervision. In social contexts, we exist to each other as subjects, but Schütz & Luckmann (1973) also points out how we, in certain situations, rather are perceived as objects. The relationship between supervisors and doctoral students are long, and they both stand out as subjects to one another, but at the same time also as officials with a specific mission. In the life-world, things are taken for granted. For example when the structure of rules and regulations or critical thinking is taken for granted by the supervisor. What is taken for granted by the PhD student might not be the same. Therefore, in Swedish universities of today, with explicit regulations implemented, hidden dreams can stand out as vulnerable treasures.

The object of the interviews was not originally to find dreams in relation to the reality of the university life-world. Instead, dreams became apparent during readings of the interviews. The result shows that students can dream of changing things outside the academy, in the community, but they might as well dream about their own careers, within or outside academia. It also appears that there is a great tension between the dreams of doctoral students and the power they encounter from their supervisors. Strategies to maintain that dreams are to keep a straight face and to sneak. It is obvious how the reality of the life-world is confronted by the tacit Dream-world, and as the dream is tacit, it will not win any battles.

In the life-world, with everyday activities and sometimes-tough reality, where PhD students seldom experience that they have power, the dream-world may be essential in order to cope with life. A dream or fantasy can affect the work in many directions. A question, which could be raised in relation to this study, is whether the supervisor should know about those dreams. Another question is, if they do know about these dreams, how should they handle this knowledge?

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Stories from my PhD journey: rewriting my methodology chapter

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Abstract

This paper describes a case study of how an unexpected event created an opportunity to reconsider and rewrite my methodology chapter in my PhD thesis.

The approach I used that assisted me to change my methodology involved a combination of reflective and reflexive reading, thinking and writing. It was a slow and thorough process through which I considered widely the choices I was making. Through an iterative process of writing, reading and talking, and then re-writing, I was able to establish a position or standpoint from which I felt confident about the underpinnings of my study.

I came to understand myself ontologically in a new way. I could see how I had moved significantly from a positivist view of static bodies of knowledge creation to a paradigm involving a more dynamic knowledge creation. Correspondingly, I was able to revise and focus my methodology, and in the course of the process I learnt and grew as a person and as a researcher. I understood my values, assumptions and beliefs about the world much more clearly. I also became much more aware of my own PhD journey, how I was developing personally, and how my identity was evolving.

This paper will be useful for those who are embarking on their PhD journey and attempting to critique and / or rethink their methodological approach in the qualitative or interpretive paradigm.

Keywords: Research methodology, interpretive paradigm, narrative inquiry, researcher journey, reflective and reflexive writing, identity.

Introductory background

This paper presents a critical narrative that describes and reflects on the process of how I reconsidered and rewrote my methodology for my PhD. I describe the process in which my early methodological thinking changed and evolved when I was challenged with an unexpected event in my PhD journey. The paper includes an overview of my study, a discussion of how I viewed myself at the beginning of my Phd Journey, a description of how a significant event changed the course of my Phd journey, how I explored my ontological and epistemological position, and how I have come to see that reflexivity is central to my methodology. Throughout this paper I weave in stories and excerpts from my journals.

Overview of My Study

Briefly, my research can be broadly categorised as a qualitative social science study, with a focus on culture, language and people. The aim was to explore the effects of globalisation on the Tamil community in Chennai, India. The research sits within a wide range of studies that are underpinned by a humanistic philosophy in the interpretive paradigm, as distinct from the scientific method or empirico-analytical paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). On a personal level and as a researcher in this study, I have positioned myself as a participant observer (Angrosino, 2007; Gray, 2003; Labaree, 2002 ; Sherman, 2001) who was both involved in and took responsibility

for my emerging understandings and the interpretations I developed through engaging with different social beings and their stories. Like Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) I am 'interested not in prediction and control but in understanding' (p. 4). When I commenced my PhD I had some understandings and prior knowledge of research methodologies from previous research experiences and educational background, which meant that I had worked in what is often described as traditional paradigms of positivist knowledge. Where the products of research were seen as 'true, objective knowledge, following a scientific method' (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009) and when I worked in health where 'causes probably determine effects or outcomes'' (Creswell, 2007, p.7) and a reductionist approach to generating and understanding knowledge (Creswell, 2007; Higgs, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). On that basis, although I could see the value of information that my research into another culture could gain through surveys, examinations and tests that could be analysed statistically and presented in the form of graphs and tables of numerical figures, I wanted to understand the human condition and the world on a more nuanced, personal and interpersonal level. As part of my research, I wanted to be able to utilize my time observing and talking with people particularly as a central part of the inquiry process. This meant working in an interpretive paradigm using a qualitative approach. To this end, I was able to work with a PhD supervisor who was grounded in this philosophy; however, this came to an abrupt end which I discuss later. I also held some assumptions about my study and working across cultures, which were based on lack of research experience, which I discuss in the next section.

In the beginning of my PhD journey

Early on in my PhD journey, I made the assumption that I would be able to navigate and traverse into the Tamil culture easily. I initially saw this as an uncomplicated study, because of my previous knowledge and educational work with migrants, and extensive travels around Asia. These experiences encouraged me to believe that it would be a simple matter of interviewing people, gathering data, analysing that data and then presenting my results. Over time, I recognized that there were two other key elements I had not included. They were myself and the journey that I was undertaking, and learning to be a researcher undertaking a study of another culture. It is in this context as an apprentice researcher, that I also came to appreciate the significance and importance of one's supervisor.

The significant event in my PhD journey

My PhD supervisor was seriously injured and was unable to work. Up until then I was happy with my progress and relationship. Methodologically this supervisor and I agreed on a qualitative approach, with a mixture of narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1997) I wrote up my first draft of my methodology chapter along those lines. My supervisor indicated that she was happy with it as a first draft. And I went away with thoughts like, 'this is very easy' …'what's all the fuss about?' … 'I know what I'm doing here', but using the Australian vernacular expression, it was 'famous last words!' I then left my methodology chapter, feeling self-satisfied, and moved on to collecting data. I realize now that I would have understood research methodology in this way because my last research methodology studies were several years ago and on a minor scale. Also, I had not attended recent research seminars where methodology was discussed, and had not fully discussed issues around the importance of methodology with other PhD students.

I worked with my first supervisor part-time for over two years. I was bereft at the time of her injury and the loss of her supervision. The thought of starting with another supervisor worried me and raised concerns about whether the change would add further time and complications or at worst take me in a different direction. At about the

same time, I decided to change from part-time to full-time studies, which caused a small life crisis as I adjusted my identity from full-time worker to full-time PhD student. It was a difficult period for me. But it also meant that I could study in a supportive scholarly community which encouraged peer learning, provided research seminars and access to academics, rather than studying at home on my own.

A new supervisor

Starting with a new supervisor is somewhat daunting. I found that it involved starting a new PhD supervisor-to-student relationship and going through a phase of getting to know each other, negotiating ways of communicating and relating, and working out ways of working together, to name a few. It also involved reviewing my work and progress so far. It was while we were reviewing my work that my PhD journey took another turn, not in a new direction, but in a solidifying, deeper exploration of myself as researcher. The review started by critically re-reading my first draft of my methodology chapter.

In this next section of this paper, I convey my story of how I revised and changed my methodology chapter. It is a story in three parts. In the first story, I discuss how I understood my methodology initially; in the second part, I describe the process of becoming cognizant of and understanding that I had moved ontologically and epistemologically from a positivist to an interpretive understanding of how knowledge is generated—and the importance of that insight. The third story explains how I have used reflexivity as part of my inquiry.

My first story: how I understood my methodology initially

How I understood my methodology, as I explained earlier, was acceptable as a first draft in the early stage of my PhD journey. I look back on my earlier versions of the methodology chapter and it reflects my level of understandings of knowledge at the time. What I was attempting to do in that early draft was to apply multiple methodological theories and methods, such as case study, ethnographic, narrative inquiry, and grounded theory all at once and rather superficially. It lacked deeper theoretical foundations, reflection, critique and synthesis. I wondered whether it was because I feared exploring deeply or perhaps this was a way to 'show off' my knowledge and my developing expertise as a student researcher. But mostly what I saw was confusion and a lack of commitment to a particular ontological and epistemological view of the world. For an example, this is what I wrote about narrative inquiry.

Stories or narratives are how we communicate, share our experiences, and understand the world around us. Such narratives form sources of data in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). The key to narratives is that they have a beginning, middle and an end; they are lived and told stories, also known as biographies, autobiographies, life history and auto ethnography. Patton (2002) also maintains that narrative analysis includes in-depth interview transcripts, life history narratives, historical memoirs and creative non-fiction. According to (Clandinin, 2007; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998) narrative research 'refers to any study that uses or analyses narrative materials'. In this research, the 'story' is the fundamental unit that accounts for human experience, and so is central to gathering data because India has a long history of being an oral society. Story-telling is deeply rooted in its formal history, traditions, myths, and legends such as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India. Narrative inquiry therefore seemed to be the most obvious data collection strategy for this study.

There is much in this early writing and early understanding of narrative as it relates to my methodology that I have held on to, and built on. For example, my clear understandings of what a story is and its centrality in human

lives. And yet, my thinking about narrative and its place in my PhD thesis has moved on. This (below) is how I have been writing more recently about narrative inquiry.

My understanding of narrative research as a practice is diverse and interdisciplinary, and still evolving. It involves different approaches taken depending on the researcher's interests, assumptions and discipline (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2008; Chase, 2005, 2011; Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Lieblich et al., 1998; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Chase (2005) describes five major approaches for understanding the diversity of narrative, and categorises them according to their use by psychologists, and sociologists who focus on identity work and sociologists who focus on the communication of meaning, anthropologists, and narrative ethnography, and auto-ethnography.

In the second example, although shorter, I indicate that I have read more widely and my understanding of narrative inquiry has broadened and is more complex. It is not a simple matter of telling stories, it's that narrative is used in a range of settings with a range of interpretations, it is an underpinning philosophy.

My second story: my shift ontologically and epistemologically

The second story is how I became cognizant of my ontological and epistemological shifts through reflecting on my life and research practice. This story will include a discussion of how I applied a theory of change to my own life and so entered into a different relationship and approach to research.

A key reading during this period was Pinnegar and Daynes' (2007) article about what they describe as the 'four turns' or 'changes in direction from one way of thinking or being toward another' (p. 7). These turns seemed to speak to some of the changes I was experiencing in my research and indeed my life—the parallels were compelling. Pinnegar and Daynes describe in theoretical terms paradigm shifts that may take decades to take effect. When I reflect on my own situation the changes were happening over two decades but my awareness and naming of the change process is only happening now. They maintain that these turns represent philosophical turns from the widely held positivist assumptions about what makes 'paradigmatic knowing' (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p29). 'These four turns are: (1) a change in the relationship between the person conducting the research and the person participating as the subject, (2) a move from the use of numbers towards the use of words as data, (3) a change from a focus on the general and universal toward the local and the specific, and (4) a widening in acceptance of alternative epistemologies or ways of knowing'. The following stories, drawn from some autobiographical writing in my research journal illustrate my understanding about the four turns that I took in the process of struggling to make sense of my encounters and experiences in my study.

The first turn: equals working together

In the first turn, I reflect on my experience of working as a health professional over twenty years ago, as I experienced people differently and saw their contributions. When I look back on my life, my first turn to understanding that a 'change in the relationship between the person conducting the research and the person participating as the subject' or as I understand it now, moving away from a controlling to an equal partnership, occurred back at the time when I stopped working in hospital settings and moved towards working in the community as a community health nurse. It is hard for me to accurately recall this period in my working life as a health professional, but some time in that period

I began to notice that the power I had as a nurse in a hospital was diminished when I worked with individuals and families in their homes and communities. I could no longer neatly and efficiently deliver medical solutions and

bedside care according to hospital standards. I could no longer treat patients in ways that suited me; patients simply would not wait if I had chosen to deal with them according to some pre-determined schedule. This was hard to see and acknowledge in the beginning. I had been part of a medical system for several years that was hierarchical, bureaucratic, and was used to making decisions on behalf of the patients, as most people were in awe of medical doctors and science and so mostly accepted without question. And, as a young nurse I aped the system. At that stage of my career and education I had only the most rudimentary knowledge of sociology and health politics, and it is only now that I understand that I acted the way I did perhaps to ensure professional power, status and control. It took assertive community members to stand up to me and express their indignation to jolt me out of my complacency. They reminded me that we were equals working together towards a healthy individual, family or locale. Over time, I accepted and learned that as patients, as fellow humans in this community they were contributing to my life as much as I was contributing to theirs. It took their standing up to me for me to realise that the power balance had shifted.

The second turn: using words instead of numbers for data

The second major turn, which Pinnegar and Daynes propose, is the moving from the use of numbers towards the use of words to make sense of the worlds I was working in and the work I was doing in these worlds. In my life, this came about through two significant experiences. One, when I worked in the community as a family therapist/community health nurse and the other when I collected data in my first piece of research.

As a family therapist, when I worked with individuals and families, I was privileged to hear intimate details of the lives of people struggling to deal with day to day personal and interpersonal issues. What I became alerted to was that there were different points of view on the same event, by different family members who witnessed or experienced that same event—and they were all possible explanations of what happened. Some years later, when I commenced my first research study for my Master's degree, I took a qualitative approach. This was new and different to reading epidemiological reports and statistical analyses from my medical studies. For the first time I interviewed people to understand a phenomenon. I began to think of words and language as my data, I was astounded at the richness of the revelations and insight that I gained. These experiences led me to appreciate the depth of knowledge to be gained from taking the time to listen and reflect on what an everyday person who has authentic stories to tell, and often from a variety of valuable perspectives, can contribute to knowledge and understanding.

Yet this new-found, apparently enlightened understanding was shaken sometime afterwards, when I subsequently worked in an academic faculty as an academic-teacher a few years ago.

At the time, because I was new to academia, I was not aware that faculties and schools could be dominated by one way of thinking about knowledge. In this case, and as I understand it now, the underpinning understandings about knowledge creation, research and teaching methods were strongly positivist in this academic community. I began to realize this when I supervised Honours level students and there were no opportunities to engage with other academics in discussion about research methodology, philosophy, ethics or integrity. It was viewed as unnecessary. I had been studying at another university faculty where a range of philosophical positions were held, and I was used to these positions being argued publically in seminars and meetings.

The experience was intellectually unsatisfying and I was quietly exasperated by the attitudes, and so with some regret I moved on. Although at the time I wasn't as clear about the reasons why, in the way that I am today.

The third turn: moving towards the specific

My third story relates to when I moved from an emphasis on the general and universal toward the local and the specific. Like all of the other turns, this has been a particularly difficult one to negotiate. My early professional life had taught me to rely on facts, to believe in science as something that is beyond question or contestation, and in my career in the health professions the importance of epidemiology. In short I believed in the authority of generalization. With more understandings of my biography (and the contexts from which I was coming to this research), it makes sense that I would be strongly persuaded by this way of knowing the world. Indeed, as Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) point out, positivist values and assumptions have been the dominant paradigm in western societies since the beginning of the 20th century. But it was more recently through struggling with and attempting to make meaning of my data that I realised the power of 'the particular'. My struggle was around my unacknowledged need to distil definitive conclusions and neat trends from the stories I heard, and on the basis of these conclusions and trends make predictions, and produce a model about how the Tamil community was an example of the way all ancient communities are dealing with the effects of globalisation in modern times. My discomfort was that I could not do this. Intellectually, it was just not possible to distil the diverse and sometimes acutely contrasting stories into a set of neat conclusions and trends, and from there create a generalized model of 'the way these things happen'.

What I now understand is that the study that I am undertaking probably reveals more about what is going on at a specific point of time in a specific place. It can also lead to further conversations about the situation and further action if the Tamil community chooses to do so. It is about the particular as much as the general (Chase, 2005, 2010, 2011; Gubrium & Holstein, 2009; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). I now understand that my study will not be making easy generalisations about what is happening within the Tamil community in Chennai, prescribing recommendations on that basis or even suggesting that the outcomes are happening everywhere for all, as a matter of fact.

My fourth turn: learning to accept other ways of knowing

In summary, my three turns towards narrative inquiry have been challenging but ultimately transformative and have lead on to the fourth turn, which is a widening in acceptance of alternative epistemologies or ways of knowing. One of the narratives of this whole research PhD for me has been my journey of learning about and appreciating more fully the value of this kind of inquiry. As a PhD candidate, I feel I am still learning about what it means to be a narrative researcher. Beyond this PhD, I have no doubt I will continue to learn about what it means to be a narrative researcher.

Changing my supervision provided an opportunity to pause and reflect on my life and reflexively view it through a theoretical lens, and so access and acknowledge the many changes I had made, and in particular an openness to alternative ways of knowing. Essential, I believe, for a cross-cultural researcher. This leads on to my third story of how I came to value and incorporate reflexivity into my study and so recognize and position myself within my inquiry.

My third story: reflexivity

My third story explains how I employed a degree of reflexivity in writing about my cross-cultural process of coming to know and to understand a different culture and people – and coming to know myself better in the process.

Reflexivity has been a term discussed in the social science literature as a central methodological approach since the 1970s (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009; Chase, 2010; Davies, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, 2011; Dowling, 2006; Etherington, 2004; Luttrell, 2010; Steier, 1991). And yet as late as 2006, Dowling (2006) was suggesting that reflexivity was still an 'emerging' methodological instrument for inquiry. Consistent with the work of Davies (2008), Etherington (2004) and Luttrell (2010), I use narrative in my study, in an ethnographic methodology, and in line with these researchers I see reflexivity as not only a methodological approach and instrument—a set of practices to follow—but something which places the ethics of the project firmly in the foreground. But first I want to distinguish reflection from reflexivity and the role that each play in my research project.

Reflexivity is different from reflection or self-awareness in research. The philosopher Soren Kierkegaard: 1813–1855 once said 'The irony of life is that it is lived forward but understood backward'; in some ways this is a statement about reflection. However, in most of the articles and books that discuss the notion of reflection, many authors (Akbari, 2007; Fendler, 2003; Jay & Johnson, 2002; LaBoskey, 2010; Loughran, 2002; Rodgers, 2002) refer to Dewey (1933, 1938) and Schön (1983, 1987). Dewey (1933) defines reflection as action based on 'the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it' (p. 9). But there are differences between reflection as it is formulated by Dewey, and the type of reflection promoted by Schön. Rodgers (2002, p.844) maintains that Dewey reminds us that reflection is a complex rigorous, intellectual, and emotional enterprise that takes time to do well. Whereas, according to Akbari (2007), Schön defines reflection as an 'intuitive, personal, and non-rational activity' (p.196). Fendler (2003) sums up the differences 'these days the meaning of professional reflection is riddled with tensions between Schön's notion of practitioner-based intuition, on the one hand, and Dewey's notion of rational and scientific thinking, on the other' (p.19). There also appears to be an array of meanings, for example, Fendler (2003) maintains that reflection is used as 'a demonstration of self-consciousness, a scientific approach to planning for the future, a tacit and intuitive understanding of practice, a discipline to become more professional, a way to tap into one's authentic inner voice, … and a strategy to redress injustices in society' (p.20). For me, in my research practice, my understanding of reflection is 'through reflection, one reaches newfound clarity, on which one bases changes in action or disposition. New questions naturally arise, and the process spirals onward (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p.76).' It is an internal thinking process, where I as a researcher think about my external world or what is around me and attempt to make sense or meaning of it. My thinking process aided by writing notes and transformed with discussions with others, where my views are either challenged or validated. In my PhD project, as I present and analyse the interviews I had with a range of Tamil people in Chennai, and as I write and reflect on the narratives I have written on my own journey of getting to know these people, their culture and their history, I attempt to make explicit that writing, reflection and analysis is influenced by my pre-understandings, underlying assumptions, theories, and language. Indeed as I make sense of my data and as I write drafts of my thesis, I have made clear and explicit the way in which reflection is part of my internal processing and meaning making. In other words, I have employed reflection to learn through questioning and investigating (Loughran, 2002), whereas I have used reflexivity to generate knowledge in research.

Methodologically, reflexivity is about knowledge development 'during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written' (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009, p9). One of the key aims of reflexivity is that the researcher makes explicit his/her efforts of seeking to understand, rather than establishing a singular truth. Importantly reflexivity stimulates critical reflection and awareness, rather than establishes a definitive interpretation of reality. Luttrell (2010, p160) maintains that 'reflexivity is at the centerpiece of qualitative research design and process ... and is at the heart of the research journey.' Alvesson & Skoldberg (2009, p9) posit that reflexivity has 'two basic characteristics: careful interpretation and reflection.' Whereas Davies (2008, p4) defines

reflexivity as a 'turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference' and further elaborates 'reflexivity at its most immediately obvious level refers to the ways in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research'. Etherington (2004, p27) extends this argument further and maintains that reflexivity is about including the researcher's stories into the study, 'thus making transparent the values and beliefs that are held, which almost certainly influence the research process and its outcomes'. In short, reflexivity is multidimensional with layers and levels that reflect back other layers and levels, an interaction that affects all parts.

There is also an ethical component to reflexivity, in that as a narrative researcher it is also about viewing myself as a narrator (Chase, 2005). This means, in my capacity as a researcher, I need to acknowledge and critically scrutinize my experiences and what I bring to the study. I also need to make clear when and how these experiences are changing as I reflect and learn, and as I am informed by the processes and outcomes of the research I am engaged in. As Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009, p269) contend, 'people construct their social reality … this applies to the researcher as well.' It also behoves me to translate my understandings of my study in the same spirit as Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), famous for his book Wretched of the Earth (Fanon, 1965), as one of respecting and empowering the Tamil culture (Young, 2003). It is about positioning myself within the context of my social and personal history, culture, environment, feelings and thoughts, when I converse with and attempt to understand my participants.

This way I take responsibility for understandings and interpretations in my writing, which also means that I am making less use of the 'anonymous third person or the passive voice that distances subject from object' (Crotty, 1998, p169) in the research texts I am producing. Indeed, I am actively seeking to 'undermine the myth of the invisible omniscient [third-person] author' (Chase, 2010, p225). Davies (2008) maintains that if observers and the observed in 'objective sciences' require reflexivity and self-awareness of perceptions, then those of us in social and human research, and in my case ethnographic research, where I am searching for richness and complexity, requires even more reflexivity and self-awareness of perception. Being reflexive is not about self-absorption or introspection to the exclusion and incapacity of being open to other societies and cultures. It is the opposite. It shows that I have been open to and have considered many other views and have the critical capacity to incorporate them where appropriate, in the co-construction of meaning, in ways that ethically honour and respect the Tamil peoples of Chennai whom I am researching.

Conclusion

Comparing my PhD journey with other PhD students I have come to realize that they are not straight forward, in my case there was an unexpected event where there was a sudden change in my Phd supervisor. In retrospect, I could have viewed it as devastating, but I chose to use the opportunity to review my journey and my progress, and gain new insights. Insights about my ontological and epistemological positions, how I moved from positivist to an interpretative view of knowledge formation, and that reflexivity is pivotal to the kind of qualitative research I am undertaking. This process has resulted in significant personal and researcher identification growth and understanding, which in turn will be reflected in the quality of my writing and analysis. I hope to use this growth and understanding to show how I am engaging in ethical research practices and so respect the Tamil community who have so graciously invited me into their homes and lives.

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Great Expectations: The relationship between negotiating student and supervisor expectations at the commencement of the candidature and future conflict

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Abstract

Clarifying student and supervisor expectations at the start of the Higher Degree Research candidature is said to be important to provide a strong foundation for the student/supervisor relationship and to prevent later conflict (Jonas, 2012). However, research in a regional Australian university has identified that while clarifying expectations is helpful, it does not prevent much of the conflict that arises in the Higher Degree Research student/supervisor relationships. This article explores the relationship between negotiating student and supervisor expectations at the commencement of the candidature and later student/supervisor conflict. It considers the use of checklists and conversation guides to support discussion about expectations at the start of the candidature and the impact of those conversations on later conflict. It identifies a number of problematic factors in how these conversations occur, in particular the differences between the level of power and knowledge of the supervisor and the student, and the tendency for the conversations to be supervisor-centred. The research also identifies that a large proportion of conflict that arises in the HDR relationship is not about unclear expectations, as such, but rather about clear expectations that are not met, or about other matters entirely. The author recommends that in order to minimise unnecessary conflict in the HDR supervisory relationship, and to ensure that inevitable conflict is managed constructively, more needs to be done to support students and supervisors. In particular, conflict needs to be normalised and seen as a positive, learning experience; students and supervisors need training about how to manage conflict constructively; and they also need independent confidential support such as conflict coaching to assist them to manage conflict effectively at an early stage prior to it escalating to a point where it is unresolvable. Clearer exit pathways are also important where the conflict is not able to be managed or resolved.

Keywords: higher degree research education; supervisory relationship; conflict; expectations

Introduction

> '*Suffering has been stronger than all other teaching…*'
> Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

It is well established that the quality of the student/supervisor relationship is directly related to the success of the doctoral candidate (Jonas, 2012). The relationship also impacts on the satisfaction of both the student and the supervisor with the candidature process. The literature suggests that a fundamental basis for a healthy and productive supervisory relationship is an explicit discussion between the student and supervisor at the outset of the candidature about each person's expectations about the future relationship, culminating in an agreement about how supervision will proceed (see for example Brockman, Colbert & Hass, 2011; Golde, 2000; Goodyear,

Crego, & Johnston, 1992; Green, 1991; Harnett & Katz, 1977; Klomparens, Beck, Brockman & Nunez, 2008; Lovitts, 2001; Moxham, Dwyer & Reid-Searl, 2013; Wisker, 2012). While a discussion about expectations may provide a framework for how the candidature proceeds; the research discussed in this article suggests that such discussions are not sufficient to prevent much of the conflict that arises in the Higher Degree Research (HDR) student/supervisor relationship. Some recommendations for improving the management of conflict in the HDR student/supervisor relationship are introduced in this article. In particular, the author recommends that universities actively normalise conflict in the HDR student/supervisor relationship by explicitly acknowledging that conflict is likely to arise around expectations and other matters during the candidature. In addition, universities should provide a range of support strategies to assist both students and supervisors to constructively manage that conflict when it inevitably arises, such as conflict management training for both students and supervisors and independent conflict coaching services for students and supervisors experiencing conflict. Another particularly useful strategy is to promote explicitly identified exit pathways for students who have unresolvable conflict with their supervisors.

This paper includes a selection of quotes about expectations and conflict experienced by students and supervisors at an Australia regional university. The interviews were conducted as part of a larger research project exploring students' and supervisors' experience of conflict in the HDR context. It is acknowledged that the experiences of the students and supervisors quoted in this paper are not necessarily representative of all students and supervisors across different disciplines and universities, nor do they necessarily 'prove' in an empirical sense the arguments made in this paper. However, they do provide some useful examples in the students' and supervisors' own words of some of the points being made.

Setting Expectations and Conflict

Both students and supervisors commence their relationship with expectations about how the candidature will progress (Wade-Benzoni, Rousseau & Li, 2006). Some of these expectations will be formal and documented (e.g. in policies and handbooks) while others will be unwritten and less identifiable (e.g. politics, myths, history, ethos) (Klomparens et al., 2008). Some expectations are about the actual research and outputs (e.g. the research methodology, access to resources and other support, performance and progress) while others are more personal (e.g. the closeness of the relationship between student and supervisor, behavioural and attitudinal expectations) (Wade-Benzoni et al., 2006).

It is well documented that the culture of HDR education is one in which there are unclear expectations, implicit assumptions and frequent misunderstandings (Brockman et al., 2011). It is also well established that the lack of explicitly communicated expectations between HDR students and supervisors undermines the retention of doctoral students (Klomparens & Beck, 2004; Nerad & Miller, 1996) and creates potential for conflict (Brockman et al., 2011; Golde, 2000; Lovitts, 2001).

Previous studies have demonstrated that conflict between students and supervisors is often based on mis-matched expectations (for example Adrian-Taylor, 2007; Brockman et al., 2011). This is probably not surprising in that conflict itself could be defined as a mis-match in expectations about what should happen (or should have happened) in any particular situation.

Accordingly, there is a great deal of literature recommending that doctoral students and their supervisors spend time at the outset of the candidature discussing their expectations of the relationship, and reaching an agreement or learning contract about how the supervisory process will proceed (see for example Brockman et al., 2011;

Golde, 2000; Goodyear et al., 1992; Green, 1991; Harnett & Katz, 1977; Klomparens et al., 2008; Lovitts, 2001; Moxham et al., 2013; Wisker, 2012).

Generally speaking, the topics that various authors recommend should be covered in early discussions about expectations tend to be fairly procedural. For example, students and supervisors are typically encouraged to discuss matters such as: the regularity and focus of supervision meetings; the student's involvement in research development programs; the length and format of progress reports; dates for submission of work and milestones; length of work; publication plans; etc. (Wisker, 2012). Students and supervisors may also discuss their role expectations, including such things as: the level of responsibility of each for research topic and methodology choice; the level of involvement of each in conducting the research (for example collecting and analysing data), writing up and editing; and provision of feedback.

Students usually understand the formal and procedural expectations but frequently do not have the same understanding of the informal and implicit expectations such as behavioural, attitudinal and cognitive expectations (Klomparens et al., 2004; Lovitt, 2001). Students and supervisors may find it difficult to initiate discussion on these topics (Hair, 2006; Phillips & Pugh, 2000) and accordingly these kinds of informal expectations are often understood only as the candidature progresses, through trial and error, the departmental grapevine, intuition, and socialization (Brockman et al., 2011).

It is often recommended that tools be used to provide a prompt and structure for these initial and sometimes difficult conversations between a new doctoral candidate and his or her supervisor/s. A range of tools is available to support students and supervisors to discuss their expectations at the commencement of the candidature (see for example, Denicolo, 1994; Gurr, 2001; Hair, 2006; Moses, 1985). These include checklists for early discussions, sample learning contracts, and inventory/rating scales with a series of diametrically opposed statements about various aspects of HDR supervision to be completed by students and supervisors independently and then discussed together (for example Hair, 2006; Gurr, 2001; Moxam et al, 2013).

The Research

In 2012 research was conducted at a regional Australian university, supported by a university learning and teaching grant, and approved by the Human Ethics Committee. The aim of this research was to better understand the relationship between HDR supervisors and students, and in particular:

- The types of conflict experienced in that relationship;
- How such conflict was managed; and
- The impact of conflict on supervisors, students and the university.

All registered supervisors and currently enrolled HDR students were invited by email to participate in interviews about their experiences with conflict in the HDR student/supervisor relationship. In-depth interviews (45-90 minutes) were conducted with 22 HDR students and 24 supervisors. The majority of interviews were conducted face-to-face, although a number were conducted by telephone. The interviews were conducted by two academics from the same university: one an experienced supervisor and the other a current PhD candidate. The interviews were conducted using the 'responsive interviewing' technique (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The interview transcripts were coded in NVivo based on themes identified from existing literature about conflict in the HDR

student/supervisor relationship, and also themes developed from the transcripts themselves using grounded theory.

Of the students interviewed, seven were male and fifteen female. Their ages ranged from 30 to over 70. Twenty students were enrolled in a PhD, and two in an MPhil. The students came from a range of faculties, university research centres, and disciplines. Students were both part-time and full-time (some having been both at different times throughout their candidature) and their periods of enrolment ranged from 1 to 10 years. Three students were international candidates, the remaining nineteen were domestic students. Six students were enrolled externally, and the remainder internally (although some of them had changed between internal and external throughout their candidature). Only one student identified as indigenous. Seven students identified as having a scholarship. Six students identified that their research was part of their supervisor's research project.

Fourteen supervisors interviewed were male and ten were female. Supervisors came from a range of faculties, university research centres, and disciplines. Their years of experience as a supervisor ranged from less than one year to thirty-five years, with a reasonably even spread across that range. Supervisors interviewed had supervised between 0 and 75 HDR students during their careers, and were currently supervising between 0 and 11 students.

The researchers acknowledge some limitations in the research, including that the interviewees were self-selected and are not necessarily representative of the broader university cohort or other universities; that the researchers could only analyse the participants' reported experiences (not data on the conflict as it actually occurred); and that the researchers are both staff/student at the same university as the participants, which may have affected what participants were willing to say in the interviews.

Given the number of participants and the length of the interviews, the research resulted in a large amount of data. This article refers to only limited examples of the data collected and analysed.

Results

In our research, students identified the following main causes of conflict with their supervisors:

- Their supervisor was too busy (and in particular, took too long to read drafts);
- The supervisor was not interested or sufficiently involved in their research;
- The supervisor was only interested in what they could get from the student (e.g. research assistance, data, technical support, putting their name on publications);
- The supervisor was too involved/controlling.

Supervisors most often reported the following causes of conflict with their students:

- Student performance issues (especially student not taking supervisor's advice)
- Student having unrealistic expectations of the supervisor;
- Cultural issues, including English language capacity;
- Personality issues;
- Student not acknowledging supervisor in publications;
- Communication issues;
- Student disappearing, not being contactable.

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Supervisors did acknowledge that conflict could occur when expectations were not made clear at the outset of the candidature as indicated in the following quotations:

> *I think [minor conflicts] happen because of expectations and misalignment of expectations so what the student expects from us compared to what we're expecting from them and I think that kind of stuff, if it's not really explicit right from the beginning, I think those are the kinds of things that where you end up inevitably getting minor conflict because, you know, they want something back from you within a certain timeframe and if those sorts of things aren't discussed up front, I think it causes tension and they don't understand. [SUP014]*

> *I think [conflict is] a matter of conflicting expectations and often a failure to communicate those expectations. [SUP017]*

Many of the supervisors interviewed referred to the usefulness of having clearly communicated expectations early in the candidature.

> *I always personally… make it very clear what the expectations were [about authorship] so if there was any conflict about those expectations it should be sorted out before they even start the project. So it all sounds a bit premature talking about publications when they've hardly started but the form that the student and supervisor has to fill in now there is a tick box to say that you've discussed that. Now clearly that's going to vary a bit depending on the type of project, the relationship and so on and I think that's appropriate that it should and the number of supervisors and who does what. But whatever, the views need to be aired early on and if they aren't, conflict can arise later. [SUP009]*

> *I think having more structure rather than less structure is a good thing, particularly early on so that there's mutual expectations around frequency of contact, goals, planning, you know, supervisor and student arriving at a set of mutual expectations around conference attendance, publication output… [SUP010]*

Another supervisor specifically referred to the university guidelines for having such a structured discussion and negotiating a supervisory 'contract':

> *The good thing about what's happening now in the university is the contractual arrangement or at least the supervisor guidelines, I think that's a good starting point and I think most students don't think about that until they get into the situation so ensuring that they know the guidelines exist and that the conversation is a really important one to have at the beginning of a supervisory relationship is pretty important… [SUP008]*

Students also indicated that they found a clear discussion about expectations helpful:

> *It's just a matter of knowing how – what people expect from each other and how people work and I think it works that way. [STU005]*
> *[T]hey have all of those sort of check lists and all of that sort of stuff and then like for me I think it would have been helpful… explicit expectations of 'look, [we will] meet you know, twice a month for the first six months and then figure out where you go from there'. [STU008]*

However, as one supervisor pointed out, as well as the formal discussion and documentation, it is also important to discuss some of the more informal expectations about what students could expect from their supervisor:

> *[S]ome instructions 'What to expect from your supervisor' would be a really good thing…you need all that documentation in a formal way but you also need some informal stuff on what to expect from your supervisor …what you can realistically expect from your supervisor…. A minimum set of expectations that every student should be able to get from their supervisor… [SUP007]*

Some recognized that new students, and particularly international students, didn't know what to expect and find it incredibly difficult to negotiate expectations.

> *I'd send him drafts and he wouldn't look at them and then he would never acknowledge that he got them and then you'd send another draft and so that, just that physical feedback I guess was the difficult thing but – and I – and I don't know what's normal. … the trouble is when you come in as a PhD student, you're very naïve as to all of those processes and procedures... [STU003]*

> *You start off in a Phd, you're very vulnerable at that stage I think. You're very worried about like 'oh, my God, I don't, you don't know the people'. You don't have much confidence… They're not your friends… they're your supervisors, okay, so most of these things don't get talked about…[STU006]*

> *I think that [early conversation about expectations] helps a lot because it gets people to consider some of the things like 'What are your expectations of me and what are my expectations of you? And if there's stuff that doesn't match at all then perhaps we need to find another way to manage that', you know, so that you just negotiate that and I think students new into the game find that difficult, but at least it gives them a starting point... [SUP008]*

> *[P]articularly those overseas students need to know what's expected of them and how they're expected to interact with their supervisors and for some of them that's quite hard, one of the hardest things I would think 'cause they treat the staff as I said, as a guru, somebody to be looked up to, respected at all costs, whether they earn it or not. [SUP009]*

Frequently students indicated that at the start of their candidature they were incredibly grateful to their supervisor for agreeing to take them on as a student. It seems likely that students in such a situation are likely to agree to anything the supervisor suggests in order to maintain the candidature.

> *I thought it was like winning the lotto. I'd found somebody who'd put their name on a piece of paper and allow me to start… I was very grateful that there was somebody who was prepared to take a totally unknown quantity on when they didn't know anything about me or my subject or what I was thinking. And be able to just on the day, sit down with me for an hour or so and say yeah that sounds like it will be ok, and let's do it… I was grateful that there were two people who were prepared to be my supervisors. I could have found myself in a situation where there was nobody. [STU001]*

From the descriptions provided by many supervisors, it appeared that the discussions that did take place between students and supervisors around expectations generally involved the supervisor presenting their expectations and the student either taking or leaving them (rather than any negotiation):

> *I spend a couple of months to begin with setting up their expectations in every meeting as to what they should expect from me, what their responsibilities are… [SUP006]*

> *I think the onus is on the supervisor to let the student know and say 'Hey, you're in Australia now. This is how it works and this is what we expect of you'. [SUP007]*

I don't leave them in any doubt about what's expected. [SUP013]

Just when my students start, I sort of sit them down at the beginning and I tell them how I work and what I expect from them and, you know, ask them what they expect from me…. I work very hard in the beginning to lay the ground-work with them and let them know what I expect and what they can expect from me. I think that saves a lot of trauma down the line because right from the beginning I say 'Right, you know, these are things – these are my expectations for you. Tell me what you expect from me and I'll tell whether I think that's reasonable or not or you know, how we can come to a point where we're both happy with what we expect from each other'. [SUP014]

Where conflict over expectations became apparent at the outset (e.g. when expectations were first discussed and theoretically negotiated), it seems that in many cases the supervisor's expectations prevail, or the student is expected to find another supervisor:

The first thing would be to put something in writing of what my expectations are for the next meeting. Sometimes that sorts it out because many times or often it is purely a communication failure. They didn't understand what I or other supervisors were looking for, that their English wasn't appropriate, that their culture wasn't appropriate, all these sort of things. It's usually in the beginning stages... I've always treated them in the way: 'Look, I've been appointed your supervisor. This isn't an equal relationship. You're not my equal, if not you wouldn't have chosen me', all those sort of things. Then 'Look, what do you want to get out of this?' And if we can't sort it out that way, some students say, 'Look, this isn't what I wanted.'… They change supervisor... [SUP011]

Some students were quite pro-active in clarifying expectations, either directly with their supervisor or from others who might be able to give them helpful information:

Well, I spent a lot of time talking with other colleagues… I had to make sure that I tried to glean as much – what was normal for a PhD student. [STU003]

I had spoken to several of my primary supervisor's PhD students prior to so I was expecting certain things. [STU105]

[T]here are some expectations that on my part I do not really understand him, but I make it my business to go back and ask him, 'Did you mean this? Did you mean to say this or did you mean to say that?' [STU112]

One supervisor indicated that the best students were those who worked hard to understand what is expected of them:

[T]he best [students] in those situations are often the overseas students who are very committed to trying to understand what is expected of them. [SUP007]

Another supervisor noted that expectations were usually clear (and thus conflict much less likely) when the student was:

'mature age… very well qualified…[with] a very good understanding and experience of the university system' [SUP106]

However, many students and supervisors recognised that even when expectations were clearly discussed and negotiated at the outset of the candidature, this did not always prevent conflict. A good example of this is

STU102, who probably fits quite well SUP106's description above of a mature student with a good understanding of the university system and what is expected of them.

> [B]efore I took on the PhD…I've done a few post graduate degrees in different universities so I know that, you know, the person you talk to them, talk about, you know, 'How do you run being a supervisor?' and 'What are your expectations of the student?' and stuff... Anyway, I went and met with [my prospective supervisor] and he was, in my opinion, very professional. He said something that I was really impressed with which was he liked to meet once a week, that he had very clear goals and tasks and I'm thinking wow, fanatastic 'cause all the things I'd heard about that, you know, you want to avoid anything to do with not being clear, miscommunication, you know, non-aligned expectations and stuff like that and guidance… [STU102]

Unfortunately for STU102, his positive experience in discussing expectations at the outset, which convinced him to commence his candidature with that particular supervisor, did not continue once his candidature was underway:

> [T]here's no way I'll be able to tell you why there was a change…But from the time that we started our meetings, he just was amazingly rude… [STU102]

> It seems that conflict based around personality differences, cultural misunderstandings, or the student's academic ability was not likely to be prevented by early discussion and clarity about expectations: Does [discussing expectations] really help if conflict arises anyway because of those personal things … they're going to come up anyway. [STU008]

> [T]here was this sort of misalignment of expectations, yeah, that to some extent was exacerbated by who she was, not just what she didn't know. [SUP002]

> I still think all of the processes in the world in place won't necessarily compensate or necessarily help some of these fundamental structural problems which really begins with a misunderstanding of (1) culture or un-alignment of culture and cultural expectations and (2) academic ability… [SUP002]

Conflict also tended to arise when the discussion about expectations was not clear enough (e.g. it was agreed that the student would receive 'prompt' and 'detailed' feedback, but the supervisor and student had interpreted those terms differently):

> I think the student had higher expectations for the co-supervisor than what the co-supervisor was prepared to do in terms of feedback on drafts so the co-supervisor was 'This is not good enough. You need to work on this more. It lacks X, Y and Z' whereas the student's expectations was that they would provide more detailed feedback, even rephrasing and restructuring it. [SUP015]

Conflict also arose because one of the parties failed to live up to the agreed expectations (e.g. the supervisor did not provide feedback within the agreed two weeks from the student sending her work):

> Even if [expectations are discussed and agreed] … then people don't properly follow those rules … or the definition of those rules … or interpretation is different then there can be conflict… [SUP009]

> I told my supervisor…'I need your close support' and he said to me 'Sure, I will give you all the support.' But there were times when the supervisor would be so busy… there were sometimes I expected my supervisor to give me that support but he would be busy with the students and that kind of demoralized me at times. [STU112]

Our research indicates that where students and supervisors have different expectations at the start of the candidature, even where these are identified in early discussions, generally students simply agree with their supervisors' expectations rather than find another supervisor who has more similar expectations). Partially, this is a systemic issue, in that the discussion about expectations tends to happen after the candidate has been accepted into the doctoral program and the supervisor is already appointed. It is logistically and politically difficult to change supervisors at this point.

> …if you've made a commitment then you have to kind of try to see it through, don't you? And from the supervisor's point of view too, if they – if it's got to the stage where they know that they can't do it, then they have a responsibility to say 'You need to find a supervisor who's right for you' or – I don't know, maybe that needs to be more explicit that that's an option where if this isn't working within 12 months, can we look at alternative supervision arrangements or something. [STU008].

Where problems arise subsequently, students tended not to raise them with their supervisor.

> I would not know how to manage it because I didn't know him so well and he still had this position of supervisor and stuff … I wouldn't do much and I would just feel bad. [STU005]

> I would like to see the student that goes to his supervisor and tells him directly … 'Could you please provide me with better feedback?' I mean it's not going to happen, like I cannot see that. [STU006]

Students often face difficulties replacing a supervisor with whom they are having conflict:

> [He] was the main supervisor in the sense that he was the person who provided most of the funding…he was the one person with the actual background knowledge to be able to understand what was going on. So that was … a reason why it took much, much longer to decide that this can no longer be that way… because I felt like I'm going to kick out the one person out of my project which is the person that has the most knowledge about it, so the person I'm most reliant on was the one which failed me basically. [STU006]

Discussion

The interviews with students and supervisors confirm some of the existing literature about the usefulness of having clear expectations at the outset of the candidature. However, our data also revealed a number of important factors that limit the usefulness of early discussions about expectations in preventing or managing subsequent conflict in the relationship.

In the HDR context, perhaps the appropriate question to ask is 'How much conflict could have been prevented by early discussions about the students' and the supervisors' expectations of each other during the candidature?' Considering the types of conflict described by participants in our study, it is certainly not clear that, had the students and supervisors involved had a discussion (using a structured tool or not) about their expectations at the start of the candidature, that many of the reported conflicts would have been prevented. Indeed, it is likely that some of our respondents did in fact have such a conversation, given that the university recommended it and provided students and supervisors with a rating scale to complete and use as the basis for such a discussion at the commencement of the candidature.

While such tools are helpful in clarifying some of the student's and supervisor's expectations up front, they are of limited use in preventing or helping to manage many instances of conflict between students and supervisors for a number of reasons. These reasons include:

- The checklists and guides often refer to imprecise concepts that may be interpreted differently by student and supervisor.
- Agreed expectations are often worded in such a way that different interpretations are possible. For example, a supervisor may interpret 'responding promptly' to a research student's need for feedback to mean providing feedback within 4-6 weeks, whereas a student may interpret promptly to mean within a few days. Similarly, what a supervisor interprets as 'constructively critical' a student may perceive as harsh and overly negative.
- The checklists and guides tend to cover only limited areas in which conflict typically arises in supervisory relationships.

Our results show that conflict frequently arises from issues (e.g. personality differences, cultural misunderstandings) that were not part of the expectations discussion, and highlights the fact that such discussions and agreements cannot cover every possible issue that may arise in the future.
It is erroneously assumed that a discussion about the matters listed in the checklists and guides will lead to agreement between the supervisor and the student about those matters.

Our research has demonstrated that often, while agreement may appear to have been reached, it is typically undermined by a number of phenomena. Our data shows that early discussions about expectations tend to be 'supervisor-centred' in that where there is actual (or even the possibility of) disagreement, the supervisor's view usually prevails. Students will typically agree with whatever their supervisor suggests in relation to expectations, for a number of reasons. Firstly, students frequently do not know what to expect from the relationship so defer to the supervisor's suggestions. Secondly, students often make a deliberate choice not to express different expectations, either because they are so grateful that the supervisor is willing to take them on as a student that they are prepared to agree to anything the supervisor wants, and/or because they feel that they do not have other options available to them (e.g. no other appropriate supervisors available) and so have little choice but to agree. Our study supports Kramer and Martin's (1996) statement that initial discussions between students and supervisors about their expectations of the relationship were a bit like 'talking about a pre-nuptial agreement on a first date' (Kramer & Martin, 1996, p. 171) in that students tend to idealise the supervisor and are highly motivated to maintain the supervisor's interest in them as a candidate. Our study also reinforces the relevance of the warning given by Moxham et al. that 'during these initial meetings when expectations are being identified, it is beholden of supervisors to be cognisant of the power imbalance or perceived power imbalance' (Moxham et al., 2013, p. 353).

Also, expectations (in particular students' expectations) generally change over the course of the candidature, so agreement at the outset of the relationship will not preclude later conflict.
Checklists and guides rarely include specific consideration of how future conflict will/should be managed.

Another important constraint on the usefulness of early discussion and agreement about expectations is that they rarely include specific consideration of how future conflict will be handled by the student and supervisor. Wisker (2012) suggests that clearly defined expectations/learning contracts can be used when conflict arises, in two ways:

- Students and supervisors can always revisit and change the ground rules, or remind each other of them if the research relationship has some problems; and/or
- The documented rules/expectations can act as an objective vehicle to discuss any breakdowns.

While these two suggestions sound good in theory, our research has indicated that neither is likely to happen in practice. As demonstrated by both our research and previous research, the typical response of both students and supervisors to problems is to avoid discussing them at all. Some of the reasons that these discussions do not take place include embarrassment that they are experiencing conflict in the first place, fear of consequences of raising the conflict explicitly, and lack of conflict management skills (Brockman et al., 2010).

Summary conclusions

Our study provides some new perspectives on the relationship between expectations and subsequent conflict in the student/supervisor relationship. In particular, our interviews show that even when expectations are discussed and agreed upon, and learning contracts are negotiated at the outset, this does not necessarily prevent conflict from arising. Another significant finding is that conflict often arises precisely because one of the parties has not complied with the previously agreed upon expectations.

One of the most important arguments put forward in this paper, and substantiated by our study, is that discussions about future expectations (even with supporting tools or checklists) typically do not include a discussion about what happens if someone does not do as agreed, or where a previously unforeseen disagreement arises. In other words, there is generally no discussion about or mechanism for managing future conflict. What checklists and recommendations for early discussions about expectations do not provide is guidance about how to manage situations in which there is a mismatch of expectations.

Previous research and anecdotal evidence has indicated that in many universities conflict is not being handled well and that typically students and supervisors deal with conflict largely by avoidance, leading to increasing levels of frustration and conflict escalation. We suspect that some of the reasons for this include particular university cultures around conflict (in which the university implicitly, if not explicitly, discourages people from raising and dealing with conflict early), power issues inherent in the student/supervisor relationship, general norms of avoidance in the population, and the fact that both students and supervisors tend to be not very well trained or supported to manage conflict effectively. Other data in our study (not included here due to length limitations) indicates that students in particular, but also supervisors, would find useful an independent person with whom they could raise conflict issues in a confidential manner, in order to 'talk them through' at an early stage, without having to make public or formal complaints.

Recommendations

As a starting point, it is important that universities normalise conflict so that students and supervisors are not embarrassed about asking for assistance. In induction programs / supervisor training, conflict should be introduced as something that is necessary for learning and development, and that what matters is how well it is managed. Conflict management skills should be something developed during the candidature, as a kind of graduate attribute for doctoral students – conflict management skills will serve researchers well in future collaborative research or professional activities in which they will be required to work with others with whom they will not always agree or get along with.

In discussions about students' and supervisors' expectations, it should also be presented as normal that students and supervisors will likely have different expectations at the start of, and throughout the candidature, and that this can be effectively managed if dealt with early and constructively. It should be emphasised that early

discussion of difficulties is likely to be more beneficial than avoidance. It is also important that, as much as possible, expectations are described in as much detail as possible (e.g. 'feedback will be provided within four weeks of the students submitting written work to the supervisor' rather than 'feedback will be provided promptly') to maximise the likelihood of a shared understanding at the outset.

Most importantly, support must be provided for both students and supervisors to have these difficult discussions when differences inevitably arise. This support should include conflict management training, as well as independent and confidential conflict coaching. The role of the conflict coach is not to advise students or supervisors about what they should do, but rather to act as an independent sounding board who can facilitate the individual through a structured process to assist them to become clearer about the situation they are facing, their needs in relation to the situation, their choices for managing it, and who can support them to evaluate their options and implement an action plan (Spencer & Hardy, 2014).

Finally, there should be specific consideration of a range of exit pathways for students who have irresolvable conflict with their supervisor (including mechanisms where they can identify and approach alternative supervisors without negative consequences, and process options if there is no alternative supervisor available).

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What happens when a researcher wants to publish differently?: A vision of the possibilities – cabaret as academic discourse

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Abstract
Research publication is one of the core factors of research practice. From the Medieval studia generalia in which prospective applicants had to orally defend themselves against all comers, through to the ERA processes that put value on individual research publications, research publication, as an aspect of research practice has undergone enormous change. Like many practices associated with research, there is hegemony that often inhibits creativity. The dissonance surrounding this hegemony begs a question 'what happens when a researcher wants to publish their research differently?' In the case of a research student, what happens when they choose to write a dissertation that is different from the established norms?
Keywords: Different dissertations, cabaret as academic writing, practice-led research

Overture

Someday, somewhere, somehow
A vision's just a vision if it's only in your head
If no-one gets to hear it it's as good as dead
It has to come to life.
Bit by bit putting it together
Piece by piece, only way to make a 'work of art'
Every moment makes a contribution
Every little detail plays a part
Having just the vision's no solution
Everything depends on execution
Putting it together, word by word.
Art isn't easy
Overnight you're a trend,
You're the right combination
Then the trend's at an end. Suddenly you're last year's sensation
All they ever want is repetition
All they really like is what they know
You've got to understand what's their tradition
Got to learn to trust your intuition
While you reinvent your own position
And you get your work on exhibition
Putting it together, bit by bit,

Phrase by phrase
Word by word, thought by thought, dot by dot,
song by song, spat by spat,
and that is the state of the art.

(Sondheim, 1984)

Introduction

This presentation draws on several strands of my professional status. I trained as a work-study analyst while completing my undergraduate degree in Psychology. This nurtured a life-long interest in professional practice. Later in my academic progress, completing my first research degree, I was exposed to action inquiry, leading into practice-related inquiry, the general term for all of the research I now undertake. The emergence of practice-related inquiry into the research agenda was itself a critical incident in development of the notion of research publication.

In the light of redefining research to include performance (Trank & Rynes, 2003), I started to recognise my own provenance in performative research. I was initiated into performance as a pre-teenager through drama-school and matured with a range of performative pursuits including being a member of the singing group Raglan, a solo performer in a restaurant in Melbourne, Australia and numerous theatre roles in Community Musical and Non Musical theatre. When my career embraced adult education, I amalgamated my performative and intellectual strands. This later became a signature of my academic publishing.

Publishing in cabaret is a co-operative venture. This presentation has involved an accompanist, Cathryn Solomon and a presentation manager Suzanne Angell.

The presentation interrogates the question 'what happens when a researcher wants to publish their research differently?' It also models a mode of delivery of conference presentation that I have championed for several years.

In this presentation I want to look at two things:

Firstly, I want to explore some strategies for researchers/investigators to enable them to advance their desire to publish differently. The notion of difference might simply represent variance from what is being encouraged through the dominant literature and what is encouraged in specific universities and research centres. It might also represent something vastly different in the realm of research practice that no-one has ever tried before.

Secondly I want to look to the role of the advisors or research mentors and explore the strategies they can adopt to support researchers who express a desire to do something different.

The proposed question for inquiry may give rise to more foundational or contributional questions, the 'so what' question 'Why publish differently?' Publication is essentially about communication. One of the beliefs that I have always held is that there are many different ways to communicate and thus, when we are talking about communicating how we have undertaken a study and the results of our research, it is important to look to a variety of methods. This can ensure that we communicate to a variety of people. In the discipline in which I work, there is a fear that some of the research publications have become impenetrable. In fact, in some circles, distinctions are made between Mode 1 knowledge (knowledge arising from traditional research practices) and Mode 2 knowledge (knowledge arising from practitioners (Starkey & Madden, 2001)). In my research, I have not

only been trying to access Mode 2 Knowledge, I am also exploring alternative ways to communicate that to make research more usable by practitioners.

Provenance

In this paper I am using the term provenance to suggest that a practice has provenance in the form of a general and a personal history. The general history is evident in the documented origins and an evolution of that practice available through the mainstream literature. The personal history illuminates the way in which the practice has evolved for a specific practitioner. It draws on the experiences in their professional development that enables them to develop this practice in their personal repertoire and may include publications written by the practitioners themselves (Hill, 2014; Hill and Lloyd, 2015). Personal and general provenance work together when we attempt to name and frame (Schön, 1983) a practice for the purpose of investigating it.

The Provenance of Research Publication

Part of the general provenance of research publication is research practice itself. Research practice goes back a long way and while with the Ancient Greeks it was associated with dialogue, in more modern societies it has come to be associated with texts and writing.

> *You can open doors and take from the shelves all the books you've longed to hold.*
> *You can ask all the questions the whys and the wheres as the mysteries of life unfold.*
> *As you walk through the forests of the trees of knowledge*
> *and listen to the lessons of the leaves.*
> *You enter a space to discover debates*
> *wrapped in the shawl that learning weaves.*
> *I remember, everything they taught me*
> *What they gave me look at what it's brought me.*
> *You can travel the past and take what you need to see you through your years.*
> *What philosophers have learned and scientists as well*
> *That was there for their eyes and ears.*
> *Like a link in a chain from the past to the present that joins me with my future yet to see.*
> *I can now be a part of this ongoing stream that has always been a part of me.*
> *I remember, everything you taught me*
> *What you gave me, look at where it's brought me.*
>
> *There is literature that once you've read no-one can take away,*
> *No wave can wash away, No wind can blow away*
> *No tide can turn away, No fire can burn away*
> *No time can tear away*
> *And now they're about to be mine*
>
> *There are things to remember all your life*
> *Those thoughts that fuel your dreams until the fall of your life.*
> *Find meaning in those moments!*

(Legrand, Bergman & Bergman, 1983)

Before we can explore the question what 'counts as research publication?' we need to explore the more foundational question 'what counts as research (Stenhouse, 1981)?' What we 'count' as research started with Ancient Greeks and their practice, which we now study as philosophy, questioning what was happening around them. This Greek provenance is evident in some of the words that are used to discuss research practice today such as ontology and epistemology, terms that will be addressed later in this paper. Publication in Ancient Greek times was oral and occasionally in written form (Noble, 1994: 10 citing Schachner 1962: 322-30)? Later with the growth of printing, there were more written publications and with the invention of the printing press printing then dominated research publication (Hamilton, 2001). The printing press is one example of how technology changed the way in which research was published.

As written publications of research developed, the structure of the writing mirrored a structure for oral presentations established in the Medieval studia generalia form (Noble, 1994: 10 citing Schachner 1962: 322-30). These precursors to the modern day universities required students seeking admission to argue a case or thesis. Their arguments, which they had to defend against comments made by the audience, were often presented in Latin and/or in verse (Noble, 1994: 10 citing Schachner, 1962, 322-30; Winter, 1996:25).

Boyle (1660) published his invention of the pneumatic pump using a style of writing that enabled readers of a description of the invention to 'witness' the experiment and thus verify its truth. This was the format that later become a standard way of writing for scientific experiments (shaping, 1984). At about the same time universities were established as centres of research (Shapin, 1984), Auguste Compte (1848) proclaimed that scientific knowledge was the only true knowledge and so we moved towards hegemony of research practice enmeshed with the notion of scientific method (Comte, 1848 summarised by Habermas, 1968:77).

Although research practice was dominated by Scientific Method, it was also challenged by the likes of the Chicago school and Thomas Kuhn (1962) (and ensuing paradigm wars). These challenges led to a variety of research methods and ways of writing about research. One example of changed writing practice is writing in the first person. My Master's dissertation required a 3- page argument to justify why I was writing in the first person. Soon after graduating, I found an article that suggested that to write about action inquiry in any other way than the first person was inappropriate (Someky, 1995: 347)!

Some of the challenges to the dominance of scientific method have also led to different forms of knowledge. Mode 1 knowledge is associated with knowledge developed through scientific method and Mode 2 knowledge evolving from practice and practitioners (Starkey and Madden, 2001).

The advances in technology have also led to variations of what counts as a research publication. As soon as we move to an electronic version of a research publication, we open up opportunities for presenting knowledge in non-linear ways. The traditional method for publishing your research is linear in that the argument had to follow the structure of the book in which it was published. Non-linearity meant that you could jump through an electronic portal into another part of the research publication. The late Lesley Jarmon (Topracc, 2011) is often credited as being the first person to submit a digital doctoral dissertation. Web sites created for conferences often mean that the publication of one's research following presentation at a conference is an electronic event and that form of research publication has even advanced to double blind peer review electronic publication.

The OECD study of research practices (ERA 2010:10) redefined creative works as research and research publications. Some of the literature about researcher's 'voice' have acknowledged these creative approaches to research publication as providing a vehicle for the researcher to express their own voice (Matsudo, 2001).

The path for most researchers is arduous at best, but when a researcher chooses to do something different there can be barriers placed in the way. Their research might be described as marginal in that it is positioned on the edges of what is accepted practice; It might be described as aberrant, meaning that the example is so different that pursuit of this direction might even be discouraged. Those sorts of people might be told to 'not rock the boat!' At an extreme, those people who consider themselves gatekeepers of research practice may describe certain research as not even research.

I am speaking for the people
Who have wondered what would happen
if they chose to publish research somewhat differently.
Will they be overawed by the rules and regulations,
or see it as their chance to voice creatively?
Make just a ripple.
Come on be brave.
This time a ripple,
Next time a wave

Sometimes you have to start small,
Climbing the tiniest wall,
Maybe you're going to fall-
But it is better than not starting at all!

Everybody says no,
Everybody says stop.
Everybody says mustn't rock the boat,
Mustn't touch a thing!

Everybody says don't,
Everybody says wait,
Everybody says can't fight city hall,
Can't upset the cart,
Can't laugh at the king!

Well, I Say Try!
I Say Laugh at the kings or they'll make you cry.
Lose Your Poise!
Fall if you have to,
But(lady), make a noise!

Everybody says don't,
Everybody says don't,
Everybody says don't-
It isn't right,

Don't-it isn't nice!

Everybody says don't,
Everybody says don't,
Everybody says don't walk on the grass,
Don't disturb the peace,
Don't skate on the ice.

Well, I Say Do,
I say, 'Walk on the grass, it was meant to feel!'
I Say Sail!
Tilt at the windmill,
And if you fail, you fail.
and if I say 'don't'
I say 'Don't be afraid'

(Sondheim, 1964)

Clearly, when you look at the provenance of academic writing and particularly research publication, there is evidence of a genre being consistently challenged and reformed as a result of philosophical and technological innovations.

Alternatives to the traditions

One way to look at how one would propose something different is by returning to the threshold concepts of academic writing to recognise that any publication of research is an extended argument and even the way of writing or publishing is part of that argument. This takes us back to the way in which prospective students in the Medieval monasteries and *the studia generalia* would present their cases for admission (Noble, 1994:10 citing Schachner, 1962: 322-30). They argued a position against all comers.

When you are not doing anything different you are often adhering to the standard rules or the hegemony. Here there is no need to argue because what you have done is exactly what is expected. When there is a variance from hegemony then I can see there are a number of ways to proceed.

1. Precedent.

2. Paradigm and

3. Practice.

Precedent is perhaps the most common form of argument for a research study. We identify how others have investigated a similar topic and suggest that we are going to do the same as what they have done. The argument rests in the ability to be able to show that your study is similar to the one you want to mimic. While this is predominantly done in the same discipline, there are examples of taking an example from one discipline and suggesting it be carried over to another because of the similarity in the topic being investigated. This was how my most recent doctoral student argued for part of her methodology (Lloyd, 2011). She looked at a measurement tool that had been used in Educational practice to evaluate participant comments in professional development.

Her own study involved professional development in a different discipline and she argued for the appropriateness of the same tool, but she also extended the measuring devices in the tool to accommodate some variations in her own data. Not only did she argue a methodology but by advancing the methodology, she also made a contribution to research knowledge about the use of that tool. Precedent is how I have argued my current PhD. I have suggested that there are precedents of storytelling as inquiry in disciplines such as Education and Health, and because I am studying a topic which also has provenance in Education and Health, I have argued for a similar approach as I undertake my study in a Business context.

Arguing from the point of view of an inquiry paradigm is another way to put forward a case for difference. The idea of paradigm is attributed to Thomas Kuhn (Kuhn, 1962), and while Kuhn did not explicitly define it, subsequent use of the term in a range of arguments has generated a variety of meanings. One particular debate in which paradigm is used is called the paradigm debate. This is a discussion about belief systems underpinning research practice and was particularly advanced by Guba and Lincoln (1982) and Denzin and Lincoln (1994). They argued against the use of a traditional paradigm for undertaking what they described as human inquiry – research with or involving people. Others took the inquiry paradigm argument a little further and named the elements of the inquiry paradigm to include ontology and epistemology (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Reason, 1988). These terms also have various definitions and I tend to think of ontology as relating to issue of truth or reality and epistemology related to issues of knowledge. When Gray (1996) introduced a notion of practice-led inquiry she drew on the Guba and Lincoln (1982) arguments and suggested that the practical structuring of practice-led inquiry involves two initial philosophical considerations – the epistemology and the ontology. Thus she was arguing for a paradigm basis for a methodology argument. This was how one of my doctoral students argued for his methodology. He identified conversations as a key factor in meaning making in school settings, the context of his study on knowledge management. He also suggested that there was no single meaning in knowledge management, positioning his research as post-positivist. He then argued for conversation as inquiry as an appropriate methodology to drive his inquiry.

In my doctoral dissertation (Hill, 2002), which examined the process of undertaking my doctoral degree I described my inquiry paradigm as ontologically being based on Kelly's notion of constructionism – there is no single truth; and Schön's notion that knowledge arises from Reflection on Practice. I published some of my doctoral dissertation in the form of a cabaret titled 'Doing a Doctorate' and in that I described my paradigm this way

I am what I am
My world's my own social construction.
I know my own truth
Some would say- 'struth, that's an obstruction.
But my world is my own unique ontology
It's my world
It's the only place I want to be.
For life's tough for a man
Till he can say
Hey world, I am what I am.

I am what I am
And what I know comes from my practice.

I've learned what I've learned
Yes it's been tough but there's the praxis.
I know that when I think about the things I see
I start to build my own unique epistemology
As you can see
This makes up me, and my inquiry paradigm

(Herman & Fierstein, 1983)

A third possibility for arguing for difference in the ways in which you undertake research and publish it, [I believe] is exclusive to practice-related inquiry (Reason, 1998). When a practitioner realises the ways in which they have been undertaking investigation into their practice and finds a name for that approach in the research literature, their argument for difference can be based on continuance of the approach –or continuance of their recognised investigative practice, that they have discovered has a name. A good example is with the profession of educators, many of whom reflect on something they have taught once they have taught it. In my own case as a management consultant, where I might deliver the same professional development several times throughout a year to different groups, this is a closely iterative cycle of quality improvement so that as an educator I am always honing my craft through reflection on each presentation. Once exposed to the literature on action inquiry, what I describe as a cycle of quality improvement becomes evident as a form of action inquiry. By recognising that what I have been doing in improving my practice is action inquiry, you can thus argue for that investigative approach and embrace some of the literature related to action inquiry. This will grow your research skills with regard to action inquiry and make your study more rigorous. As an inquirer, I can then argue for a continuance of my now recognised action inquiry with the added consciousness of inquiry practice.

The other important point, having identified a form of argument to argue for difference or marginality in either the way you are undertaking your research or publishing your research, is to take that step of faith and go and do it. This not only establishes the case for you, but lays the ground work for others who might follow in your pathway. If you have created a new way forward, they can argue from a position of your precedent. This is the way new methodologies are created, particularly those that are relevant for investigating practice.

This is the moment!
This is the day,
When I send all my doubts and demons
On their way!

Every endeavour,
I have made - ever -
Is coming into play,
Is here and now - today!

This is the moment,
This is the time,
When the momentum and the moment
Are in rhyme!

Give me this moment -
This precious chance -
I'll gather up my past
And make some sense at last!

This is the moment,
When all I've done -
All of the dreaming,
Scheming and screaming,
Become one!

This is the day -
See it sparkle and shine,
When all I've lived for
Becomes mine!

For all these years,
I've faced the world alone,
And now the time has come
To prove to them
I've made it on my own!

This is the moment -
My final test -
Destiny beckoned,
I never reckoned,
Second Best!

I won't look down,
I must not fall!
This is the moment,
The sweetest moment of them all!
This is the moment!
Damn all the odds!
This day, or never,
I'll sit forever
With the gods!

When I look back,
I will always recall,
Moment for moment,
This was the moment,
The greatest moment

Of them all!

(Wildhorn and Bricusse, 1997)

What can supervisors or advisors do to support students' requests for difference?

We have spent some time talking about what the researchers can do. I would now like to shift focus and look at what advisors/mentors/supervisors can do to support a student who suggests that they want to publish their research differently to the norm or the standards of the discipline.

Since the mid 1980's, there has been a constant growth in literature about research supervision or advising/mentoring. Within that is a particular strand devoted to Pedagogy. It addresses the issues of explicit interventions made by research mentors/supervisors/advisors to advance their students inquiry (Connell, 1985; Lee & Green, 1995; Pearson & Brew, 2002; Bruce & Stoodley, 2010; Grant & Manathunga, 2011; Zeegers & Barron, 2012) .

This pedagogical literature continues a long line of pedagogical inquiry that exists in education and has traditionally been focussed on early childhood, primary, middle and secondary schooling. In Higher Education, it works to rectify an assumption made in earlier years of universities, that if one had a PhD then they would automatically be able to teach. As the idea of teaching in Higher Education institutes was brought under the spotlight this particular form of adult education (sometimes labelled andragogy (Mezirow, 1991)) grew in popularity.

It is important to realise that while the research advisor or supervisor is the delegated person to help a research student, they are by no means the only person to help them. Each research student has their own community of practice1. These can be people whom they have met at conferences and with whom they correspond; their fellow students who at least have their understanding of what it is like to undertake research as a student. This community of practice may be informal meetings with other research students or it may have become formalised as research buddy-group that meets at regular times – such as Monday morning - to get everyone mobilised.

Another form of community of practice is the worldwide community of practice that is represented by other researchers around the world who are doing something similar to you. This form of networking also helps in searching for examples of precedent. Since publishing earlier iterations of this cabaret at the Inaugural International Storytelling Conference in Prague in 2012, I have learned of other researchers also addressing these same issues.

- Jennifer Lapum's (Lapum, Church, Yau, David,& Ruttonsha, 2012) Heart Lung research that was published in the form of an installation including images and stories from people who had undertaken heart lung operations.

- Timothy Blais' (2013) explanation of string theory using the music of Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody that helps to advance his dual agendas of being a physics master's student and (in his words) a lifelong harmony junkie. It is how he brought together this creative and academic sides.

- Raelene Bruinsma (2012) dramatic story 'An Invitation To The Sacred Wedding Of Inanna And Dumuzi, the subject of her PhD, that was presented at Inaugural Storytelling Conference in Prague 2012 .

- Lesley Jarmon (1952-2009), who is reputed to have submitted the first ever digital doctoral dissertation. (Topracc, 2010)

- Shellie Morris, the northern Territory 2014 nomination for Australian of the Year who is an Aboriginal singer and health campaigner. She writes songs in traditional indigenous languages to help stamp out glaucoma in Aboriginal communities, as part of the Fred Hollows foundation.

A research advisor/supervisor/mentor can help their research student begin to build up their own community of practice. When I worked in Early Childhood pedagogy creating a play based environment was often referred to a 'provisioning the environment' and helping a research student to begin to identify the contacts who are fellow travellers in their particular research topic is a form of provisioning the research student's environment to encourage their particular ways of undertaking and communicating their research.

No one here to guide you,
Now you're on your own.
Only me beside you.
Still you're not alone.
No one is alone, truly.
No one is alone.

Sometimes people leave you
Halfway through the wood.
Others may deceive you.
You decide what's good.
You decide alone,
But no one is alone.

People make mistakes,
Fathers, mothers,
People make mistakes,
Holding to their own,
Thinking they're alone.
Honour their mistakes.
Everybody makes
One another's terrible mistakes.

Witches can be right,
Giants can be good,
You decide what's right,
You decide what's good.

Just remember
Someone is on your side
Someone else is not

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While you're seeing your side
Maybe you forgot;
They are not alone.
No one is alone.

You move just a finger, say the slightest word
Something's bound to linger be heard.(2)
No-one is alone. Truly no-one is alone.

Hard to see the light now
Just don't let it go
Things will come out right now. We can make it so.
Someone is on your side,
No one is alone

(Sondheim, 1987)

Conclusion

Now it's time to draw this cabaret to a close. I hope you have enjoyed it. I hope that it has provided some insights for you. Most importantly, if you were one of the people who have secretly thought 'I want to do something different' I hope that this have encouraged you. We talked earlier about provenance. When we think about the provenance of people trying to do something different from the mainstream we have Boyle (1772), and the theorists in the Chicago school, and Guba and Lincoln (1982). It is a provenance which provides evidence for constant change, so someone who wants to try something different is part of a long stream of revolutionise who have been changing the genre. Finally Be brave!

Something is stirring
shifting ground
It's just begun
Edges are blurring all around
and yesterday is done

Feel the flow. Hear what's happening
We're what's happening.
Don't you know We're the movers and
we're the shapers We're the names in
tomorrow's papers Up to us now to show 'em

In our hands there is light to see the future
In our hands there are gifts to give the world
In our hands lies a way to make a difference
In our hands in our hands

In our hands is the future

In our hands is the outcome
In our hands is responsibility
There will be joy and sorrow
There will be tears and laughter
There will be a better world
in our hands in our hands

With our hands we will work to find solutions
With our hands we'll give help along the way
With our hands we will surely make a difference
With our hands with our hands

It's our heads on the block
Give us room now and start the clock
Our time coming through
Me and you now me and you, me and you, me and you
You and you and you and you and you and you and me and you.

(This arrangement of two songs, Sondheim's (1981) 'Our Time' from Merrily we Roll Along and Lindley's (1999) 'Our Hands' was undertaken by Catherine Solomon).

Questions

(Following the questions) Reprise

At the start of this presentation I acknowledged that it is a team effort. I want to acknowledge Catherine Solomon for her accompaniment and I want to pay special thanks to Suzanne Angell today for technically management of that accompaniment. Let me wrap up this presentation with one final encouragement!

Open a new window,
Open a new door,
Travel a new highway,
That's never been tried before;
Before you find you're a dull fellow,
Punching the same clock,
Walking the same tight rope
As everyone on the block.
The fellow you ought to be is three dimensional,
Soaking up life down to your toes,
Whenever they say you're slightly unconventional,
Just put your thumb up to your nose.
And show 'em how to dance to a new rhythm,
Whistle a new song,

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Toast with a new vintage,
The fizz doesn't fizz too long.
There's only one way to make the bubbles stay,
Simply travel a new high way,
Dance to a new rhythm,
Open a new window every day!

(Herman, 1966)

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Geof has been presenting one-man cabarets as academic presentations throughout his academic career. He has a background in the performative arts and training as an opera and musical theatre singer which he draws on lecturing in Communication, Management, Education and Research. His first one-man cabaret was written in 1995 on 'Being a Reflective Practitioner'. Following his cabaret on 'Doing a Doctorate' he wrote and performed a subsequent one-man cabaret on 'Research Supervision' which was performed at the International Conference on Quality Postgraduate Research in Adelaide, Australia in 2006.

Geof is the principal author and instigator of 'The research supervisor's friend' – a Wordpress blog.

The style of writing in this paper: This paper was presented at the Quality in Post Graduate Research conference in cabaret mode. As cabarets are not a common feature in academic writing, there is an absence of writing models. I have responded to this by developing a style of writing that I hope conveys the content of the paper/cabaret and also indicates the way in which it was presented as a cabaret.

I have used centred italics to indicate the text of the paper which is sung.

I have used footnotes to provide the authentication or references for the points I have made in presenting the argument within this paper.

This writing style was established in the development of my cabaret within my doctoral dissertation (Hill, 2002) ahead of the Excellence in Research for Australia submission guidelines (2010, 10) that defined research as comprising 'creative work undertaken on a systematic basis' (OECD Frascoti Manual: Proposed Standard Practice for Surveys on Research and Experimental Development). I hope this style of writing conveys the rigour involved in developing the work and reflects the systematic underpinnings for this choice of publication.

The Researcher's Little Helper: The design of an enabling online resource for postgraduate students and their supervisors

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Abstract

The question of how to support postgraduate students and their supervisors, especially neophyte supervisors, is a challenge faced by many higher education institutions. This paper outlines the early stages of a research study which incorporated a design-based research methodology to inform the planning and development of an online, self-paced resource for postgraduate students and their supervisors. Once the needs of these two groups were identified through regular focus groups, the findings from these collaborations, along with literature review findings, informed the structural framework of an online resource known as *The Researcher's Little Helper*. Keywords: postgraduate research, research education, heutagogy, instructional design, threshold concepts

Introduction

> *'... we need to think carefully how we create environments that recognise complexity and fully engage with enabling capability' (Hase & Kenyon, 2003, p. 5)*

The question of 'how to support postgraduate students and their supervisors, especially neophyte supervisors, is a challenge faced by many higher education institutions (National Academy for Integration of Research, 2012; Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004) and a range of strategies have been trialled in the past to meet this challenge (Kobayashi, Rump, & Grout, 2012; Ulhøi, 2005; Wisker, Kiley, & Aiston, 2006). Just as academic staff need guidance on how to be effective postgraduate supervisors, postgraduate students also need research training (McCallin & Nayar, 2012) to successfully complete their research degrees. Indeed, the very notion of supervisory pedagogy (Lee & McKenzie, 2011) is a developing form of practice in higher education in which both the supervisor and the supervised have an active role.

The experience of postgraduate supervisors and postgraduate students are sometimes described from 'both sides' (Lee & Green, 2009, p. 615), reflecting their different roles, but the needs and interests of both groups often overlap. Since the process they embark on together is focused on the implementation, analysis and reporting of a research project, they both travel concurrently towards the same outcome, albeit in different roles. Whether the travelling navigates partly familiar territory or not, some aspects of the research embarked upon by both supervisors and students can be seen as detective work (Kelly, 2012), a process that two groups need to steer to some degree. Even so, many of the needs of postgraduate students can be quite overwhelming, as they struggle to develop different ways of thinking, writing and researching (Kiley, 2009), activities that are often more familiar to their supervisors. Ulhøi (2005) further explains the complexity of the role of the postgraduate student

as someone who is producing knowledge while also experiencing self-enlightenment, two outcomes he argues which are not always compatible. In the case of an institution developing its postgraduate student research capacity, the needs of neophyte research supervisors may also need attention. For new academic staff, becoming a postgraduate supervisor can be an additional stress to their workloads (McCormack & Pamphilon, 2004).

Effective supervisory practice is flexible (Pearson & Brew, 2002), as well as acknowledging the breadth and diversity of postgraduate students (Parker, 2009) and is built on a one-to-one relationship (Lee & Green, 2009). However, the processes of supervising postgraduate students has changed greatly in recent years, most often in response to the changes in funding and management (McCallin & Nayar, 2012). Still, the quality of supervision received is often the critical factor in a postgraduate student's experience (Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004) and success.

Institutional background

Avondale College of Higher Education has over a hundred years of history in the tertiary sector. The College is a higher education institution that offers vocational education and training (VET), pre-tertiary, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The structure of this College is based on a number of Faculties that offer degrees from undergraduate to PhD levels, in education, arts, business, theology, science, nursing and health. Currently the College is preparing to apply for self-accrediting status. Successful attainment of self-accrediting status will be followed in the coming years by an application for university-college status.

Avondale, by university standards, is relatively new to the area of research degrees, especially PhDs. The College currently has approximately 30 candidates studying at this level across the range of disciplines. Avondale has only offered PhD level studies for the past 10 years after receiving accreditation to do so. Although many staff have PhDs themselves, Avondale's newness to the area of research degrees means there is not a well embedded research culture. The growth of a research culture that translates into a supportive and effective supervision environment requires a strategic approach to supporting neophyte supervisors. In order to support the development of knowledge and skills associated with supervising students, further initiatives are required to support academics as they embrace the role of supervisor.

A range of initiatives are in place at the College that provide support to postgraduate supervisors. For example, Avondale ensures that every student's supervision team includes at least one supervisor who has supervised a higher research degree (HDR) student through to completion. Also, Avondale conducts forums each semester where supervisors and HDR students come together to discuss the issues they are confronting and to share experiences that have led to success. These forums identify the support supervisors need to better undertake their supervision and the support students need to better complete their research. Outcomes from these forums have led to the implementation of policies or changes to existing policies and processes and a shared understanding of the requirements of an Avondale PhD, Masters by Research or Honours qualification is developing.

The research problem

A recent semester forum identified one issue confronted by most supervisors at Avondale: access to supporting materials relating to research. At Avondale the shortfall between the required and the actual levels of skills held by postgraduate supervisors is even more salient because the majority of the academic staff who supervise postgraduate students do not have extensive experience with supervision. They need support to be available to them as specific needs arise during their interactions with students. The main issue of concern was a question of how to make the required support resources available. In addition to this issue being revealed in a forum, informal requests were received from staff and students for a centralised location from which they could access relevant guidance and instructional resources regarding how to be a good postgraduate supervisor and how to be a good researcher.

The development of a self-directed online resource, *The Researcher's Little Helper*, is the institution's response to this need. Our researchers need more than just a context in which to discuss their concerns; they need what McCormack and Pamphilon (2004) explain as 'processes that enable them to explore and analyse the complexity of the postgraduate experience' (p. 23). *The Researcher's Little Helper* resource has the capacity to provide a space in which research guidance and examples can be explored using a linear or a non-linear approach, by both HDR students and their supervisors.

The resource also supplements the traditional one-to-one meetings between supervisors and their students, which can be time-consuming (McCallin & Nayar, 2012). Even in a small institution, supervisors are not always accessible, so students need just-in-time access to pertinent support materials as they undertake their research activities. Such support may also prevent postgraduate students from experiencing a state of 'stuckness' in their research (Kiley, 2009, p. 293) which can cause much unnecessary annoyance and frustration for both students and their supervisors. An accessible online resource may also prevent some of the anxiety and uncertainty that is experienced by HDR students (Wisker & Robinson, 2012) when they are unable to access help from their supervisors or other support staff.

Theoretical underpinnings of the research

The institution's decision to develop the resource, *The Researcher's Little Helper*, was guided by the needs of two groups: postgraduate supervisors and their HDR candidates. In contrast to Cummings' (2010) claim that 'the voice of research candidates in the skills debate has been largely muted or ignored' (Cummings, p. 408), we wanted to give our postgraduate students a voice to express what they required as they progressed through their HDR degrees. Once the need for the resource had been established, theoretical principles were sought that would inform the design of the resource and acknowledge the specific requirements of the adult learners who would access the resource.

The resource's design was informed by established principles drawn from the theories of online instructional design (Gunawardena et al., 2006; Herrington & Oliver, 2000; Siragusa, 2006), threshold concepts of postgraduate education (Kiley, 2009; Meyer & Land, 2005; Wisker et al., 2006) and the learner-driven, self-directional theory of heutagogy (Hase & Kenyon, 2003). The self-help nature of the resource provides just-in-time support and supports just-in-case training activities, thus being informed by Hase and Kenyon's (2003) theory of heutagogy that 'recognizes that people learn when they are ready and that this is most likely to occur quite randomly, chaotically and in the face of ambiguity and need' (pp. 3-4). According to heutagogical principles, learning resources may be provided by the teacher but students' learning pathways will ultimately be chosen by

the learners themselves. These principles were integrated into the design of the resource, especially in relation to how supervisors and students were provided with access to identical materials.

The collaboration of postgraduate students with their research supervisors generally occurs for the purpose of assisting students to develop as independent researchers who can conduct research and later supervise their own students (Morris, Pitt, & Manathunga, 2012). This process, which does not necessarily follow a predictable path, requires the flexibility afforded by a heutagogical approach. Because postgraduate student-supervisor collaborations typically work towards the development of the students' skills and capabilities and are often dependent on the student's initiative, Hase and Kenyon's (2003) theory of heutagogy is seen as an appropriate theory on which to base the design of a professional development resource such as *The Researcher's Little Helper*.

Research methodology and resource development

The design of this research study, in four stages, was built upon the current and ongoing needs of Avondale's postgraduate student supervisors and the postgraduate students themselves. The design of the study's approach, the selection of participants and methods, and the stages of the study were all aimed at meeting the needs of these two groups by constructing an online resource which was developed within the authentic context in which it was intended to be used.

Research design

The research approach adopted for this research incorporates a design-based research methodology (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; Reeves, Herrington, & Oliver, 2005) to inform the planning and development of a self-paced resource, *The Researcher's Little Helper*, for postgraduate students and their supervisors. Design-based research interventions are typically introduced to solve a problem within its authentic context. The intervention, or in the case of this study - the resource, has been iteratively developed and refined across a six month period, with plans for future development. Use of the design-based research approach ensures that *The Researcher's Little Helper* resource can be simultaneously developed, used and improved within the natural setting of the research.

The first two stages of the four-stage approach, along with findings from these stages, are outlined in this paper. Plans for the final two future stages of the research are also described. In the final stages of the study, the researchers aim to use the findings from both the first and second stages of the study to inform the ongoing development of the resource, *The Researcher's Little Helper*, and to contribute to the educational theories associated with postgraduate education, heutagogy (Hase & Kenyon, 2003) and researcher development.

Participants

Academic staff from all Faculties at Avondale who are involved in the supervision of postgraduate research students were invited to participate in the research project. All current candidates in postgraduate courses at the College were also invited to participate. Currently, a total of 43 staff members and 17 students are enrolled in the fledgling site, *The Researcher's Little Helper*, all of whom were invited to contribute to the study via online modes of communication.

Research questions

Guided by the practical and theoretical tenets of design-based research (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; Reeves et al., 2005), the research questions that steered this study were aimed at gathering information about the research context, the resource users and the resource being developed. Additionally, answers to the research questions may further contribute to our understanding of postgraduate education, heutagogy (the study of self-determined learning) and researcher development. The study is guided by the following research questions:

- How can the needs of postgraduate candidates and supervisors at Avondale be met through the design and development of an online resource, *The Researcher's Little Helper*?

- How should the online resource, *The Researcher's Little Helper*, be structured and presented to provide postgraduate students and supervisors with the instructional materials they require?

- How do the findings of this research contribute to our understanding of the educational theories of postgraduate education, heutagogy (the study of self-determined learning) and researcher development?

Within this design-based methodology, both qualitative and quantitative data gathering and analysis processes are being used. By incorporating a range of face-to-face and online data gathering processes and tools, the research project provides users of the resource with multiple opportunities to contribute to its design and development.

Initial stage of the study

During the first stage of this study, the researchers defined the need for an online resource in consultation with postgraduate supervisors and some of their students. The problem was defined as a lack of self-directed, centralised materials for research and supervision processes that could be accessed by postgraduate supervisors and students at the institution. To further inform the researchers who were charged with the task of finding a solution to the problem, the following questions were posed:

- Location: Where should the resource be located? How should the resource be accessed?

- Content and style of content: What should the resource include and not include? How could it be designed as a self-help resource? In what format should the content be presented?

- Ownership: Who creates and maintains the resource? How will it be evaluated? Who makes decisions about the resource?

In this early stage of the research, advice from previous researchers and educators was also sought through a preliminary literature review of previous research about postgraduate education, online resource design and professional development. Findings from this review formed the theoretical basis of the research and guided the resource development, and were integrated with the defined needs of postgraduate researchers and students that were detected during the problem definition stage. These data gathered from potential users of the resource

and from the initial literature review identified the following characteristics that informed the design of the first prototype of the resource, which has since become known as *The Researcher's Little Helper*.

- Quick and easy access was preferred within a commonly accessed and familiar online environment.

- Content about the institution's policies and procedures were requested, along with examples of best practice from other institutions.

- Much of the information requested from postgraduate students was similar to the information requested from postgraduate supervisors.

- Just-in-time instructional resources and processes that are accessible when needed were perceived as being more useful than resources and processes of a just-in-case nature that are provided for possible use in the future.

- The resource should be organised and ordered in a manner consistent with the stages involved in the research process.

- A living resource was required, one that that grows with and has the capacity to respond to the needs of the researchers and supervisors.

Development of the resource

Data gathered and analysed from the initial discussions with HDR staff and students, along with findings from a preliminary literature review, informed the initial structural framework of the resource and the first prototype of the resource was developed within the institution's Learning Management System or LMS (Moodle) by the two researchers. The first prototype of the resource was completed and made available in December 2013. The decision to locate the resource within the institution's LMS was guided by the success associated with a previous experience of providing professional development resources and information through a similarly named resource, Moodle's Little Helper (see Figure 1). The Moodle's Little Helper resource was specifically designed to enable Avondale's academic staff to develop knowledge and skills about online teaching and learning, and was located within the institution's LMS. As a result, the location and structure of this existing resource were very familiar to the academic staff who were to be some of the main users of *The Researcher's Little Helper* resource (see Figure 2). Hence, a suite of two similarly structured and located resources have emerged from the professional development needs of Avondale's academic staff.
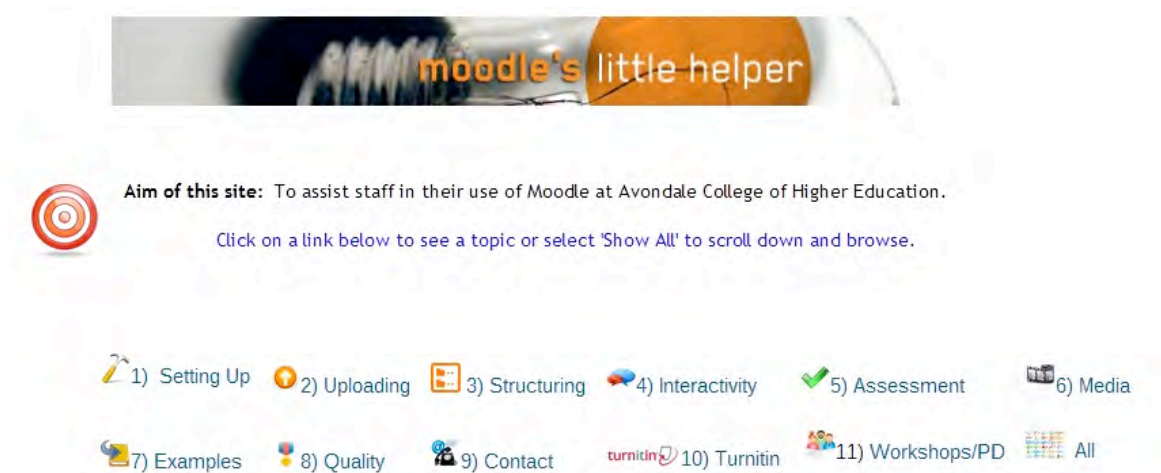
Figure 1: Header of the *Moodle's Little Helper* site

Once the location and basic structure of the resource were established, the content of the resource was determined through consultation with currently enrolled postgraduate students and their supervisors, as outlined above. Since one of the major principles of design-based research is to actively involve research participants in the process of developing the research artefact or product (in this case, an online resource), it was the intention of the researchers from the beginning of the study to provide multiple opportunities for current and potential users of the resource to contribute to the design, development, revision and evaluation processes associated with the development of *The Researcher's Little Helper*. This resource has subsequently grown to become an online repository of examples of best practice, instructions, policies and suggestions about how to conduct postgraduate research and how to supervise HDR students. The resource is available to all postgraduate supervisors and students at Avondale and is accessed through the institution's password-protected LMS. As well as providing access to the institution's research resources and policies, *The Researcher's Little Helper* incorporates links to resources from other universities and organisations. The home page of the resource (see Figure 2) provides the user with a brief description of the purpose of the resource as well as direct links to a selection of topics related to the research process.
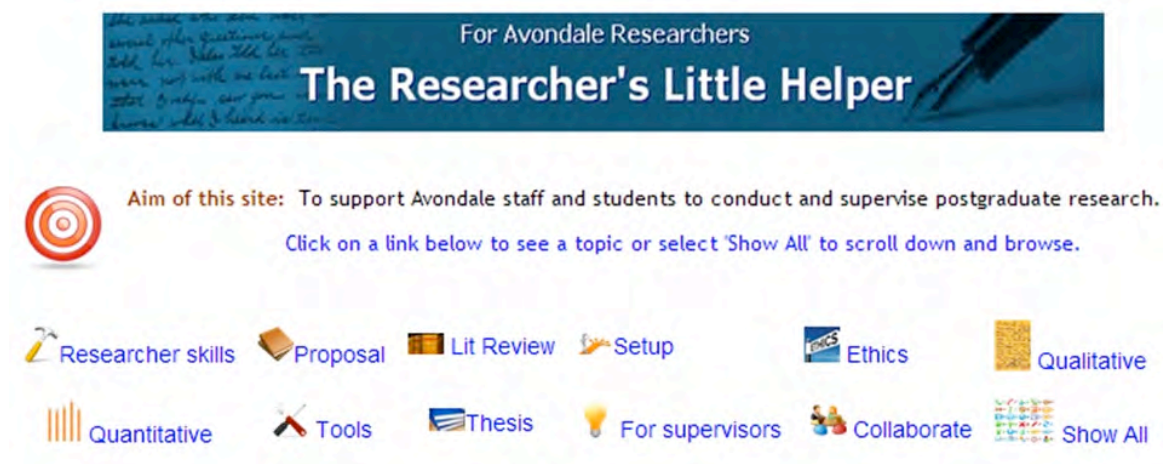
Figure 2: Header of *The Researcher's Little Helper* site

Based on the feedback gathered from users to date, along with relevant advice from contemporary literature about the development of such resources, the content of *The Researcher's Little Helper* is structured according to topic categories, including: researchers' skills; how to prepare a research proposal/ confirmation; conducting a literature review; setting up a research study and collaborating with other researchers. The current version of the resource is aimed at meeting the needs of a diverse range of students and supervisors engaged in research topics such as:

- What is the nature of the lived experience of a number of homeless people in one local government area?

- What matters to Australian university accounting academics?

- The Special Character of Adventist education as perceived by one cross-section of the system: A qualitative investigation into philosophy, purpose and practice

- Human body parts and their functions as media of communication in the narratives of Acts

- A people to be gathered: The Seeker clan heritage connections of core pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

As well as the wide range of topics that are currently being studied by researchers at Avondale, the mixture of research methodologies adopted by the researchers is similarly diverse. Researchers are beginning to use the resource as a consultation point for finding out about the research paradigm that matches their chosen research paradigm (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008; Lather, 2004). The provision of this type of advice can assist Avondale's researchers to maintain a good fit between their research design and methods (Lincoln, 1995; Patton, 2002). For example, the timely consulting of *The Researcher's Little Helper* resource will provide postgraduate students with guidance about utilising the findings from their literature review to inform the development of their research question and their selection of an appropriate methodology (Borrego, Douglas, & Amelink, 2009).

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Future iterative prototypes of the resource will be developed by the researchers throughout 2014 and 2015 by integrating findings from analysis of the data gathered through observational field notes, a feedback survey, analysis of system analytics and interviews with users. Findings from these data analyses will be further considered alongside current emerging educational theory on postgraduate education, professional development and online course design. By providing a collaborative space which can be independently consulted and contributed to by postgraduate supervisors, researchers and students, the materials included in the online resource will contribute to the postgraduate research community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) that is forming at Avondale.

Usage of the resource to date

Word of mouth has proved to be a powerful introduction to the resource. Postgraduate students talk amongst themselves and, as a result, the satisfaction of users of the resource is passed onto others who then request access to it. Artefacts from research seminars, showcases and panel discussions are being requested via this resource. For example, an on-campus panel discussion of expert researchers was recently held in the Faculty of Education, Business and Science. Although the content was directed primarily at students from the disciplines represented in the Faulty, the content had broader application and access to it was requested by HDR students from other Faculties. An audio recording of the panel discussion was loaded onto *The Researcher's Little Helper* and has provided support to students and supervisors who were not able to attend the on-campus seminar. In this way, students and supervisors are empowered by being able to access material more flexibly without necessarily having to attend such sessions.

Based on the analytics information available through Avondale's LMS, the resource is being used more and more by both postgraduate supervisors and postgraduate candidates alike, demonstrating how the resource is meeting many of the users' needs. As well as the increase in access by users of the resource, the number of people wishing to access it is growing. This is evidenced in Figure 3 which illustrates a pattern of usage since the first prototype of the resource was created in December 2013 until recently, May 2014. Interestingly the growth in user numbers has predominantly been by students. This is to be expected as the number of supervisors has remained static but student numbers have increased and, more importantly for the success of this project, their desire to access the system has increased.
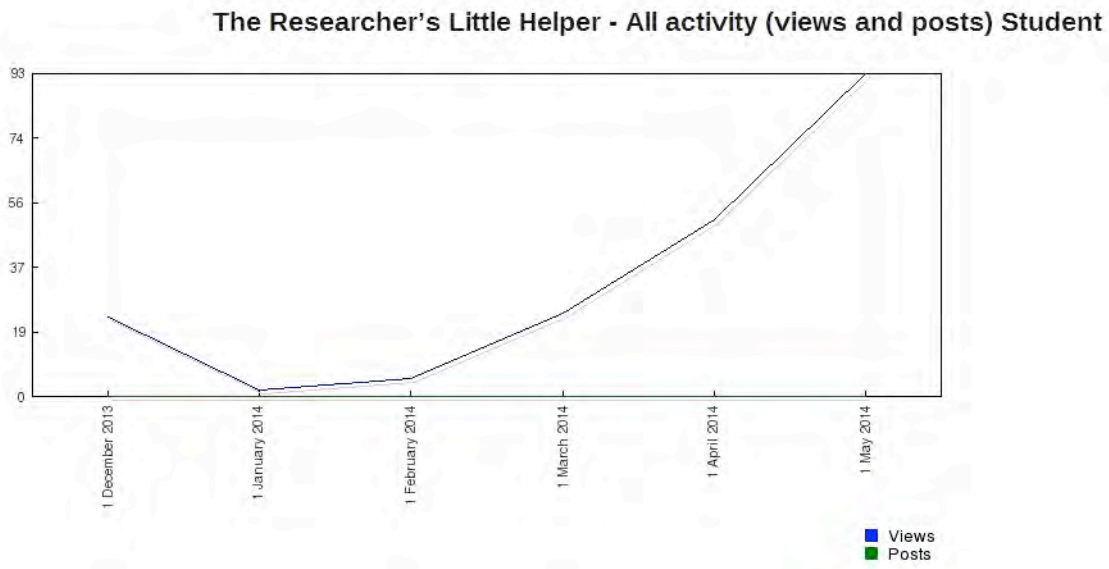
Figure 3: Access of the resource between December 2013 and May 2014

Current stage of the study

Now that the first prototype has been created and made available to users, the researchers have met with participants in focus groups to further determine their ongoing needs. During these meetings data were gathered via verbal conversations and a short survey was conducted in which participants were asked to respond to the following question:

> Based on its current state, what else would you like to see included in this online resource, *The Researcher's Little Helper*?

Once the gathered data were analysed, the following feedback emerged:

- More examples are required to illustrate processes such as how to write a research proposal, how to write a literature review and how to apply for research funding and scholarships.

- Guidance on different styles of referencing is required.

- Staff showed interest in learning about the methods used by other institutions to examine PhD and Masters theses

- The order of the topics in the resource should reflect the typical stages of the research process (setting up the study, selecting questions, conducting a literature review, etc.).

Feedback received to date, such as the above, has been used to further develop the resource by making additions, changing the sequencing of content, modifying wording for greater clarity and removing unnecessary

components. Some content was reorganised to be nested within other related components of the resource, to avoid what one research participant referred to as 'the scroll of death'. Ongoing feedback from staff and students continues to be used in this way.

According to the principles of design-based research which enables the evolution of 'multiple iterations' (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012, p. 17) of a developing intervention or resource, this process of meeting regularly with users of the resource to gather formative feedback about its use is currently underway and will continue throughout the remainder of 2014 and into 2015. Furthermore, alternative sources of data are being sought to inform the development of the resource, in addition to the on-campus meetings with postgraduate supervisors and their students. Future plans for gathering data from additional sources are outlined below and comprise the final two stages of the study.

Further stages of the research and future development of the resource

In the spirit of emergent research design (Garraway, 2010; Rogers, 2012), the initial two stages of this research project have informed the design of the future two stages of the study. In the next stage of the study, the third stage, the resource will continue to be developed. During the final stage of the study, the fourth stage, the iterative process of continually developing the resource will be implemented, as will the production of the resource itself. The findings of this study will be gauged against recent theoretical frameworks to inform practical instructional design of online resources, and postgraduate and researcher education. It is anticipated that the parallel consideration of the study's findings with current research may further contribute to the development of these recent educational theories. This final stage of the study will enable further integration of robust theory about learning and teaching into the implementation of the resource. This helps to ensure that the resource will meet the needs of HDR students and their supervisors, while adding to the theories of researcher and postgraduate education.

Because the development of *The Researcher's Little Helper*, is currently in its third stage, further data gathering and analysis processes are underway to provide opportunities for postgraduate candidates and their supervisors to continually contribute to the ongoing development of the structure and content of the resource. As both on-campus and distance (online) HDR students are enrolled in various postgraduate degrees at Avondale, the following data gathering processes will be used to include these two groups of students during 2014 and 2015:

- Email interviews with selected HDR supervisors and on-campus and distance (online) students from varied Faculties within the institution.

- Observational field notes recorded in focus groups during on-campus meetings held with HDR supervisors and students.

- Online feedback survey facilitated from within the online resource, completed by HDR supervisors and on-campus and distance (online) students.

- Learner analytics data gathered in an ongoing, monthly basis from the report function within the LMS to determine usage patterns of the resource.

Data gathered through these processes will be analysed using the a constant comparative method, recommended by Thomas (2009), in which data are open-coded using qualitative analysis software to establish themes and relationship between themes. The thematic map that emerges from the data analysis process will be used to determine the main areas of need for postgraduate supervisors and their students and, subsequently, to further ascertain areas of the resource that require future development and refinement.

In addition to considering the user feedback gained through the data gathering processes above, experts in postgraduate education and researcher development will be consulted to provide external evaluation about the ongoing development of this resource. Colleagues from Macquarie University in New South Wales, Adelaide University in South Australia and Trinity College in Dublin have agreed to be external evaluators. Further integration of information, regulatory frameworks and research resources provided by federal government bodies and their associated policies will be incorporated into future iterations of the resource, including guidelines and information from:

- Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency's (TEQSA) Higher Education Standards Framework, including Threshold Standards (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, 2011);

- Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013);

- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 2007);

- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Universities Australia, 2007); and

- Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

Conclusion

Outcomes of the research will continue to inform the design and development of the online, self-directed resource, *The Researcher's Little Helper*, which will in turn assist Avondale's postgraduate supervisors and students to extend their research skills and knowledge. The use of this resource has reduced the demand on current supervisors by their students through the provision of a centralised set of materials that can be independently consulted while preparing for and conducting research projects. Because some postgraduate supervisors at Avondale are less experienced than others, this resource provides a means by which these supervisors can improve their supervision skills and research knowledge. Also the more experienced supervisors can share their skills and tried expertise within the community of practice.

In the short term, participants will be provided with an opportunity to reflect on and monitor their own development of knowledge and skills in postgraduate research. In the longer term, the student-participants in this research project will be able to increase their competence and confidence in conducting postgraduate research. It is also anticipated that the supervisor-participants in this research project will increase their competence and confidence in conducting research and in supervising postgraduate students. The resource provides a point of connection between candidates and supervisors and has the capacity to develop a shared understanding of

effective research. Instead of student-supervisor discussions beginning with their supervisor authoritatively outlining the requirements of research, the student is able to initiate discussion about their research project, gained through background reading and exploration of the materials provided on the resource.

What is expected is that the opportunities for researcher education within the resource will continue to grow in response to student and supervisor needs. Data gathered during the continuing stages of the research project will inform the ongoing development of the resource. In terms of the benefits for Avondale as an institution, the outcomes of this project will inform and guide the design and development of an innovative approach to postgraduate education that promises to become an effective component of our postgraduate education program and our professional development program for supervisors.

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Consumerism in Higher Education: The Dichotomy between Students as Learners and Students as Customers and how Higher Education Institutions must decide to whom they cater

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Abstract

Higher education institutions must decide whether to cater to students as learners or students as customers. In attracting learners to their campuses, universities must consider what they are 'selling.' Is it an ambitious academic experience designed to produce scholars and leaders or is it to attract as many consumers as possible to expand their revenue base? Resisting treating students as consumers and fostering their sense of being part of 'a community of learners' is key to a quality student experience' (Attwood, 2008). This is particularly pertinent when working with postgraduate research students. Higher education institutions therefore must embrace both ideals of consumerism with respect to the students and not sacrifice one for the other.

Introduction

Plutarch, a Greek philosopher who lived from 45 – 120 CE is credited with the saying, 'The mind is not a vessel that needs filling, but wood that needs igniting' (Karamanolis, 2010). This quote represents a view of the educator: as one who ignites a spark of creativity, which lives in everyone. Socrates, 470 BC – 399 BC had a similar perspective: 'Education is not the filling of a vessel, but the kindling of a flame' ('Socrates quotes,' n.d). Regardless from whom the saying originated, it nevertheless forges the ideal that education is for the development of the intellect: to ignite in the mind of the student an awareness of the world around him and a desire to seek understanding of it. As 'creators of knowledge' rather than just receivers, postgraduate research students more than any others require a heightened awareness of the world around them, but is this possible in the modern university?

The role of higher education in America has long evolved from exclusive recruitment of elite white males of aristocratic descent trained to be clergy and politicians (Rudolph, 1990), to present-day open enrolment policies designed to produce equality of opportunity and advancement. Certainly, everyone has a right to an education of their choosing. Yet, higher education institutions now find themselves in a position of opening their doors to a 'clientele' which, it has been argued, are poorly prepared for the rigors of advanced educational pursuits, a situation that directly correlates to lower graduation rates (Grove, 2013). Colleges and universities also have little recourse but to lower their standards and increase the number of remedial courses necessary to raise the student's academic level (Grove, 2013).

Academic institutions must undeniably market their programs and amenities to increase enrolment just as a business targets a certain market to increase sales of their product. Yet, there are critical differences rooted in the missions of companies that are in the business of promoting customer satisfaction as opposed to educational

institutions that promote learning. Corporations' foci is to produce profit whereas higher education institutions' responsibility is to produce learning (Davis, 2011).

Students today are surrounded by a myriad assortment of recreational options designed to attract as many consumers of education as possible. Although extolling the virtues of a campus's gymnasium, running track or indoor rock-climbing wall may at first invite numerous applications for admittance, advertising extracurricular activities without promoting the benefits of a rigorous and challenging education intensifies the problem of leaving a generation unprepared for the competitive demands of a global society. How higher education institutions regard their students, as learners or as customers, is the focus of this discussion.

Attracting Learners

In his 1962 article 'College Students as Learners and Thinkers' for the Journal of Higher Education, John E. Walsh stated 'The duty of the university, then, is to set the atmosphere, largely through the personal example of stimulating professors and against the background of classroom learning, for the educative interaction of the students' (Walsh, 1962 p. 326). Walsh wrote about this fifty years ago and it is still being debated today!

Professors are experts in their fields and have the capacity to present information in such a way as to illuminate meaning and spark an interest in their students to want to learn more about a subject. It is a clear signal to potential students that there is scholarship. There is research and stimulation of thought and process when universities promote the high standard of intellectual capital within their institutions. When this occurs, it is likely students will be attracted to scholarly ambitions. As they fall between the two extremes of undergraduate students and experienced Professors, the postgraduate research student faces the challenge of at the same time developing their own social capital and developing (as tutors) the social capital of the students they teach.

In 1977, Morstain and Smart conducted a study on the reasons that motivated adult learners to further their education. They wrote:

> Too often, an educational program is developed without systematic regard to the population it tends to serve, and the result is usually 'here it is, come and get it.' If postsecondary institutions wish to be genuinely responsive to the needs and interests of adult learners, it would seem essential to know something about the kinds of adult learners it attracts and attempts to serve. (p. 677)

From this point, it is simple to extrapolate that it is not just adult learners institutions need to focus on; indeed, it is the entire potential student body that must be understood. Factors to be considered in recruitment efforts are the high schools students come from and the community colleges that feed the higher education institutions. This can be taken further to explore the needs of the postgraduate research students who enter their programs from within the university and from abroad. University administrators must be cognizant of the many concerns potential learners will have as they enter their institutions.

Universities can accomplish this by forming community networks among themselves, the high schools, and community colleges and the international institutions that feed their [post]graduate programs. Knowing where their student body comes from, preparing courses of study that address their needs and the needs of the community in which the students will eventually live and work, and creating aggressive first-year experience classes for these students including the transfer population, will go a long way to cultivating a population of learners who have been acculturated into the university environment. An important aspect of this transition is to

remember that students are learners more than they are consumers. These concepts have been rigorously applied for some time to the undergraduate experience, but the assumption is too often that the postgraduate research student, does not require a structured 'first year experience'.

Consider this passage from The Montana Professor, a journal of education, politics and culture:

> Thinking of students as consumers, for instance, places education entirely within the frame of market forces, just as refashioning the citizen as consumer does for participation in a democracy. The world of products and services bought and sold, with specific costs and an easily measured 'bottom line,' promises to make education simpler and more efficient. So far, so good. Or, is it? If we consider students strictly as consumers, we are suggesting that all we need to do is find out what they want at any given moment and give it to them. With this kind of market-oriented emphasis, popularity and profit can reign. We question the wisdom of the application of the student-as-consumer metaphor to higher education (Cheney, Mcmillan, & Schwartzman, 1997)

It is important to note here that, 'Students are not customers nor are they not customers' ('Are They Students? Or 'Customers'?,' 2010). It may be controversial to view students as customers; however, higher education institutions still have a product to sell, that is, education itself. As emphasized in The Montana Professor article:

> The dual status of students, as both clients and relatively long-term members of the organization, is weighted completely toward the external role. As consumers, students are part of a consuming public to be courted and seduced, rather than being committed members of the organization whose job it is, at least in part, to participate actively in the very process they're buying. (Cheney, McMillan, & Schwartzman, 1997)

There is a dichotomy between treating students as customers and students who are customers. In a 2010, New York Times article which explored the quandary of 'Are they students? Or 'customers'?' Stephen J. Trachtenberg, president emeritus at George Washington University, emphasized, 'Students are investing time and money with a purpose in mind. The school that does not serve that purpose will not survive' ('Are They Students? Or 'Customers'?,' 2010). Students who are searching for a quality education and a distinguished and accomplished faculty from which to learn will invest their time and money.   This is an example of students who are customers. They are 'shopping' for an experience wherein faculty research enhances the education provided and 'expands the discipline and the scholarly foundation of the school' ('Are They Students? Or 'Customers'?,' 2010). If colleges and universities recognize that these students are customers seeking a value-added educational experience, this will be a win-win situation for both the student and the institution. As highly skilled learners, [post]graduate students are able to articulate clearly their learning needs to become innovative contributors to knowledge and teachers of the next generation of students. If the institutions learn to listen carefully to these students, they will participate in a positive and rewarding academic experience and the reputation of the institution will be enhanced because those students chose to attend. On the other hand, there's a difference between the educational experience of a student and the experience of going to college.

In the same New York Times article, Edward A. Snyder, former dean of the University of Chicago Booth School of Business identified the customer-focused paradigm; 'Customers pay for services, products and experiences that are packaged and delivered to them.' Additionally, Dr. Snyder contrasts this with the academic paradigm, '…sellers don't set demanding expectations of customers and partner with them on strategic initiatives' ('Are They Students? Or 'Customers'?,' 2010). Thus, instructors are leading students and helping them to succeed in

their academic experience. The challenge for higher education institutions is to find a balance in promoting the exceptional academics available to students while retaining the students they admit. Although much work has been done on retaining undergraduate students, [post]graduate students are often allowed to 'sink or swim'.

Retaining the Students

In today's information age, learning sometimes occurs by the push of a button and an instant answer from SIRI is received. Identifying a location from Google maps can generate directions to a favourite movie theatre and a tweet about a particular subject quickly conveys the user's thoughts.

Technology-driven instant gratification has given way to the quick answer replacing critical thinking, questioning, and study skills.   Institutions must encourage their students to view themselves as learners and not passive recipients – as information takers and not information users.

Often, learning is a passive receipt of a store of knowledge. Yet, Walsh (1962) contends, 'higher education is not merely taking courses' (p. 325). Having knowledge without understanding what to do with it can be in his words, 'ruinous.' Walsh (1962) insisted on the need for renewed attention to independent and creative thinking. Even though Walsh wrote of concerns envisaged by higher education institutions fifty years ago, his observations are relevant to today's society because of the principles they espouse, 'in a fast-paced, competitive, and money-centred culture, some kind of professional or career orientation gives learning a more meaningful direction' (p. 325).

Modern technology can facilitate learning; however, the convenience of rapid responses designed to increase continuous use can potentially become a crutch. When a person wants to 'know' something, he or she pushes a button and an answer is transmitted. Higher education, however must not resort to just 'filling a vessel' (Karamanolis, 2010). It must teach critical thinking and questioning assumptions. Does the answer make sense? Does it fit the context? Does it come from a reliable source? Technology must be used in conjunction with and not replace learning.

Through inclusive and innovative learning strategies, the use of technology in classrooms can enhance the learning experience for students. College should be a time of creativity, critical thinking, and questioning to expand students' understanding of themselves and the world they live in. Yet, quite often students become complacent with learning. They fall into a routine of just gathering knowledge. To help combat this affliction of complacency, students must be viewed as learners and constructors of their own destinies guided by the mentoring hand of engaged faculty.

In Kenneth A. Feldman's Review Essay of Alexander Astin's 1993 research titled 'What matters in College? Four critical years revisited,' the following is noted: there is a positive correlation with student involvement in college and student retention through 'academic involvement, involvement with faculty and involvement with student peer groups' (p. 619). As Feldman indicates, colleges that are heavily invested in research have a higher student dissatisfaction, which negatively impacts students' cognitive and affective development. Conversely, colleges that focus on students and their development have a positive impact (Feldman, 1994).

From a constructionist point of view, John Dewey emphasized the whole package of education as being essential to a student's intellectual development (Arcelus, 2011). He advocated the acquisition of knowledge and skills through education as well as experience. Thus, students learn best by utilizing all facets of education: classroom learning, experiential learning, and social interaction. According to Dewey 'colleges and universities

have a broad educational mission, one that seeks to enhance students' intellectual development through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and learning through social interactions' (Arcleus, 2011, p. 66). In order to realize a holistic model, institutions must brand themselves as providers of the whole education experience as envisioned by Dewey.

However, all this research again focuses on the undergraduate experience. How does a university ensure a holistic education for the [post]graduate research student? How do they ensure that this cohort that has a less structured experience than the undergraduate student, receives 'education' as well as just 'experience'? One way is to conceptualise research supervision as 'teaching' rather than just mentoring. Although the coursework required of [post]graduate students in the USA involves explicit teaching, too often students are expected to be almost entirely autonomous in the dissertation phase. Explicit teaching is equally needed in writing the dissertation and preparing for its defence.

Building the Brand

If students are considered only as consumers then it is assumed they are only buying and using a product. When a consumer uses a product, their interaction with it is complete. If they are not satisfied with the product or if there is some defect that they cannot live with, they return the product and it is either replaced, exchanged for something else or they receive their money back for a product they no longer desire.

A diploma should not be viewed only as a product to be purchased. It is evidence of a completed course of study culminating in the receipt of certain credentials that will enable a person to seek out a livelihood and perhaps further other educational pursuits. In order for students to attain the future they desire, they must first gain the requisite knowledge in a subject matter that suits their own ideals. Therefore, students have a responsibility '… for reflecting critically, exploring ambiguities, giving and receiving feedback' during the course of their education (Davis, 2011). In the [post]graduate context, they additionally have the responsibility of creating 'new knowledge' and innovating.

In an educational setting, this back and forth of conceptualizing and understanding is not only normal, but also expected as learning takes place. It is part of the reflection, exploring and feedback process between instructor/advisor and student. Additionally, there is the natural ebb and flow of the learning process itself. Students learn at a particular pace, sometimes they slow down with concepts and other times they move faster. In a business model these might be called negative trends for a product, thus, the reaction would be to fix the issue, to make the customer happy because the customer is always right.

Arguably, students are not always right and teachers who think they are successful because they are making their students happy are not; teachers are successful when they advance leaning and encourage students with academically rigorous activity (Davis, 2011). Therefore, an institution's name or brand often hinges on the quality of education received, not the number of graduates produced.

In 2008, Professor Paul Ramsden, then chief executive of the Higher Education Academy in the UK stated 'Resisting treating students as consumers and fostering their sense of being part of 'a community of learners' is key to a quality student experience' (as cited by Attwood, 2008). Although Ramsden is talking about higher education in the UK, the challenges of consumer vs. learner seem to be universal. The warning is that campus personnel cannot be complacent. You must keep your edge as a provider of quality education. Dr. Ramsden noted:

What makes graduates really world class is that independence of thought and capacity to solve new problems. That comes from a collaborative environment where academics and students are working together. It doesn't come so easily from an environment where students are simply positioned as consumers. (Attwood, 2008)

In addition, universities who want to attract international students to their campuses must understand their ability to do so is predicated upon the calibre of graduates they produce. According to Ramsden (2008), students remember top-quality teaching, inspirational lectures, knowledge gained and the sense of empowerment that knowledge gave them (Attwood, 2008,'We Must Focus On Students As Learners,' para. 7). This is not only the case in undergraduate education, but should also be extrapolated to the [post]graduate research context.

Conclusion

There are critical differences rooted in the missions of companies that are in the business of promoting customer satisfaction and in educational institutions that promote learning. The purpose of both industries is distinctly different: businesses produce profit where higher education institutions produce learning [and innovation] (Davis, 2011).

Higher education institutions today are intent on attracting as many consumers of education as possible. To do so, they entice students with a myriad assortment of recreational options and in the case of [post]graduate students, a selling of research already developed at the institution. When students are seen only as consumers, institutions place them 'entirely within the frame of market forces' (Cheney, Mcmillan, et al., 1997). This discredits the academic environment in which students have the potential to become leaders and innovators of the market instead of the market dictating their successes.

In attracting learners to their campuses, universities must reflect upon what they are 'selling.' Is it an ambitious academic experience designed to produce leaders? Or, is it a diploma given to as many consumers as possible to expand their revenue base?

High quality instruction and academically challenging classes are the very attributes for which institutions expect to be remembered long after the college experience is ended. Universities and colleges must advertise both amenities and the benefits of a rigorous and challenging academic experience. In addition, they need to show that they provide support for students at all qualification levels. Therefore, it is incumbent upon higher education institutions to embrace both ideals of consumerism with respect to the students and not sacrifice one for the other. In so doing, colleges and universities succeed in preparing a generation for the competitive demands of a global society. As Plutarch and Socrates admonished, education must be used to kindle or ignite flames and the mind is not a vessel just to be filled.

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The irony of research in doctoral education

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Introduction

As a former PhD dropout, I share my reflections of being re-ignited as a doctoral candidate. I began my doctorate in 2004, but later withdrew. I had become too busy. Working at a full time job and building a new home meant there was little time to do research. After three years of part-time study, I was still a long way from presenting my research proposal. So reluctantly, I withdrew my candidature. After seven years of no research, my circumstances changed. I had retired from full time work and my mentor had encouraged me to take up a new challenge. Now, after a year of full-time research since I re-enrolled, I am making some ironic discoveries.

Irony

Irony is a difficult thing to grasp (Booth 1974: 2). It is easier to recognise than to define (Lang 1996: 571; Good 1965: 13). Nevertheless, for our purposes I am going to risk providing a definition. Irony can be a paradox with an incongruent twist (Muecke 1969: 19-20). It can be a situation in a drama with a couple of layers, where one layer is what appears, and another layer is what the audience knows (Muecke 1969: 20). When you look at these layers side by side, the result is a 'cheeky grin' (Duke 1985: 156).

The irony of research in doctoral studies is concerned with the incongruities associated with the problems and issues you have to face which work against you in the process of completing your doctorate (Muecke 1969: 102). Yet, these are the very things that are essential to bring your research to completion. These problems relate to purpose, process and passion.

Irony occurs because the issues and problems are often outside the expertise of the researcher, but mastery of them is mandatory if you are to succeed.

Irony in doctoral research has three aspects, encapsulated in these three words: purpose, process and passion. (See Diagram 1 below).

Three aspects of irony in doctoral education

The aspect of purpose

There has to be a reason to do the research. If there is no purpose then there will be little motivation to proceed to completion (Kearns & Gardiner 2012: 31). It requires years to achieve a research doctorate. Yet, the irony of the research is that for most doctorates, the hours worked on the dissertations are disproportional to the actual readership of them. Often the reality for the candidate is ironic. There can be over seven thousand hours spent in research and writing.

Why do you work at it for years? What will be the long-term benefit? The candidate has to believe that the purpose of the research is worthwhile, otherwise motivation to complete the research will be lacking.
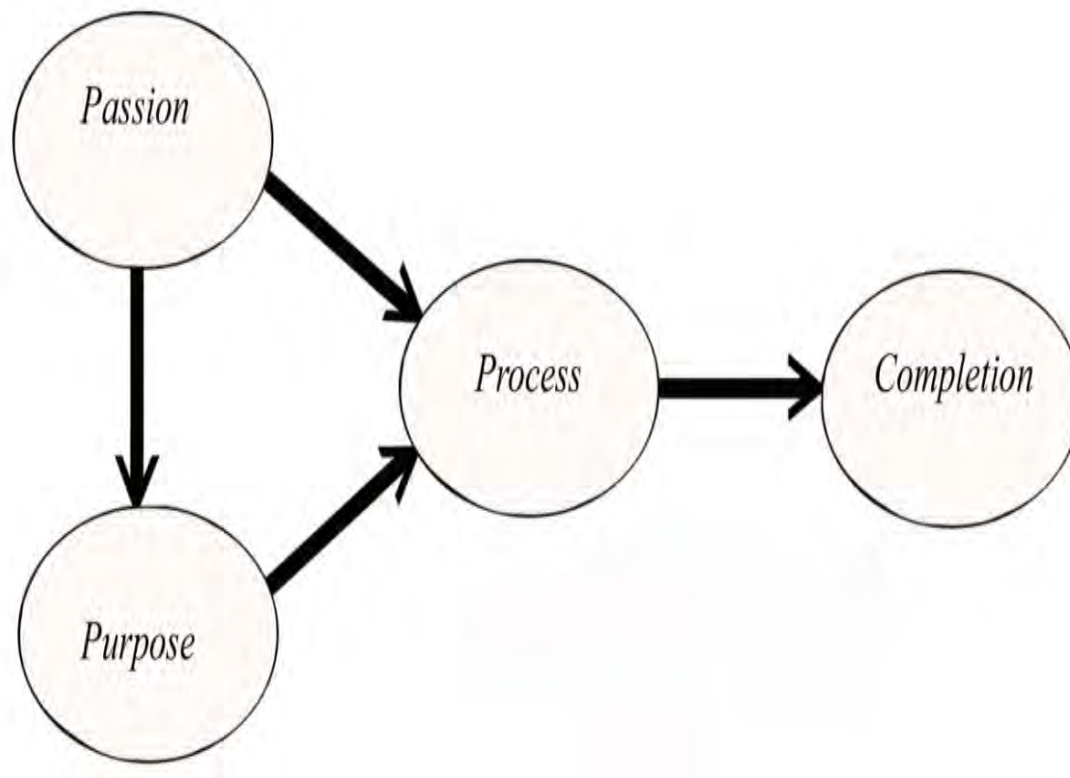
Diagram 1. Aspects of Irony in Doctoral Studies

The aspect of process

Methodology is critical in doctoral research degrees (Ling & Yang 2012: 8). Methodologies are the steps we use in our arguments. They are different for each discipline. A methodology involves learning and applying a lot of information of how to do certain things that are acceptable in our academic circles. Methodology is a lot easier to define than it is to get right in practice (Ling & Yang ibid). As a doctoral candidate for the second time, I am working on the methodology of my own research into the irony demonstrated in the Fourth Gospel.

Konrad Pesudovs, a Flinders University Professor of Ophthalmology, has come to this conclusion in his research (Pesudovs 2006: abstract). He says,

> …to conduct good research it is essential to use the latest and best methods. In outcomes research, one modern initiative has been to conduct holistic measurement of outcomes inclusive of the patient's point of view; patient-centred outcome. This, of course, means including a questionnaire. However, the irony of trying to improve outcomes research by being inclusive of many measures is that the researcher may not be expert in all measures used. Certainly, few people conducting outcomes

research in (my field of) ophthalmology would claim to be questionnaire experts. Most tend to be experts in their (own fields).

So, the irony of the process is that what works against bringing the research to completion is the process or lack of skills in methodology, which are often outside the area of expertise of the researcher (Trujillo 2007: 1-9). The researcher must be expert in framing the questions of a questionnaire; must be expert in epistemology; must be expert in documenting the steps in setting out the research findings into a thesis; and must be expert in overcoming blockages or difficulties in his / her personal life during the lifetime of the research project.

The aspect of passion

It is ironic that the doctoral topic you have a passion about is the same one that brings you so much frustration (Stubb et al., 2010: 33). The love affair you have with your dissertation holds you on course and keeps you plodding away until you finally reach completion (Stubb et al. 47-48). Yet it is concerning the same topic that you struggle to write about academically for a sustained period (Cf. Kearns & Gardiner 2010: 17). You have the conviction that the work is worth doing, and that you were meant to do it, but it is so hard to overcome issues like writer's block (Kearns & Gardiner ibid). Nevertheless, your passion will help provide your purpose, and will help drive you to keep going through the process to bring it to completion.

Summary

Without a purpose there will be insufficient motivation to undergo the process to complete the doctorate. The process of doctoral research can be a sufficient deterrent to prevent completion (Kearns & Gardiner 2012: 42). Maintaining your passion about your topic will help maintain the purpose of your research, and provide you with the incentive to work through the process (Trujillo 2007: 7-8). Likewise, knowing your purpose helps you to continue working through the process of your research, to see it through to completion.

A way forward

These three aspects of irony in doctoral research in education: process, purpose and passion are not sequential. They do not logically follow any chronological order. Rather, they are engaged together in order to overcome the obstacles candidates are likely to experience in their doctoral studies.

Firstly, in order to maintain your passion, I encourage you during your research to seek a mentor (Mallinson 1998: 175-180). It may be someone outside your area of expertise and apart from your supervisor. It will be someone you trust and with whom you can be completely honest. It will be one with whom you can and do share issues and problems, as well as celebrate your achievements. Sharing and discussing your doctoral research experience will help you gain a different perspective, and it will help maintain your passion for your project (Creighton, et al. 2010: abstract).

Secondly, I suggest a positive way forward that will hold the researcher to the task. It is to write down in a prominent place the 'why of their research'. Answer the question 'Why am I doing this?' Sign this question of purpose and keep it where you will see it in your study area throughout your doctoral study.

The irony is in the question itself. When you are keen at the start and you ask yourself that question, you will be able to speak about it with glowing terms and enthusiasm. But, when the issues and problems come during the research, you may ask that same question. When you do, the answer will be coloured with negativity (Mallinson 1998: 15-16). Isn't that ironic!

Finally, learning institutions would do well to assist candidates to surmount hurdles that previous researchers overcame, so that the doctoral researcher's experience is as smooth as possible. Also, candidates would do well to familiarise themselves with the program of professional development workshops provided at their learning institutions. These steps will help make the doctoral research process easier, more achievable and with less dropouts.

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The socialisation of research students into disciplines through spoken academic discourses

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Abstract

Seminar presentations and their subsequent discussion sessions are social performances of expertise and socio-academic relationships. Oral presentations are a key socialising discourse in academic scholarship; students must simultaneously be experts in order to give presentations and give presentations in order to be experts. Jacoby and Gonzales (1991) emphasise the dynamic and dialogic nature of the linguistic construction of expertise (1991:174); participants' (emerging) professional identities are not simply presented, but always negotiated, as a 'core' feature of academic discourse (Duff 2010:170). Konzett (2012) examines the ways in which academic experts negotiate their professional identities in conference discussions. The focus of the current paper is on doctoral students, and on the socialising nature of discussion sessions. Using transcribed spoken data from a student research seminar conducted during the course of an academic bridging program for international doctoral students, this paper explores the grammatical and discursive ways in which supervisors and students collaboratively position their research field and research practices, and how this structures students' discursive claims to their own space within the discipline, as a part of their socialisation into academic and disciplinary discourses. Participants in these sessions represent the triad of doctoral student, their supervisor, and the Academic Language and Learning (ALL) academic (Picard, Warner and Velautham, 2010). This paper examines the dynamic construction of participants' expertise through a selection of linguistic elements, demonstrating the intensively socialising nature of these discussion sessions.
Keywords: academic socialisation; disciplinary identity; research presentations

Introductory background

Research literacy practices involve a performance of expertise: projection of an academic voice which conveys disciplinary knowledge and positioning, and which claims the research's legitimacy, value, and space within the field. Appropriately displaying knowledge and carving out a specialised area of expertise – establishing and occupying a particular disciplinary niche – are fundamental to research speaking and writing (Swales 1990, Swales & Feak 1994), and are realised at multiple levels within and across texts, and through a range of language choices (Charles 2003). Because academic speaking and writing are fundamentally social, reacting to and constituting ongoing disciplinary 'conversations' (Berkenkotter et al 1988), they are dynamic, and dialogic; the appropriateness and successfulness of particular language choices and rhetorical claims to expertise depend upon the responses of others in the research community, who are in turn enacting their own voices and expertise (Jacoby and Gonzales 1991, Konzett 2012). Indeed, research is 'a dialogue with other experts' (Wisker Robinson & Shacham 2007:304), and language, disciplinary knowledge, and identity are deeply intertwined (Teramoto and Mickan, 2008:48). For new research students who are not yet sure of their exact positioning or niche within their discipline and 'do not yet own' a disciplinary voice, participation in disciplinary practices and conversations can be hugely challenging (Ivanič 1998:86). Despite the relationship between disciplinarity and language, and the importance of participation in academic socialisation (Weidman and Stein 2003), issues of voice tend to remain tacit, 'rarely discussed by supervisors with their students' (Guerin & Green 2012:197-198). There is thus a significant responsibility, and opportunity, for institutions to provide explicit support for postgraduate research

students in disciplinary socialisation and the development of academic voice. Guerin and Green (2012) suggest that voice can be supported by deliberately framing disciplines as living, breathing audiences to ones' writing and speaking, and inducing participation via publication (Guerin & Green, 2012:198). However, in the early stages of candidature, publication is perhaps an unrealistic expectation. In the earliest stages, then, disciplinary participation and development of disciplinary literacies can be supported through a domain-specific approach to language support – where the domain is the discipline or sub-discipline – in conjunction with modelling and integrating interactions with disciplinary supervisors and peers, which is strengthened by feedback from supervisors (Picard, Warner, & Velautham 2011) and post hoc reflection (Hedgcock 2008). Language specialists must unpack the particular conventions and cultures of a student's disciplinary community, shifting academic literacy practices from the tacit realm to the explicit (Duff 2007, Picard & Velautham 2009), connecting content knowledge with disciplinarity and language, and providing models of 'actual discursive practices' (Duff, 2007:15), in order to equip students with practical ways to explore and refine their disciplinary voice. Furthermore, in addition to providing such scaffolding, we also need to consider how (or even if) language specialists are able to manage to incorporate the diverse range of literacy practices required of students across different faculties and disciplines. Because variations in disciplinary epistemologies – i.e. underlying approaches to phenomena, knowledge, and authority – significantly influence their practices and discourses (Biglan 1973, Becher 1989, Lea and Street 1998, Mickan 2012), and thus also necessarily shape the kinds of positionings and expert selves that are valued within them, academic literacy support efforts need to be careful to avoid epistemic misunderstanding or clashing (e.g. Sheridan-Rabideau, McLaughlin & Novak 2002), or bombardment with ancillary discourses. Therefore, for research language and literacies support to be both explicit and relevant, we need to examine the ways in which it is appropriate to perform voice and negotiate expertise within disciplinary contexts, and consider the interactions between students, supervisors, and language specialists.

This paper, based on part of my doctoral research, presents a short case study of a first-year doctoral student's expression and negotiation of disciplinary expertise in supervisory and peer interactions, during a research presentation seminar which was part of an academic literacies program. It examines how conventions within literacy practices may be informed by specific aspects of disciplinarity, as well as the dialogic negotiation involved in establishing expertise.

(Post)Graduate research presentations as academic and disciplinary literacy practice

The case was selected from a semester-long concurrent bridging course for commencing international doctoral students, which focuses on the completion of texts/literacy events required by the discipline and university, which includes delivery of a formal research presentation within their discipline within the first six months of candidature. Course participants first deliver their research presentation within the bridging program as a dry run, with an audience which includes: their supervisor(s), often a few graduate students from the discipline, the other doctoral students in the bridging program (who are from other disciplines but the same faculty), and the bridging program lecturer; all give feedback on the presentation. The bridging course broadly follows Canagarajah's safe houses within contact zones' framework (Canagarajah 1997, Pratt 1991), foregrounding participants as researchers with various degrees of disciplinary knowledge and experience, who are already somewhat socialised into disciplinary ways of thinking and being (see Bowen & Schuster 1986, Paulsen & Wells 1998, Riley 2002, Karimi 2014, for the strength of disciplinary epistemologies across institutions), and who are thus peripheral but legitimate community members whose existing disciplinarity now must be negotiated and further developed within new socio-political networks. Because of the conscious foregrounding of disciplinarity, the emphasis on participants as legitimate disciplinary members, and the inclusion of supervisory interactions, the

program was a particularly interesting site to examine disciplinarity and the construction of voice/expertise. It provided a specific literacy practice which was a discrete instance of a construction of disciplinary voice and socialisation into a research community.

Doctoral student research presentations represent both a performance and development of expertise. Weissberg (1993) describes the particular hybridity of the graduate research presentation as a text type, and Sunderland (2004), analysing data selection rationales in graduate research presentations, notes the significance of instructor presence and audience familiarity on rhetorical choices, as presenters customise their explanations of methodologies to the social and academic contexts of the audience. Other literature on research presentations as literacy practice has examined international scholars' cultural and English language issues, as either established career researchers (e.g. Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas 2005) or as novices/apprentices within an EAP framing (e.g. Weissberg 1993, Morita 2000, 2004). This case study does not attend to these issues, but uses internationality as a way of examining disciplinarity, by looking at an international student researcher's socialisation into a new research community via the performance of voice during a specific literacy practice in which researcher education/academic language specialists had scaffolded interactions and connected issues of disciplinary membership to rhetorical choices. For this case study, the pedagogic nature of the bridging program meant that the its research presentations are thus an even more highly hybridised literacy event type, incorporating features of doctoral research presentations, research proposals, supervisory consultations, and ALL/ESP seminars. Presenters are displaying disciplinary knowledge to their supervisors, performing in front of two sets of peers (disciplinary and non-disciplinary), as well as fulfilling the requirements of a language-focused program; these are important contexts.

Case Study: A Presentation from Surgical Research

This particular case study presentation was selected for discussion partially because it was a particularly strong presentation containing notable overt claims to membership, which seemed to reflect both the disciplinarity of the presenter and also the pedagogy of the bridging course. The transcribed excerpts from this presentation are illustrative rather than exhaustive, and have been adjusted to remove tacking elements (Halliday 1985:90), and also identifying and sensitive information. The presenter's topic was a particular surgical technique as an alternative to a currently standard technique for a common chronic health problem. Much like Jacoby's (1998) Physics presentations, the question-answer discussion was compelling in terms of the seemingly confrontational discursive strategies of a faculty peer. As an applied, life discipline, surgery is concerned with concrete problems and living bodies, and in this presentation, the concept of 'the patient' was centred as a site of disease and a subject of medical intervention, but also as a stakeholder with experiences and concerns. There was a discursive centring of visual modalities, with the inclusion of a large number of pathology slides and diagrams, and the frequent use of 'see' as a metaphor for knowing as part of a metadiscursive set phrase 'we can see here'. While the presentation signalled belongingness in many different ways, both within and across turns, the discussion session was also marked by an authoritative voice of consensus, as well as the confrontational aspect of peer feedback counter-claiming disciplinary discourse; both features are presumably reflective of the hardness of health sciences disciplines, and also possibly indicative of an epistemological approach to pedagogy which values direct verbal sparring. Membership claims and interpersonal framing were also reflective of the classification of surgery as a hard discipline which values collaboration and established authority (Biglan 1973a:202).

Aspects of the disciplinary voice of the speaker can be deconstructed via Swales' (1990) CARS model, which describes how introductory sections of academic texts first establish a research territory, second establish a niche within that territory, and third occupy that niche. In his initial move, establishing of his territory, the presenter made clear centrality claims, evaluating the disease as 'important', and using the term '*interesting*' to describe the disease's impact to instantly set a scientific gaze (a):

> *An interesting part of the disease is that it exerts a higher toll on the quality of the life of the patient than do other famous diseases – like congestive heart failure, angina, and back pain – in the areas of bodily pain and social function (Respondent A).*

Still establishing territory, the speaker then set up a rival procedure for a subsequent counterclaim, acknowledging its successes but grammatically restraining them through the use of perfect aspect and past tense – the procedure 'has risen to be the gold standard'; 'this concept was hugely successful' – and, transitioning into the establishing of his niche, and switching to present tense (Thompson 2002) described the weaknesses of this procedure, and listed a set of alternative radical procedures. The presentation's lack of citation was interesting. While many presentations would give a few important citations in the introduction, this speaker never explicitly cited other researchers, rather referring to 'the literature', 'they', or using a passive sentence form and eliding citation. He did however list a number of radical procedures, which, presumably, are associated in the discipline with particular researchers or research groups – two of these procedures are named after individuals ('[X]'s procedure'). His precise niche is expressed through a series of projected if/then questions, and occupied via a summarising rhetorical question.

Signalling disciplinary positionings

Disciplinary voices

As noted by Casanave (2008:24), there are 'various subtle ways that a writer can refer to the work of others'. For example, the speaker uses the following phrase to indicate the moment to the voice of the literature, *'And here comes the argument'.*

However, in this particular case study, patients are an additional 'voice' to that of the literature and that of the presenter and his/her supervisor(s) and research group.

Patient as stakeholder, subject, and site

Patients were represented throughout the presentation as stakeholders, conscious agents who experienced pain and suffering, and also as subjects who would undergo surgical interventions, with patient/patients a high frequency item, appearing 57 times and used by both speaker and supervisor. The patient-as-stakeholder framing sandwiched the presentation, which was significant in terms of tone, setting the initial context where '*Patients usually complain of [symptoms]*', and appearing frequently again throughout the question-answer segment where justification of the proposed surgical technique was achieved by contextualising it with a more concrete hypothetical gendered agent, '*he*': '*he appears to be surviving*'; '*he just quit*', '*the money he invested in the surgery*', '*he may be offered radical surgery*'. In contrast to the previous offer of surgery, the shift to a discursive representation of patient as medical subject was associated with the present-tense requiring of surgery, which itself was often collocated with 'resistance':

..... they are resistant and require further revisions…

…resistant to any […] surgical management and require multiple surgeries…

A great number of patients pass on to require surgical management…

…as a patient requires a revision…..

Patients were also positioned as a site of disease and intervention, i.e. as a body, represented via specialist anatomical vocabulary which was concentrated within the hypothesis, research questions, and methodology segments.

Visual references and visual (multi)modality

The deictic integration of a large number of slide images was a salient feature of this presentation, with deixis used for textual organisation during segments of the presentation which were image-focused; '*this*', '*here*', and '*we see here'/'here we see*' thematically anchored the slide as a position from which to give technical descriptions of the images (with 18 instances of thematic deictic 'here'), breaking up dense technical explanations for the largely non-specialist audience. The speaker also utilised deixis as a situated meta-discursive framework consisting of the presenter himself, the audience, and the slide (text), for example: '*And I will show you here, this is a diagram of…*'; '*…this is a survival curve, so, you can see…*'; '*…and we see here the same features.*' This deixis not only navigated and integrated visual modality of the presentation, but structured a relationship between the audience, the speaker, and the information on the slides, drawing the audience into the content.

Slides, in addition to allowing for the incorporation of condensed forms of information that would not otherwise be able to be included, allow the inclusion of images for the sake of interest and emphasis (DuBois 1980), as well as other kinds of personal expression (Archer 2006). In this presentation, the speaker also utilised this modal capacity, via the inclusion of a rather informal cartoon which illustrated a somewhat overstretched metaphor for his primary research hypothesis – this is discussed further below.

Belonging: our, we, and the Prof told me

The presenter made many claims to disciplinary and faculty membership through three main strategies: the revealing of contingent, privileged information – '*Here is some data from our department which still hasn't been published*'; via the 20 instances of exclusive '*we*' (i.e. we = surgeons/researchers); and, perhaps most significantly, via projected clauses which invoked the authority and disciplinary expertise of an absent research supervisor. Excerpts (f) and (g) show the presenter's utilisation of a projected clause to regain control of a topic of discussion in the question-answer session, reframing and thus countering a critique from the researcher educator about the inclusion of the cartoon, and thereby successfully negotiating the legitimacy of his specific discursive choice and general disciplinary expertise.

All speaking turns in themselves constitute displays of understanding and claims to expertise (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, Konzett 2012), but within turns speakers can choose from a range of possible discursive strategies, which are either legitimised or in some way challenged by following turns. Disciplinary expertise is therefore relative and dynamic, enacted collaboratively throughout academic language events, as participants

negotiate and constitute each other's academic positioning and identity, with each claim to expertise therefore contingent on the next utterance (Jacoby and Gonzales, 1991:152). For student presentations, where this expertise will be co-constructed by instructors, question-answer periods often contain socialising 'display' questions (Mehan 1979), and will inevitably involve 'general lessons about the alleged conventional and moral expectations of a conference talk presentation' (Jacoby 1998:364). The inclusion of a cartoon in this surgery research presentation prompted an exchange between seminar participants which demonstrated the delicate but socialising positioning of educator comments, and the dynamic and dialogic nature of the negotiation of expertise and disciplinarity (Duff 2010:170; Jacoby & Gonzales 1991:174), as transcribed in the following exerpt:

> *Researcher Educator: I've got a query about your cartoons. Um. Yeah. Would that go down okay with the Core Component – not, some people would freak out?*
> *Faculty peer: What cartoons? Are these the-*
> *Researcher Educator: Um well it's his picture of the argument, and, his picture at the end, um,-*
> *Faculty peer: Oh so you're saying, he should be more formal?*
> *Researcher Educator: Yeah. Yay or nay? Because again it's a disciplinary thing*
> *Faculty peer: Yeah no that's fine.*

In the excerpt, the researcher educator initiates a discussion topic, and challenges the presenter on the inclusion of the cartoon, softened with multiple discourse markers and 'people would freak out' to rhetorically locate the problem with the audience rather than the speaker. However before the presenter replies, a local postgraduate student faculty peer interjects with a request for clarification, and then uses the interaction to engage in claims which further construct his own disciplinary expertise, including paraphrasing the researcher educator and giving a direct and confident evaluation. The faculty peer's use of yeah no, an informal Australian-English discourse marker, dually incorporates a claim to disciplinary authority with a display of cultural and linguistic belonging within the local institution.

In excerpt the excerpt below, which continues directly from this, we can see that the researcher educator resists acceptance of the assertions from the presenter's peer, instead sustaining her position by responding to those assertions with further counters. The presenter, who has waited for a pause in the conversation, then interjects with a strong and multilayered interpersonal competence claim, which is extended in the presenter's next turn with an overt membershipping move and an explicit metacognitive claim to knowledge of disciplinary epistemologies.

Researcher Educator: They, they wouldn't be irritated by it?
Faculty peer: No, no no, only -
Researcher Educator: We had a supervisor the other day who got very irritated
Faculty peer: Really?
Researcher Educator: because a student had a cartoon
Faculty peer: …   Really?
Researcher Educator: [laughing] Yeah.
Presenter: Prof's seen that and he told me it's a very good presentation
Researcher Educator: Okay
Presenter: The way we present in Surgery – I don't know if it's across all Surgeries – but it's about entertaining and holding the audience's interest, firstly, basically.

Researcher Educator:	*Okay*
Presenter:	*Secondly it's about methodology and data presentation and that sort of thing*
Researcher Educator:	*Oh that's good to know.*

Projection is inherently interpersonal (Thompson 1996), and the presenter's projection of reported speech above construes belonging on multiple levels, constructing a privileged socio-academic relationship between the speaker and the invoked party via the following grammatical strategies:

1. The abbreviation Prof implies a senior disciplinary figure, one with whom the presenter has some kind of personal relationship;

2. The Mental Process see which invokes Prof as a Sensor, and thus also the presenter as someone who has access to Prof;

3. The use of told as Verbal Process, which links Prof, the Sayer, with me (the presenter), the Addressee (e.g. as opposed to said, which does not require an Addressee), and also makes the veracity of the Verbiage difficult to refute by non-Addressees;

4. The projected Verbiage itself, it's a very good presentation, which speaks for Prof;

5. The favourable intensified evaluation within the Verbiage, very good.

The researcher educator's response to the presenter's utterance is '*okay*', allowing the presenter to then strengthen his position with a claim about the performative nature of this particular text type within his discipline, responding to the researcher educator's earlier reference to disciplinarity (the previous excerpt), before the strong positive ratification that's good to know.

Disagreement and disapproval

The unfolding of critique and argumentative tone of discussions within the question-answer period – which also included a negotiation of the legitimacy of statistical methodologies with a senior faculty member lasting for over an entire five minutes – involving interpersonally framed disagreement, e.g., '*I still don't think you can separate it like that'*, is also interesting in terms of Mauranen's (2002) finding that evaluative feedback in spoken interactions overwhelmingly tends be positive or affirming, making the positive but not the negative explicit (Mauranen 2002:136). Particularly in the critically reflective setting of the IBPR, surgical epistemologies as manifested by its disciplinary members in this language event seem to embrace confrontation as a legitimate and ordinary discursive strategy. As an illustration of the consistency of this pattern, the final interactional segment of the seminar, included as the excerpt, below, occurring between the presenter and the same faculty peer quoted in the excerpts above. The peer construes his expertise in a remarkably hierarchical and antagonistic manner, utilizing interruption and mimicking, and also the labelling of the presenter's methodologies as inherently biased. The presenter did not attempt to challenge the label itself but mitigate it by explaining the difficult circumstances of the research project, which the peer in turn simply rejected.

Faculty peer:	How long are you here for?
Presenter:	Ah-
Faculty peer:	Two years, three years? [Crosstalk] Two years? [Crosstalk] Because you've got to collect all this data and then follow them up.
Presenter	No, we'll, work on the patients already have. So we used the ah, the ah-
Faculty peer:	So you've already selected the patients.
Presenter:	No, no, no, actually – I'll be selecting
Faculty peer:	No, no, yeah, selection bias
Presenter:	Yeah what can you do? This is the only way so that you can correlate an outcome to, to a mucosa! Otherwise you'll have to do a prospective which will take forever!
Faculty peer:	It won't take forever.

Despite its repetition, and directness, this interaction seems quite collegial suggesting that this seemingly antagonistic type of interaction is 'normal business' in this context.

Discussion: claims to expertise as reflections on surgical epistemologies

Surgery, as a discipline, is concerned with patients, disease, and surgical interventions, and these elements can be managed through a dual discursive positioning of a patient as both subject and object. Claims to belonging and the invoking and framing of socioacademic relationships were significant features of the discussion section, which were of the classification of surgery as a hard, applied discipline which values established authority, thus creating particular discursive strategies for the construction of disciplinary membership. Several of the excerpts illustrate the interactive and contingent negotiation of participant expertise in a markedly confrontational socio-academic context. As a part of its confrontational style, the discussion session was also salient in terms of the authoritative voice of consensus, as well as the categorical aspect of peer feedback counter-claiming disciplinary discourse; both features are presumably also reflective of the hardness of health sciences disciplines, and also possibly indicative of an epistemological approach to pedagogy which values verbal sparring, with close and frequent research collaboration buffering the social effects of intense and often confrontational negotiation such as those presented here.

The (traditional) transience and interactivity of spoken presentations also allows the incorporation of 'contingent, personal and circumstantial' information (Swales 2004:26) – highly socialising evaluative language (Mauranen 2002) which can show quite literally 'what counts as a relevant contribution, what counts as answering a question, what counts as having a good answer for that question or a good criticism of it' within the discipline (Rorty, 1979 in Becher 1989).

Research presentations out of necessity involve specialist concepts which can only be expressed using dense nominalisations (Halliday 1985:73) and so the challenge for the speaker is to balance technicality with the redundancy and informality appropriate to speaking (e.g. Weissberg, 1993), navigating multiple imagined audiences, managing visual/written/spoken multimodality across slides, and responding to questions, commentary, and critique.

This paper only offers a very brief examination of a research literacy event involving two intersecting communities of practice, rather than a comprehensive account of language patterns within this text, the larger language event, the department, or the discipline. However, even in this small case study, it becomes clear that participation in disciplinary practices requires 'learning something about who the key players in the conversation are and what the relations are among experienced members and others at various stages of expertise' (Casanave 2008:19). Thus, construing expertise is not simply a matter of adopting a particular vocabulary and discursive affectation, but of participating in dialogue within the intricate 'cultural ecologies' of a research community (Mickan 2004, 2007).

In the surgery research presentation context, it is also vital that there is an awareness of disciplinarity cross-disciplinary contexts, which involve navigation of competing, invisible epistemological frameworks. If these frameworks are not explicitly addressed, we run the risk that 'unacknowledged disciplinary investments bec(o)me mapped onto our classrooms' (Sheridan-Rabideau, McLaughlin & Novak 2002:348). By examining the relationship between the scaffolding of academic literacies, the development of voice, and disciplinary situated language events, we can start to unpack and make these aspects visible to research students. As Duff

> *Identity work and the negotiation of institutional and disciplinary ideologies and epistemologies are core aspects of the production and interpretation of academic discourse. Academic discourse is therefore a site of internal and interpersonal struggle for many people, especially for newcomers or novices (Duff 2010:170) [this is especially true in] 'intercultural contexts' (same page)*

In surgery research, there is an even more complex 'double socialisation' (Golde 1998:56) into not only the practices of doctoral scholarship but also a future profession. Thus an even more sophisticated tailoring of support is required which includes texts and practices as well as disciplinary research and professional activities. Researcher education for international EAL students in this context cannot therefore be limited solely to remedial language support, but necessitates the triad of doctoral student, their supervisor, and the Academic Language and Learning (ALL)/researcher education academic (Picard, Warner and Velautham, 2010) to fully exploit the learning opportunity.

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Quo Vadis: doctoral programs in private non-profit higher education? The view from two providers

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Abstract

In order to provide high level research and postgraduate education opportunities in the widest possible range of contexts, private non-profit higher education providers (PNHEPs) have developed doctoral program offerings outside the university system. We discuss the nature of these programs, their origins, quality control mechanisms and current trajectories. We also explore the advantages and benefits of private doctoral programs along with their challenges and limitations.

Participants in the provision of private non-profit doctoral programs with a Christian ethos discuss these issues in this paper, dealing with both professional and research doctorates. Apart from the limitations arising from working outside the funding envelope of university doctoral programs and university self-accrediting status, numerous other potential limitations had to be overcome. These included the range of supervision resources available, the nature of academic freedom, and minimal institutional research culture. How these and other hurdles were overcome and how the collaborative engagement of a wide range of national and international top scholars was achieved is presented via case studies of two multi-disciplinary colleges.

The current doctoral programs in the two colleges reflect differing approaches to program quality and accreditation, one tending towards specialisation, the other towards a more generic model. These approaches may converge in the future as the experiences of the different players in the field are shared and optimal approaches are identified. This paper may assist institutions in deciding whether to adopt a generic or specialised approach for research doctorates.
Keywords: Private providers, Christian ethos in doctoral education

Introduction

A number of private higher educational institutions have developed in Australia to meet the needs of specific audiences outside the public university sector. Many such institutions were designed to meet the needs of faith-based education, especially Christian education (Sherlock, 2009). A number of these institutions commenced with vocational education and/or undergraduate education (Slape & Beard, 2008), but over time realised the need to provide postgraduate education, including doctoral programs (Tuovinen & Buxton, 2012). This paper seeks to describe how these PNHEPs developed doctoral program offerings outside the university system as they sought to provide high level research and postgraduate education opportunities for their client groups. In this paper we discuss the nature of these programs, their origins, quality control mechanisms, current trajectories, the advantages and benefits of private higher doctoral programs and their challenges and limitations.

The authors of this paper are all participants in the provision of private non-profit doctoral programs with a Christian ethos and we will discuss both professional and research doctorates. Apart from the limitations arising from working outside the funding envelope of university doctoral programs and university self-accrediting status,

numerous other potential limitations needed to be overcome. These include the range of supervision resources available, the nature of academic freedom and minimal institutional research culture. How these and other hurdles were overcome and how impressive strides were made in these endeavours, e.g. achieving the collaborative engagement of a wide range of national and international top scholars in these programs, is presented via case studies of two multi-disciplinary colleges.

Though the institutions reporting their experience in this paper differ in many respects from the university sector, there are still some experiences, which are shared with universities. Perhaps the shared experiences are not at the macro level of a university but there are still many synergies with universities at the micro level. Universities have many disciplines within them that do not have a history of research, many of the 'professional' disciplines are only emerging as researchers; the ability to develop a research culture that supports PhD students is not a simple task but requires management and a strategic approach. With respect to funding and accreditation the institutions reporting in this paper are very different, but in the need to develop research capacity and a culture that will support it, there is commonality with some university disciplines.

Nature of Programs

Avondale College's doctoral program consists of a generic Doctor of Philosophy across all disciplines, filling a special niche in the Australian higher education system. First, Avondale provides a Christian context in which candidates can undertake doctoral research: they can study topics at the nexus between Christianity and contemporary societal problems. Many candidates unable to find a place in established universities to undertake studies in this unique context enrol at Avondale. The topics Avondale is able to supervise are located in the professional fields and within three broad fields of study related to Avondale's research strength and critical mass, namely, society and culture (primarily in theology and arts), education and health. Avondale's distinctive Christian philosophy and values inform, but do not restrict, such enquiry, as supervisors encourage research students to consider the moral and ethical implications of their research and evaluate the underlying values of their findings.

The primary aim of the Avondale Doctor of Philosophy program is to advance the process of exploring past and present meaning and significance in human affairs, both for the student and for the larger community. At the nexus between Christianity and contemporary society, the emphasis is on investigating, constructing and communicating meaning while improving judgement in moral, social, and aesthetic fields. The degree seeks to expand the student's capacity to deal with the world of uncertainty and disagreement, to seek out meaning and evaluate the significance of human thought, action and imagination. It promotes open-ended research in examining complex issues through the application of interpretive and creative methods from historical, theological, educational, and health perspectives.

By framing and re-contextualising questions which must be asked by each generation, the student is challenged to refine the skill of judgment, particularly in matters of ethical, moral and aesthetic importance, while recognising that judgement is never final or absolute and that debate is essential to reasoned enquiry. Avondale acknowledges that while many of its higher degrees are professionally oriented, Avondale's doctorate has intrinsic value in creating a pool of thinkers, creators and practitioners who can enrich society, inspire vision, foster growth, and deepen human understanding of the tangible and intangible dimensions of human experience and professional practice.

At the higher education level, Avondale offers a diploma, associate degrees, bachelors, honours, coursework masters, research masters and the Doctor of Philosophy, thus providing a seamless hierarchy of degrees. The Doctor of Philosophy provides high-achieving graduate students with the opportunity to extend their academic and creative skills, as well as facilitating meaningful areas of inquiry, research and creative endeavour for those in employment who wish to enhance their professional competence. The Doctor of Philosophy also enables closer associations between the institution and the community as research output will measure, test and bridge the gap between theory and practice by facilitating partnerships between the student, the institution, schools, health institutions and cultural centres. The Doctor of Philosophy program will also help foster interdisciplinary research and maximise the available resources of Avondale. The number of students enrolling in Avondale's PhD program is growing as evidenced in Figure 1, below:
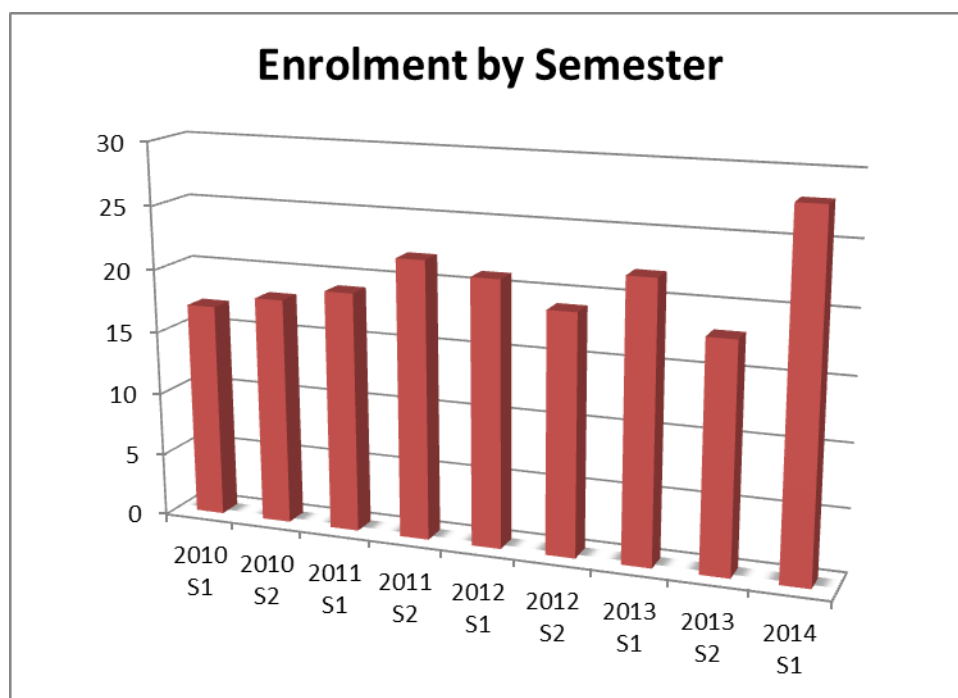
 Figure 1: Avondale PhD Enrolments

The Tabor Adelaide doctoral programs operate in many ways in a similar context to those described for Avondale PhD program. The context is a Christian higher education environment, building on prior bachelors and masters level studies, where the doctoral programs seek to foster the advancement of knowledge and professional practice. After completing Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) level 10 studies at Tabor, graduates are expected to have systematic and critical understanding of a complex field of learning and specialised research skills for the advancement of learning and/or for professional practice. More specifically, their knowledge will be at the frontier of a discipline or area of professional practice, and they will have the capacity to apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, authoritative judgement, adaptability and responsibility as an expert and leading practitioner or scholar.

In the recently redesigned Doctor of Ministry (DMin) course Tabor Adelaide's goal is to offer a professional doctorate designed to meet the continuing education needs of those in full-time Christian ministry who wish to

take their qualifications to the highest level for the advancement of professional ministry practice. The course is based on eight semesters, the first four of which consist of coursework, followed by two years of research training and a 60,000 word thesis. This restructuring ensures that, with the AQF criteria in mind, Doctor of Ministry graduates will gain systematic and critical understanding of a specialised field of Christian ministry that will enhance professional practice and contribute to knowledge at the leading edge of their vocation. In addition to continuing as mature practitioners and learners in a wide range of ministry vocational contexts, such as reflective senior pastors, pastorally skilful agents of change and denominational church and parachurch leaders, depending on their specialisation, outcomes for graduates of the Doctor of Ministry course include many opportunities. These include practising as consultants to churches, mission agencies and other Christian organisations, acting as educators of ministers in training in the fields of pastoral and theological education in theological and Bible colleges and local congregations, and mentoring peers and emerging candidates for leadership in professional ministry practice.

The Tabor Adelaide Doctor of Philosophy (Theology) is a research doctorate, originally accredited as a Doctor of Theology (ThD). The name change was made recently as the PhD award is better known and more widespread than the ThD. Through completing this award students will develop a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of theological or biblical studies, scholarship and expert, independent research skills. They will be able to demonstrate expert theological analysis or exegetical skills, and reflect critically on the practice of theological or biblical studies in the light of contemporary scholarship. The course aims to form graduates who are world leaders in their area of specialisation, highly competent researchers, and capable of making a significant and original contribution to knowledge. Graduates may find employment in universities or Christian tertiary institutions (e.g. Bible colleges, seminaries) as undergraduate and postgraduate lecturers and / or researchers, and supervisors in their areas of specialisation. Because of changing patterns of publication and vocational options for graduates, a 'portfolio of publications' is now offered as an alternative to the dissertation in the PhD program. The Tabor Doctoral programs are also like Avondale growing in enrolments, see Figure 2 below.

Tabor Enrolments

Legend: ThD, Dmin
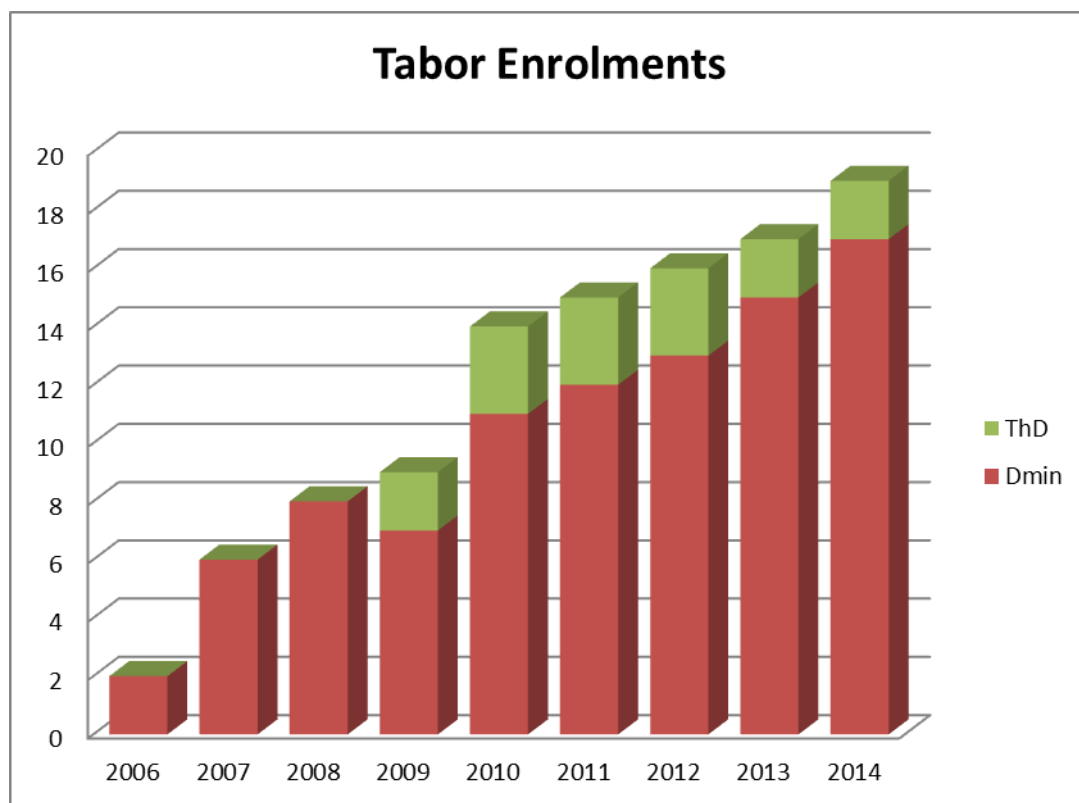
Figure 2 Tabor Adelaide's cumulative Doctoral Enrolments

Note: The change from ThD to PhD (Theology) at Tabor only received accreditation in April 2014.

Tabor Adelaide made its choice to seek accreditation for a PhD (Theology) in the current accreditation rather than a generic PhD because it values a community model of scholarship over an apprentice model. In their view it is not enough to provide the student with a single suitably qualified supervisor, something they could do in a number of fields of study. What they are seeking to provide for the student is an active community of research scholars within a particular field of study. For this reason they focused upon Theology/Ministry, an area in which they have sufficient breadth and depth to create a kernel of community that has been expanded through our substantial connections with other local and international discipline-specific research scholars. Such a PhD is not just an occasion for laser-like research; it is an opportunity to be introduced to, and to become part of, a broad bandwidth of conversations much of which may not appear to be immediately 'relevant' to the PhD topic. While they are able to provide supervisors for generic PhDs they are not in a position to provide research communities for students outside of Theology/Ministry at this stage.

Origins

After Tabor Adelaide introduced master's degrees in theology, ministry, counselling and intercultural studies in 1998, two new professional courses were added in the following year: a Master of Education, and a Doctor of Ministry (DMin) course, with both coursework and research components (Slape & Beard, 2008). A major feature of the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) is the integration of advanced academic skills within the practice of Christian ministry. This occurs through a combination of coursework and research, involving biblical study, wide and critical reading, and theological reflection and analysis, which are related and applied to actual ministry settings.

Because of the diversity of research and research training needs, contexts and outcomes, and the necessity for original and significant research as component elements of doctoral study, the structure of the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) course was revised in 2008 in order to offer several broad categories of study – pastoral (with a focus on application), educational (with a focus on teaching) and intercultural (with a focus on cultural setting). These categories have been modified in the current round of reaccreditation, where the emphasis of the pastoral DMin has been continued in the Ministry Practice specialisation and students who would have pursued an educational DMin now have the opportunity to take a Biblical Studies or Theological Studies specialisation. The intercultural DMin has been discontinued due to a lack of student interest, and has been replaced by the Spirituality and Formation specialisation.

In 2009, Tabor introduced its first research-only award, the Doctor of Theology (ThD), which – similar to the DMin structure – recognises the diversity of research in contemporary theology. Accordingly the ThD was designed to embrace four disciplinary specialisations integral to the course: biblical studies, systematic and historical theology, practical theology and contextual theology. The number of discipline specialisations have now been simplified from four to two (biblical studies and theology) by grouping the theology options together.

Avondale introduced its PhD program in 2006, with the first enrolments in 2007. One of the primary reasons for its establishment was the aspiration for University College/ University status, though this was not the only rationale. The College had offered masters degrees since the early 1980s and Masters by Research since the early 1990s. The Theology and Education courses were College leaders in the research higher degree development at Avondale. What was beginning to happen was that when examiners' reports came back there was often the comment that the master's degree thesis was of a high enough standard and should have been expanded and submitted as a PhD, the move to a PhD was a natural progression. The College has a very high percentage of staff with PhD qualifications so there was an interest in offering the degree among the staff.

At Avondale to a large extent the conceptual framework for the doctoral program is individually constructed by the candidates themselves who form a theoretical framework particular to their individual study. However, in general, the aim of the program is to develop scholarly researchers skilled at discovery-type scholarship and who are capable of using the research process in problem solving.

The generic conceptual framework for the course is designed to develop students who undertake discovery-oriented academic pursuits, and in doing so, students are required to: differentiate known from unknown knowledge; critically analyse the existing knowledge; understand the dimensions of the unknown and from this understanding focus on a manageable field of endeavour; understand and use various ways of locating new knowledge; select from a range of options, a methodology appropriate to the purpose of their individual study; collect and accumulate data pertinent to the research question; merge new knowledge with existing concepts; interpret and make sense of the new knowledge and communicate the findings of this process to assist others to merge the new knowledge into existing conceptual schema in various disciplinary fields; and envisage the implications of their findings.

Avondale ensures that the characteristics of learning outcomes at this level include a substantial contribution to knowledge in the form of new knowledge or significant and original adaptation, application and interpretation of existing knowledge. These characteristics of learning outcomes may be based on a comprehensive and searching review of the literature, experimentation, creative work with exegesis or other systematic approach or may be based on advanced, searching and expansive critical reflection on professional theory and practice.

To assure that the Avondale PhD program aligns with the Australian Quality Framework requirements, a graduate of its doctoral degree program must be able to:

- carry out an original research project, or project(s) addressing a matter of substance concerning practice in a profession at a high level of originality and quality; and
- present a substantial and well-ordered dissertation, non-print thesis or portfolio, for submission to external examination against international standards.

Quality Control

The Avondale PhD program is overseen firstly by the Research Committee, which answers to the College's Academic Board. The Research Committee consists of

- Vice-President (Research) (Chair)
- Deputy Chair of Academic Board (voted from this group)
- College President ex-officio
- Vice-President (Learning and Teaching) ex-officio
- Research Services Officer (Secretary)
- Chair of each Faculty Research Committee
- Two members of the College Professoriate elected by and from the Professoriate
- One Senior HDR Supervisor appointed by the President
- Human Research Ethics Committee Chair (if not already a member)
- Head Librarian
- Up to two co-opted external research academics as determined by the Committee

The College Research Committee has three Faculty Research Committees reporting to it, each consisting of:

- Chair appointed by Dean in consultation with Heads of School
- Up to five full-time or fractional full-time academic staff with representation from all strands/disciplines
- Course Convenors of Research degrees ex officio
- Secretary elected by the members
- Vice President (Research) ex officio
- One Library Representative

The College Research Committee is overseen by the Academic Board which consists of:

- Chair elected from Avondale academic staff (excluding Faculty Deans) by the members of the Academic Board
- Two Deputy Chairs elected from the Research Committee and the Learning and Teaching Committee
- President ex officio
- Vice-President (Research) ex officio
- Vice-President (Learning &Teaching) ex officio
- Academic Registrar (Secretary) ex officio
- Faculty Deans ex officio
- Flexible Learning Coordinators (Lake Macquarie & Sydney Campuses) ex officio
- Head Librarian ex officio
- Two academic staff members (one level C and one level B) elected by academic staff from each faculty

- Avondale Student Association President ex officio
- One post-graduate student
- One senior academic external to Avondale
- Other appointed members as necessary from senior academic staff (level D and E) appointed by President
- One member elected from and by the Professoriate

Avondale's Research Ethics Committee is predominantly drawn from the community with representation from the professions of law, education, medicine and ministry constituting the majority of the committee membership. The Chair of the Ethics committee is one of the College Professoriate. The PhD supervisors are selected by the Head of School in consultation with the Vice President (Research). The choice of supervisors is then endorsed by the Faculty Research Committee and recommended to the College Research Committee. The College Research Committee manages the six monthly progress reports as well as the selection of Confirmation Panel members and also approves the appointment of the thesis examiners.

Tabor Adelaide's Academic Board consists of a majority of external members, one of whom is the Chair. Its main responsibility is the oversight of academic Quality Assurance. In this capacity it approves, monitors, and oversees all academic policies, procedures, and guidelines. As a non-self-accrediting institution, all awards are accredited by TEQSA. The Academic Board both approves each award before it is submitted for accreditation (confirming equivalence between the Tabor Adelaide award and those offered in Australian Universities) and approves 'non-major' changes to the award during its period of accreditation. The Academic Board has two sub-committees: the Coursework Quality Assurance Committee (CQAC) and the Research Quality Assurance Committee (RQAC). These sub-committees consist of Tabor Adelaide academic staff; however, the Ethics Committee, a sub-committee of the RQAC, has majority external membership. The CQAC provides ongoing Quality Assurance to all subjects taught by Tabor Adelaide, including AQF level 9 coursework awards and the subjects offered within AQF level 9 and 10 research awards.

To ensure quality supervision consistent with the College policies, Tabor Adelaide will only use supervisors who are enrolled on the HDR Supervisors Register that is overseen by the Academic Board. Nominations to the Register are made by the RQAC (on the advice of a Postgraduate Course Coordinators) but only the Academic Board can approve enrolment.

To ensure Quality Assurance of its research awards, all dissertations are examined by two qualified examiners one of whom (sometimes both) is an international scholar. This ensures that any student being awarded a Tabor Adelaide doctorate has indeed completed it to an internationally recognised standard. To ensure the ongoing quality of the supervision process, the RQAC reviews external examiners reports and communicates their findings and any recommendations for change to the Academic Board. (The Academic Board may, on the basis of such a review, remove a person from the Register.)

Current trajectory

There were no changes deemed necessary for the Avondale PhD program in the current round of accreditation. It is meeting the needs of the students and the College and is growing in student numbers and the progression rate to graduation is very positive. The current needs are to increase supervision capacity, as each student needs a supervisor who has supervised to completion. The College is actively engaged in raising its supervisor numbers.

Tabor Adelaide's professional doctorate, the Doctor of Ministry, has undergone a significant change in the latest accreditation round, completed in April 2014. The new AQF level 10 requirements have removed the previous option of increased coursework and a consequential decrease in the size of the research project. All DMin's now include a full two years of research, including a 60,000-word dissertation. As noted previously, the Doctor of Theology nomenclature has been changed to Doctor of Philosophy (Theology), but in other ways the PhD (Theology) has maintained much of its previous shape except the dissertation length has been standardised to 80,000 words, following an extensive review of similar Australian PhD programs.

This reduction in postgraduate coursework options will result in a decrease in the number of international scholars invited to teach intensives for Tabor Adelaide. The variety of scholars brought to Adelaide was previously considered a highlight of the College's program and a drawcard for such a small program. On reflection Tabor believes this AQF induced change has resulted from a misunderstanding of the nature of the professional doctorate and the type of student who enrols in a DMin, leading to undesirable outcomes.

Advantages and Benefits

It is impossible to see how private non-profit higher education providers (PNHEPs) can offer awards at AQF level 9 or 10, which require substantial research, if they are not offering HDR awards. The culture of research required by TEQSA and the AQF of universities, which is linked to their research awards, cannot be maintained by PNHEPs without the active presence and involvement of research students and their supervisors. The lack of eligibility for HDR students at PNHEPs to receive government funding is an anachronistic inequality that hinders the development of small, yet emerging, doctoral programs.

The consequence of the AQF's standardisation of doctorates, undervaluing the distinctiveness of the professional doctorate, has limited the opportunity for small PNHEPs to develop their individual contribution to the sector. It seems to us that quality can be assured without stifling diversity.

Tabor Adelaide's 'not-for-profit' ethos means that it can offer programs that do not necessarily make surpluses, but rather meet the missional goals of the college and the needs of the community the college serves. The 'private provider' category is at times used in a derogatory sense – 'dodgy private providers'! – which is why the preference was not to use that language. Apart from the acknowledged redundancy of the term (Bradley et al, 2008, ix), Tabor Adelaide considers that such labelling can constrain its self-perception and its vision for the future and this, in turn, might limit its potential contribution to society. Rather than simply regarding itself as a niche provider Tabor Adelaide seeks to make a broad contribution to the public good of Australian and global society and considers itself well placed to do so.

Avondale believes that a Higher Education institution should have a twofold purpose, firstly it imparts knowledge, but what differentiates it from schools or the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector is that it also creates knowledge. The added benefit of a PhD program of study in the College is that it adds an extra dimension to its profile as it is now a contributor to the world of knowledge and this brings a currency and relevance to it as a Higher Education Institution.

Challenges and Limitations

Funding

Avondale, as with most Higher Education institutions confronts similar issues of funding and capacity. Identifying the source of funds to support the program without access to the funding support of universities provides challenges. The College is fortunate in that it has a high percentage of staff with doctorates, approximately 60%, with the significant majority of those not possessing doctorates currently undertaking them. It is hoped that by 2016 the number of potential doctoral supervisors in the college will be 80% of the academic staff, this also providing another means of being 'research active' for staff.

The challenge of funding the program will always be present without Government support but with the growth of capacity the College is finding support for students undertaking a PhD through externally funded scholarships, but the primary approach has been to provide fee-waiver scholarships for students who pass the research program Confirmation stage. Faculties are also able to offer scholarships to students that they see contributing to their strategic plan as well. The lack of fees and the RTF Block-grant funding does add a cost to the institution and this issue will be an ongoing one.

Because Tabor Adelaide is a private non-profit higher education provider, just as is Avondale, it is not able to access public funding afforded to the universities. On the other hand some of the restrictions of laws and regulations relating to public institutions do not apply as strictly to a private institution, offering it the potential to develop a more distinctive profile than a public university. The lack of government funding in particular means that students entering a doctoral program at Tabor could not expect Commonwealth student funding support for themselves, nor support for institutional infrastructure needs, such as the library. As a result, the areas of doctoral study offered have been very carefully defined in terms of resource availability and strategic expertise. However, this also means that the students who undertake the courses are often more highly motivated by intrinsic interest in the courses than those seeking cheaper courses in other institutions.

Because of its PNHEP status, the development and offering of Tabor Adelaide's doctoral courses have experienced a number of significant operational constraints. One response has been to engage external scholars to contribute to in-house supervisory pool. The engagement of international experts in the provision of regular intensive postgraduate courses has also contributed to the available expertise. For example, in 2011 a Memorandum of Understanding was established with St John's College at Durham University in the UK, where the Department of Theology and Religion has established an international reputation as one of the world-leading departments in its field. As well as offering faculty and student exchanges, potential joint publishing and research initiatives, the MoU offers the opportunity for reciprocal postgraduate supervision arrangements based on adjunct faculty appointments.

Supervision and supervision training

Having doctoral level staff is not necessarily the solution to PhD supervision. Experienced supervision is mandatory, and thus an institution beginning a PhD program of study cannot meet this by simply having doctoral level staff members. Starting a doctoral program in an institution requires support in mentoring staff in the role of supervisor. As such Avondale has been fortunate to be able to draw on a pool of experienced external supervisors to fill this void. Over time more of the college staff have achieved the experience of supervising to completion and can take responsibility of mentoring others in the activity. It is expected that over the next five years Avondale's reliance on external supervision support will diminish.

Avondale employs a three-pronged approach in training its supervisors. Firstly, each student must have an experienced supervisor who has previously supervised a PhD to completion. It is usual that this experienced

supervisor is able to support the study specifically through either being a content or method specialist in the area of the student's study. In the case where an experienced supervisor is not a content or method specialist in the area of the student's study they will assist the other supervisors through mentorship.

The second approach used at Avondale is less formal where the College research committee holds meetings of supervisors 2-3 times a year. This provides a forum where discussion can be held amongst the supervisors to identify issues and also to share supervision strategies. The third strategy is the use of the College's Learning Management system, Moodle, to support a site that has resources for supervisors which they can recommend to students to assist them in their studies. Finally, the College library has restructured its support of students generally through the use of online training sessions to assist them in the use of the library, academic integrity principles and strategies. The time formally spent in supporting undergraduates face to face is now directed to assist staff with their research and also to better support PhD students with their database searches, etc.

Avondale's use of external supervisors ensures that the college's approach to supervision is continually being examined and refreshed. Avondale has recognised the need to improve the training and support of supervisors in postgraduate research, and has recently benefited from the experience of a well-recognised research scholar who conducted seminars on supervision for those who are involved in postgraduate supervision. However, the college recognises that more work needs to be done in this area, and this will be a priority for a new staff member who has just been appointed to the postgraduate faculty.

The research supervision training in the various post-graduate research programs at Tabor Adelaide is a blend of apprenticeship learning, importation of training and supervision experiences from other institutions, e.g. some staff have undergone research supervision training and been postgraduate supervisors in other universities and institutions, and locally provided supervision training. The apprenticeship aspect consists of supervision of doctoral candidates by teams of supervisors, where experienced supervisors demonstrate effective methods of supervision to the less experienced team members. The local supervision training consists of supervision education seminars conducted by internal and external providers.

Academic Freedom

In terms of academic freedom, the freedom of academic enquiry is one of the fundamental academic values espoused by both Avondale College, as noted in the discussion of the Nature of Programs earlier, and Tabor Adelaide (e.g. see Tabor Adelaide Strategic Plan 2013 -2018). This means that in principle and in practice neither the research interest nor outcomes are restricted by preconceived philosophical or theological perspectives. However, as mentioned earlier, there are certain areas of particular strength in each of the colleges where substantial communities of interest and expertise can contribute broadly to the doctoral students' studies.

Research Culture

With regard to the research culture both colleges are moving from almost wholly teaching institutions to greater research engagement. At Tabor Adelaide this began by the original and early staff of the college undertaking research and gaining research doctoral qualifications, e.g. see the theses by Barry Chant (1999) and Graham Buxton (2004). The improving staff qualifications, and hiring of well-qualified staff led to increasing serious publications, e.g. see Buxton (2001, 2005, 2007), Buxton, Mulherin and Worthing (2012), and Worthing (1995, 1996, 2004a, 2004b), and engagement with international high quality teaching and research centres, e.g. Fuller Theological Seminary, St John's College at Durham University, and the Faraday Institute at Cambridge

University. It also gave further impetus to improving staff qualifications to doctoral level in many disciplines. More recently (in 2011) a specific research institute was established, the Graeme Clark Research Institute, which undertakes grant-funded research in numerous areas, such as science and faith, the history of science and faith development, ecology and faith, science and Christian education, Christian church education and Christian higher education.

The transitioning of Avondale College from an undergraduate provider to also engage in research and research training is a big paradigm shift. The college's infrastructure and culture were focused on teaching with a level of scholarship, whereas this is now changing to include the research and research training necessary to support a PhD program. The supervision strategies required to support PhD students is being developed, and the culture of contributing to knowledge through publication is a big change for academics used to the teaching of undergraduates. There has been no easy approach to this, it requires a strategic approach which includes:

- Research forums, at both Faculty and institutional level
- Development of research centres which align with the College's areas of expertise but encourage multi-disciplinary research
- Developing research networks within the College as well as links with external collaborators
- Linking with industry partners in research

It can be noted in the above list that many of these may not necessarily be linked directly to PhD studies, because Avondale believes that it is important to have a PhD program of studies embedded in a vibrant research culture. If staff members are actively engaged in research then supervision is an extension of this. It is not optimal or feasible to have a PhD program existing in a non-research culture.

Lessons Learned

What has Avondale learned from the journey thus far? The most significant lesson is that PhD students add a different culture to the institution. This is a positive outcome as the acknowledgement of the contribution a PhD student makes to the research culture and in adding a different dimension to the staff profile is significant. Interestingly despite the issues of limited funds to support the PhD student cohort and the staff workload they require, Avondale staff members are appreciating the potential for increasing the diversity of staff profile, which is important in a small institution. They also value the contribution to research publications made by the PhD students individually or in collaboration with their supervisors. With the growth of PhD students in the ten years since the beginning of the program the College now has 28 enrolled PhD students. The College hopes to be able to grow this to 60 in the coming years as new sponsors are identified and as the College develops the planned research centres. PhD students are integral to the success of research centres and these will provide the momentum from research growth as well as for opportunities for PhD students themselves.

Tabor Adelaide's doctorate program is a small one. This allows it to give individual attention to each student. But such individual attention means that it can be hard to standardise the program. As its program has matured Tabor has seen the need for greater attention to processes. While, on the basis of the reports of external examiners, the College is confident of the value of its program, it recognises that it is difficult to demonstrate Quality Assurance without approved and monitored processes.

It is evident that PNHEPs need not be discouraged from developing doctoral programs so long as they define strategically the needs of the client group, so that appropriate parameters can be developed to ensure that their

postgraduate program will work within the constraints of institutional expertise and infrastructure. However, if a real need exists in the stakeholder community, people are often prepared to contribute more towards their continuing education than would be expected of them in government-funded institutions. The global collaborative links that Tabor Adelaide has developed in recent years has ensured a depth of expertise that would otherwise not have been possible in the context of its doctoral program. Over the past five years, this intentional global academic networking policy has afforded students enrolled in postgraduate Ministry and Theology courses the privilege of attending intensive seminar subjects conducted by a wide range of national and international scholars who contribute to the culture of critical inquiry within the School of Ministry, Theology and Culture. This program will continue in the coming years with distinguished scholars invited to teach alongside Tabor faculty.

For Tabor Adelaide, the provision of doctoral programs has been a journey of faith, and the college remains convinced that it is possible to combine academic excellence and Christian faith in a way that encourages creativity and educational enterprise, leading to high levels of student satisfaction. This will involve the need to integrate existing postgraduate programs into new research initiatives as the college develops its research capacity. One way in which this can be achieved within the next few years is through postgraduate students undertaking research within the framework of research activities carried out by the Graeme Clark Research Institute, which was established to conduct, facilitate and promote research and development within Tabor Adelaide in the broad context of Christian service to the community. The experience of both colleges points to mutual benefit for the research centres and the postgraduate students from research centre/institute involvement of the doctoral candidates.

So in conclusion, what is the way forward for both institutions? Firstly, the identification of ways to fund the growth in PhD student numbers is going to be an ongoing issue for the colleges. This will always be an issue but the benefits for the colleges of active research engagement shared by staff and their PhD students is something that can only be seen as a significant benefit. The continued enhancement of practice among staff in supervision will be an ongoing task until the colleges create a pool of experienced staff to draw on for the supervision of PhD students. What will be a long-term benefit is the enhancement of the research culture of the colleges. Both institutions believe that all students of the colleges will benefit from being vibrant research communities.

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Theatre Minute Theatre: Research pitch meets dramatic monologue to enhance script and performance quality in 3MT® Three Minute Thesis presentations

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Extended Abstract

Since the Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) competition began at the University of Queensland in 2008, higher degree by research (HDR) students from an increasing number of Australian and international universities have competed in this annual challenge 'to present a compelling oration on their thesis and its significance in just three minutes in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience' (3MT®, n.d.). This paper presents the results of a two-year University of Canberra (UC) research project involving three phases: a) distillation and analysis, with reference to theories and practice of dramatic narrative and performance, of key components of successful past 3MT® presentations; b) establishment from this analysis of a suite of principles and practices to help students develop the quality and impact of their 3MT® pitches; and c) trial, evaluation and refinement of these principles and practices via workshops with UC competitors. In this context presentations are framed firstly as an exercise in pitching (a variation on what is known in business circles as an 'elevator pitch') and consequently as a type of dramatic monologue performance. Preparing such a presentation requires:
  a) scripting a research narrative as a story with emotional as well as intellectual impact,
  b) developing a vocal and physical performance presence to connect with an audience, and
  c) planning the use of the presentation space and constraints for best effect.

Evaluations by workshop participants, reinforced by their success in the UC tournaments relative to non-participants, suggest that advantages of this approach to research pitching by HDR students apply not only for 3MT® contests, but also for clarifying and crystallising their research ideas, and for enhancing the quality of their presentation skills more generally.

The outcomes of this research can themselves be presented in the form of a three minute pitch, the script for which is as follows:

You're a research student. Hard enough you've had to narrow your grand idea to a specific, manageable research problem. Now you're in 3MT, and you have to get it down to a single page. Impossible, you say. And pitch it in public! Didn't Winston Churchill, that great orator, say there are only two things harder than public speaking – climbing a wall leaning towards you, and kissing someone leaning away? What chance a mere mortal like you?

Well, better than you might think. How? Stop thinking 3 minute thesis and start thinking 3 minute theatre: A one-person show; a dramatic monologue. This opens up fertile connections, via theories of narrative and

performance, to rich traditions of dramatic writing and theatrical presentation, and the strategies actors use to maximise their impact and minimise their terror. My research makes those connections for you.

Let's look at the script. Forget 'academic' writing. Tell a story. You already know how stories work - you've heard them all your life. Someone's stable world gets disturbed, forcing them to make plans to restore stability. These plans are blocked by obstacles that mount and compound till there seems no way out. But through persistence and sacrifice our hero prevails, and a new, often better stability is restored. Stories play on our deep-seated fears of being unable to hold order in an arbitrary, indifferent, chaotic universe. And your research, by letting the world know a little more about itself, will help buttress against the chaos. Write that story. Engage our emotions. Share your passion, to calm our fears.

And the more you do really, passionately believe in the usefulness of your research, the less scary it will be to pitch it to a live audience. After all, if you have to jump into a roomful of strangers and tell them there's a fire and they need to get out, you're hardly likely to turn to jelly, look at the floor and forget what to say. Because you know how important it is that they know. The greater fear overrides the your lesser one. So, let your research problem be the fire, and your findings what will save us from it. Tell your story like it's a matter of life and death.

My research shows that 3MT winners tend to do this – pitch well-crafted, gripping stories with irresistible conviction. It also shows that the ability to do that is not innate but can be learnt, borrowing from the catalogue of conscious crafts actors use to construct compelling credibility. You even have an advantage over actors - they portray other people, tell other people's stories; your story is yours, and your character is you. But you can still use their techniques, to build your vocal power and confidence, cultivate your physical presence, and enhance your impact with the audience.

And it works. 3MT contenders who attend my workshops and assiduously apply the techniques finish consistently higher than those who don't. And they return from their 3MT adventure with the boon of transferable skills, greater self-knowledge, and a new equilibrium that helps hold the chaos at bay just a bit longer.

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Symposium: Figuring theory-method relations: Showcasing new research into doctoral education

Barbara Grant

Frances Kelly

Catherine Mitchell

Edward Okai

James Burford

Linlin Xu

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Overarching abstract

Our symposium offers a series of short presentations that explore the relationship between theory and methodology/methods in a variety of new research projects in doctoral education. We address the following issues: designing sustainable and flexible ethnographic research into supervision (Grant); utilising narrative methodology underpinned by post-structural theory in a study of the experiences of first-generation doctoral students (Mitchell); contextualizing Bourdieu's field of practice in doctoral education via the football field metaphor (Okai); illustrating queer method and methodology in a study on doctoral writing and affect (Burford); developing a post-realist methodology to analyse discursive constructions of the PhD (Kelly); designing a methodology to explore intercultural interaction in written feedback on doctoral students' disciplinary writing (Xu). The range of methodologies, theoretical frameworks and epistemological perspectives offered by the presentations promote discussion and reflection on ways of researching in doctoral education within and across different paradigms, enabling more complex dimensions of doctoral education scholarship to emerge.
Keywords: Theory and method relations; new research

Feedback for disciplinary acculturation: A study of Chinese international doctoral students and non-Chinese supervisors

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Research on written feedback to learners from non-English speaking countries commonly focuses on undergraduates in academic writing class, and in particular on error corrections, neglecting the fact that most writing occurs in a disciplinary context and is a means by which students develop their expertise in content. To address this gap, I will examine written feedback in international doctoral students' disciplinary writing. This presentation will outline the development of a methodology to explore how written feedback acculturates Chinese international doctoral students into disciplinary literacy, and how it scaffolds them to become independent scholars within the parameters of written feedback across disciplines, players and cultures.

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Contextualising Bourdieu's field of practice in doctoral education: The football field metaphor

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The usage of metaphors in doctoral education continues to gain impetus in the existing literature particularly as a tool to reveal, understand and construe the lived experience of doctoral students. However, the effectiveness of metaphors to succinctly explain abstract tenets or constructs of theories in the doctoral enterprise remains to be seen. To address this lacuna, I will journey into Bourdieu's theoretical world of practice and metaphorically conceptualise his thinking tool of the field using the football game and then relate it to doctoral education.

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Mixing it up: Collaborative design for an ethnography of supervision

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This presentation describes the process through which I designed a multi-layered, post-critical ethnography of doctoral supervision in the arts, humanities and (soft) social sciences. My primary interest is to explore supervision over time as a form of academic work and identity formation undergoing significant change. Another pressing interest at this stage of the project has been to conceive an organic and sustainable research process that, bricolage-like, repurposes diverse disciplinary research methods. To this end, I have undertaken a collaborative design process with a small group of academic colleagues (from a range of disciplines and methodologies) that has produced fruitful outcomes for the proposed research.

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Figuring the relations between post-structuralism and narrative methodology within a study of first-generation students in doctoral education

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This presentation explores the intersections between post-structural theory and narrative methodology in a PhD study on the experiences of first-generation doctoral students. It explores questions about the theoretical meeting points, gaps and disjunctures encountered by a doctoral researcher interested in utilising the power of story-telling who, at the same time, recognises how discourse constructs subjectivity in sometimes shifting and contradictory ways. It will offer potential ways forward for those interested in weaving post-structural narratives focused on gaining rich insights into the experiences of diverse others/subjects.

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The idea of the PhD: Reflecting on methodology-theory

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This paper reflects on the development of a methodology to collect written imaginings of the PhD. My research analyses the doctorate in the twenty-first century cultural imagination, critically examining the idea of the PhD in discourse. My research could be described (has been described) as post-realist in that it primarily works at the level of textual representation. In this presentation I tease out some of the intentions and implications of designing a methodology for a research project in doctoral education that focuses on the discursive.

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What can queer theory-methodology offer doctoral education research?

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Within queer studies, there have been important debates about what it is queer theory might and might not do. Recent queer theorizing has exceeded the boundaries of the sexual, examining terrorism, race, globalization and childhood. How might an equally broad queer theory take on doctoral education as its object? In this presentation, I reflect on this question by illustrating how queer theory and methodology connect in my study on the politics of doctoral writing and affect. I argue that queer theoretical frameworks, and a Jagosian-inspired queer methodology, can help us trouble normative understandings of the agentic capacities of doctoral writing practices. I entertain the possibility that comparing Jagose's queer reading of fake orgasm to writing practices of 'keeping calm, and carrying on' might contribute new insights to the field of doctoral education.

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Assisted self-construction of independent mentorship and boundaryless academic career-paths

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Extended abstract

In line with world trends, the UFS' Postgraduate School (PGS) aspires to empower staff members to attain goals (re research output and postgraduate supervision), and to enhance dynamic postgraduate education and career development. To keep up with international best-practices, works well for traditional students, however, non-traditional students need non-traditional interventions.

The PGS took up the challenge to develop a tailor-made extension of the existing programme, which includes workshops and lecturers on academic writing, research skills and methodologies, plagiarism and referencing, ethical considerations, funding, supervision and publishing.

In the first Action Research (AR)-cycle (Figure 1) the PGS responded to negotiated requirements, and developed an e-mentoring programme that included components of group- and peer-mentoring. Then, the doctorandi identified an additional requirement which sent the process back to the planning stage; and a second AR-cycle.
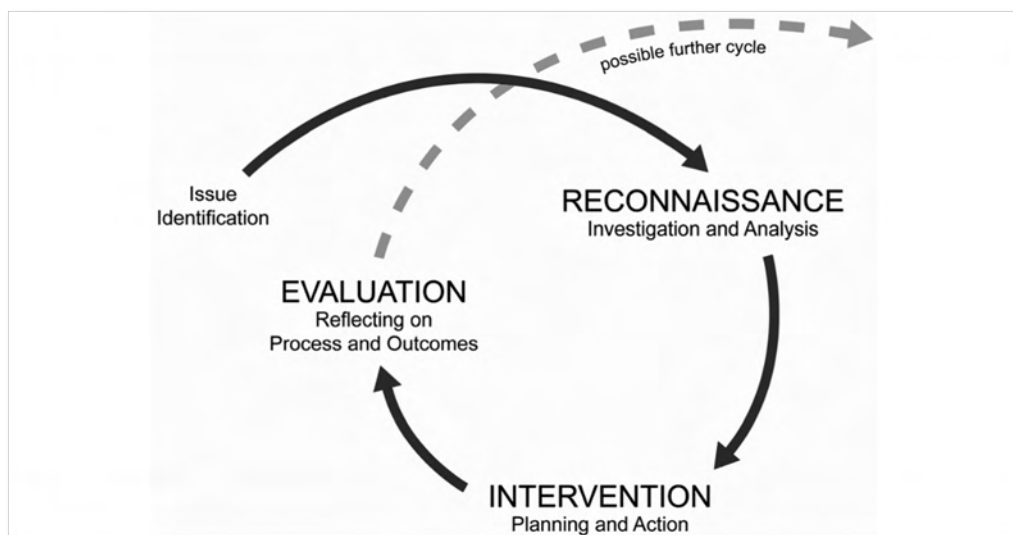
Figure 1 This version of the Action Research cycle was developed by the Green Bay High School in New Zeeland and can be accessed at www.greenbayhigh.school.nz

The design that followed on this feedback illustrates the value of AR's participation and co-constructing. The second cycle allowed the School to gain a deeper and more insightful reconnaissance of the situation. Eventually that led to the design of a self-mentoring programme that encompass life-long career ownership skills, as well as the discovery of literature that supported and furthered the passion of the PGS.

Theories, concepts and constructs of Developmental Action Inquiry and Developmental Psychology support the design of the program reported on in this article.

Key words: Action Research, Developmental Action Inquiry, Developmental Psychology, postgraduate, research development, on-line mentoring, metaphor, self-mentoring.

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Quality in Proposals for Master's Level Research: Perspectives from a University of Technology in South Africa

Ria Vosloo, University of Johannesburg

Marie-Louis Barry, Tswane University of Technology

Abstract of oral paper

The formal acceptance of a research proposal as part of doing a research based qualification is a part of quality assurance within an academic institution. A 'quality proposal' is seen to have a high likelihood of successful completion and achieving the expected outcomes of a master's qualification. However, the various stakeholders may have different perspectives on the quality of proposals. The level descriptors of the South African National Qualification Framework (SAQA, 2012) articulate the expected outcomes but this has not yet been fully entrenched. In addition to this, the publication of the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) in 2007 requires the re-curriculating and reframing of the traditional University of Technology (UoT) qualifications to map on and articulate within the framework. According to the HEQF the MTech qualification now has the same expected outcome than any other master's qualification in South Africa. In this study an intervention was introduced in a faculty within a UoT to facilitate the development of quality proposals. The various perspectives of what is perceived as a quality proposal for a master's qualification were evaluated. It was found that there are significant differences and the deeper understanding of these differences will be used to improve future interventions.

Keywords: quality, proposal, university of technology

Prepared for the PhD? Student retrospectives on explicit research skill development in the undergraduate years

John Willison
The University of Adelaide

Abstract of oral presentation

Degree of preparedness for Ph.D. studies is a large factor in the subsequent rate of progress of PhD students and of workload on supervisors. This study focuses on students' perceptions about their preparedness for research from exposure to an explicit pedagogy to develop research skills across their undergraduate degree program. In 2012, ten Honours students from a School in the faculty of Health Sciences of a Research University were interviewed. These students had experienced courses that used the Research Skill Development (RSD: Willison & O'Regan, 2007) framework to explicitly develop and assess their research skills in two consecutive First Year courses, and then again across their Honours year. Some of these students progressed to enrol in PhDs in 2013, and were interviewed again after the submission of their Research Proposals. In addition, nine academics from the school were interviewed in 2012 regarding the use of the RSD in the school.

Students strongly tended to state that there were substantial long-term benefits for them of explicit research skill development across the undergraduate program: '*Since the beginning [of First Year], they have given us assignments based on this criteria. You might not have liked the assignments, but because they have been consistently applying this structure to all of our assignments, we have come to think that way for science, in the perspective of science and writing ... You might not know that you're following their guidelines, but you are.*' The idea that a revisited, consistent structure provided by the RSD framework helped to deeply develop student research thinking processes was a common theme among the students. Academics too found it important that research skill development is: '*... dribbled through in these undergraduate years, [because]it then makes the Honours a lot easier, and then makes the Ph.D. a lot easier, because a lot of students struggle in their first year [of Ph.D.].*' This context-bound study demonstrates that the guidance provided by the Research Skill Development framework in undergraduate degrees can provide valuable preparation for Ph.D. studies and is worth evaluating in other contexts.
Keywords: PhD preparation; Research Skill Development; undergraduate research skill development

Bridging the gap in quantitative skills (QS) development: stories of researchers in service teaching

Marion Blumenstein

The University of Auckland

Abstract of oral presentation

Quantitative skills (QS) or the ability to handle data and use numerical evidence systematically are inherent to subject areas where quantitative research approaches are at the forefront. However, QS underpin effective evidence-based planning and procedures in very diverse areas in the public, academic and private sectors. It is therefore widely accepted that QS are important transferable skills all graduates, including humanities and social sciences students, should gain during their tertiary study in order to become fully-fledged researchers. In recognition of this, most research-focused institutions worldwide have QS attainment firmly anchored in their postgraduate policies and attributes. But, in practice, QS are taught in many different ways, from dedicated postgraduate programmes within faculty or graduate schools, to out-sourced courses adjunct to the discipline or in centralised learning support units. This paper provides insight into the experiences of, and challenges confronting, teachers who bridge the gap between discipline embedded teaching and learning advising in centralised learning support or consulting units. Interviews were conducted with service teachers from six research-led metropolitan universities in the UK, Germany and Australia. Thematic analyses of the interview data on QS needs, the preparedness of students, the provision of effective ways of teaching QS, and strategic directions for the enhancement of QS university-wide and across-disciplines will be presented. The audience will have the opportunity to provide their own insights and so contribute to emerging models of QS teaching pedagogy.

Key words: quantitative skills; learning advising; graduate attributes; researcher development

Postgraduate peacebuilding: effectively managing conflict in the HDR student / supervisor relationship

Samantha Hardy and Judith Herrmann

James Cook University

Abstract of oral presentation

In an academic context, conflict (handled well) is important in the development of knowledge: 'Conflict over ideas, research methods, and analysis and interpretation of data advances knowledge and is a fundamental part of academic institutions. New knowledge is created by conflict, thus making conflict both inevitable and necessary in higher education' (Brockman et al, 2011). However, 'the graduate education process involves myriad opportunities for miscommunication, misunderstanding and conflict to occur.' (Klomparens, 2004). When such conflict is not managed effectively, it can have significant and negative consequences. This presentation reports on research conducted at JCU into the causes and consequences of conflict in the HDR student/supervisor relationship. The presentation will discuss:

- Factors impacting on conflict and how it is managed in the student/supervisor relationship;
- Typical sources of conflict in the relationship;
- Issues for particular groups of students;
- Typical management strategies of students and supervisors when conflict arises in the relationship;
- Impact of conflict on students, supervisors and the university;
- Suggested strategies for supporting students and supervisors in relation to conflict in the relationship.

Keywords: conflict; conflict management; peacebuilding; postgraduate research; supervision

The benefits of embracing the education manager model for the selection and management of higher degree research students

Monica Ogierman

The Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics

Abstract of oral presentation

By adopting a comprehensive approach to the selection and management of Higher Degree Research students, our biotechnology research organisation ACPFG has reduced attrition and completion times of doctoral (PhD) students. Since 2008, 39 PhD students have joined the ACPFG Postgraduate Research Education program and to date only two students have left before completion. This means students are now more likely to finish and finish in a timely manner. Whilst ACPFG is embedded in a university environment (and therefore works closely with support and infrastructure of the University), it functions with a high degree of autonomy and is able to offer an additional layer of support. The centre has an Education Manager and a committee dedicated to the recruitment, selection (assessment), management and training of PhD students. The program places great emphasis on the pre-selection of candidates, which ensures only appropriate students are selected. Incorrect choice of student often leads to hardship of the student, supervisor and research group. Our selection process entails several stages to maximise choosing the right student, which will be addressed in this presentation. This presentation will also outline the management and training strategy adopted by our organisation throughout the student's candidature and beyond.

Keywords: institutional policy and procedures; recruitment and management of doctoral students; the student experience; quality throughout the postgraduate system

Assisted self-constructing of an independent all-round academic

Emmie Smit and Henriette van Den Berg
University of the Free State

Abstract of oral presentation

The UFS' Postgraduate School (PGS) aspires to enhance dynamic postgraduate education and career development. To keep up with international best-practices, works well for traditional students. However, non-traditional students needed non-traditional interventions.

In the first Action Research (AR)-cycle the PGS responded to negotiated criteria, and developed an e-mentoring programme that included components of group- and peer-mentoring. On presenting this programme, the students identified additional criteria. The design that followed on this feedback illustrates the value of AR's participation and co-constructing: A self-mentoring programme that encompass life-long career ownership skills, as well as the discovery of literature that supported and furthered the passion of the PGS. Theories, concepts and constructs of Developmental Action Inquiry and Developmental Psychology endorse the design.

Keywords: Action research; developmental action inquiry; developmental psychology; postgraduate; research development; on-line mentoring; metaphor; self-mentoring

Examiners assessing publication-based PhDs

Sharon Sharmini and Rachel Spronken-Smith

University of Otago

Abstract of oral presentation

Examiners are increasingly assessing theses that have publications as it is becoming popular for doctoral students to include published work in their thesis. Previous research on the examination process has made very little mention about how examiners are influenced by published work in a thesis. This study aims to gain insights into the doctoral examination process when examiners assess a publication-based thesis. A publication-based thesis refers to a thesis where some chapters from the thesis have already gone through a peer review process and have been published as journal articles, book chapters or conference proceedings. Do examiners assess a 'publication-based thesis' in the same way they approach assessing a traditional thesis? To explore how examiners assess publication-based theses, interviews were conducted with 18 examiners at the University of Otago. The findings indicate that assessing publication-based theses is clearly different from traditional theses in terms of how authorship is perceived, the candidate's contribution, the weight given to publications, the process of marking and feedback. While most institutions view the PhD as training process for researchers where for example, multi-authored publications are the norm, some examiners have a different stance when it comes to examining the outcome of this process. As such, examiners need clearer guidelines on how to assess publication-based theses.

Keywords: publication-based thesis; assessment; PhD examination

Examiners' views of doctoral theses containing published work

Jo Edmondston, Michael Azaraidis, Krys Haq
University of Western Australia

Abstract of oral presentation

As the pressure to publish during candidacy increases for higher degree research students, interest in formatting theses by publication has also increased. At the University of Western Australia (UWA), publication during candidacy is recommended for all discipline areas. However there are few institutional guidelines regarding the organisation of a thesis and no distinction is made at examination between traditional manuscripts and those formatted as a series of papers. Increasingly, students are looking for advice on how to overcome the challenges inherent in formatting a thesis in this style (such as addressing repetitiveness, omissions, lack of coherence and inconsistencies in style), how to delineate their contribution when the thesis contains multi-authored papers, and what role the examiner plays when their papers have already passed peer review. As there has been minimal exploration of the examination of theses by publications, there is only anecdotal evidence to use as a basis for this advice. The aim of this study is to explore examiners' views of theses that contain published work to assist students and supervisors in the preparation of these theses. Using UWA as a case study of an institution where theses can be presented on a continuum from a 'thesis containing no published material' through to a 'series of peer reviewed and published papers', the examiners' reports for all doctoral theses submitted for examination during 2012 that contain published material will be reviewed. Recommendations will be developed from the examiners' comments that address the pros and cons of presenting published work.

Keywords: higher degree research; thesis examination; thesis by publication

Towards a Thesis Assessment Matrix: An action research project

Michelle Picard and Lalitha Velautham

The University of Adelaide

Abstract of oral presentation

A key issue in the assessment and evaluation of doctoral theses is the lack of thesis examination standards. Thus there is a need for indicators to clearly distinguish thesis quality, especially since thesis by publication is increasingly becoming common in Australia, adding another layer of review which may influence examination outcomes. More importantly perhaps than examiners, the lack of clear national and international quality indicators has serious implications for doctoral students and their supervisors. It is likely that supervisors will have a lack of clarity in articulating and describing standards of research, rigour and communication to students. Our experience working with research students has shown that they often are unclear about when a thesis is ready to submit, what is 'sufficient' and what are the standards required of the thesis document. In the light of these grave consequences, the broad aim of this study was to create assessment tools to assist supervisors and students in clarifying expectations in order to achieve successful research writing outcomes. In this presentation, we report on a research project that has thus far included three participatory action research spirals. In the first spiral, we developed a Research Proposal Assessment Matrix which was positively evaluated by research supervisors and students in focus groups and over a two year period. In the second action research spiral, a draft Thesis Assessment Matrix was developed. This received mixed reviews in a survey of experienced supervisors and examiners. The matrix was positively evaluated as a tool for research students and their supervisors and as a research training tool in general. However, the respondents were more ambivalent about its potential in examination. The main concerns raised were its 'wordiness' and the need to emphasize the concept of 'original contribution' more. Also, there were concerns that the language of the matrix was not necessarily universal. An examination of these issues has led to a third action research spiral. Here, we aim to examine the language used in instructions to examiners in both Australian and international universities to refine and simplify the matrix. Some initial findings from this research are also included in the presentation. This study is significant in that it is the first to propose a thesis assessment tool based on empirical data and developed through rigorous review and participation of examiners, supervisors and research students. It is also the first to explore different thesis formats.

Keywords: research thesis assessment; thesis examiners; research supervision; publication formats

Challenges presented and targets met: enhancing research training to prepare the next generation of researchers leaders

Caroline Owen

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre

Abstract of oral presentation

A key issue in developing and running postgraduate research training programs relates to the degree to which additional studies – either formalized coursework, or other personal or career developmental activities – will facilitate postgraduate research skill development, and how to monitor that development . This paper provides an overview of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (Peter Mac) research training program: challenges presented and targets met. Peter Mac is recognised world-wide for its excellence in cancer care, research and education. Housing the largest cancer research group in Australia, and home to leading and innovative clinical groups, we are nationally recognised as a leading centre for innovative research in all areas of cancer prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. We are a highly sought after provider of research training opportunities, and we strive to provide a research training program worthy of this reputation. Peter Mac is home to about 80 postgraduate students (scientists and clinicians) from different countries, in a variety of research disciplines and enrolled through different universities and departments. Our challenge has been to meet the formal requirements of all research training programs across different universities, while also providing a research education program to meet the needs of our varied student cohort. This paper will highlight aspects of the Peter Mac program, including the in-house management of research training and progress review panels, the development of broader skills, the importance of the research culture, and the monitoring and academic oversight of research training and supervision.

Keywords: student experience; research degree management; research training; graduate supervision; research employability; research skills; research environment; research culture; career development for research students

What constitutes good pedagogy for generic doctoral support?

Deborah Laurs

Victoria University of Wellington

Susan Carter

The University of Auckland

Abstract of oral presentation

How do you define a good pedagogy for generic doctoral seminars, workshops and programmes?
Our title is not rhetorical: we intend to set attendees the following question and gather their answers. Supervision has received increasing attention over the last few decades; scholarly investigation has produced a lively discourse with positive benefit to teaching and learning practices (Grant, 2008; Grant, 2009; Wisker, 2012). At the same time, generic support for doctoral students has become standard practice in most universities, yet only one book to date has addressed its dimensions (Hinchcliffe, Bromley & Hutchinson, 2007). We are currently a burgeoning practice without a discourse. With the aim of extending the debate on generic doctoral support (Carter & Laurs, 2014), we compiled contributions from 38 academics and practitioners in the UK, USA, Middle East, New Zealand and Australia. An argument of our book, and this paper, is that we need to start articulating the value and pedagogy of generic doctoral support. Accordingly, we propose seven criteria that might be used to assess its quality.
Keywords: Generic doctoral support; postgraduate pedagogy; academic identity

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The spaces of doctoral research

Frances Kelly

The University of Auckland

Abstract of oral presentation

An underexplored dimension of doctoral education research is the space where doctoral research happens. In researcher accounts of the PhD research spaces are often conceptualised within a broader idea of the university space yet reshaped according to such variables as status, whether a candidate is marginal to or fully 'inside' the academy, or disciplinary practices, the nature of research work in a field. Although research activity, material objects and place do impact on ideas about university spaces, as Maggie MacLure (2003) writes educational spaces are not merely places nor are they objective locations. This paper will discuss several accounts by PhD researchers of different spaces of doctoral research. As I shall consider, ideas about 'research' are evoked by images of researchers in a laboratory, or by a scholar entering into an archive anticipating original finds (even despite the shifts since the end of last century toward archival matter becoming open access). The idea of a researcher being allowed in to a particular research space, complete with a plastic identification card, is central to a conceptualisation of doctoral research that is tied up with notions of status and privilege, access to higher knowledge, safety and belonging, and authenticity or being in the place of research.

Keywords: doctoral education; space; research

Nomad science and mass customization for architectural doctorates

Thomas Mical

University of South Australia

Abstract of oral presentation

The genealogies of doctoral education in architecture can be traced to earlier distinct academic disciplines, but in the last decade design-based dissertations have changed the discourse and valuation of qualities. This newer strand, extending from integrative /collaborative studio-based learning, aligns more closely with professional doctorates in other fields. From the sole researcher model of Harvard's doctor of Architecture, to the group-thesis model of the Berlage Institute Rotterdam, to the current reflective practitioner model of RMIT, doctoral architecture education has been customized for crossing between academic design education and into other industries or audiences. The epistemological challenge is to produce exemplary design intelligence and a substantial body of professional knowledge, customized for individual skills and outcomes, in an increasingly decentralized and mobile profession (an Engaged PhD in Architectural Intelligences). As such, the under-examined assumption of customization in architectural design-based doctoral education is here redesigned under the promise of the Mass Customization movement of industrial production, articulated as a promise for mobility and innovation within the educational-industrial complex. From the generated insights into agility and uniqueness as the doctoral values, a new model of decentralized mastery is offered. It will then be argued that this new flexible model aligns theoretically with the Deleuzian notion of Nomad Science, and the alternative forms of knowing implicated in these itinerate models. From Mass Customization and Nomad Science, this paper concludes with a proposal to imagine a radical type of customized and distributed emergent knowledge network, as already exists in some industries, and as seen in the multi-sited doctorates now appearing in some disciplines.

Keywords: Architectural doctorate; mass customization; design education; nomad science

How do ideology, expedience, and ignorance affect the practice of supervision?

Mary-Helen Ward

University of Sydney

Abstract of oral presentation

It is well-established in both anecdotal belief and in the literature that the supervisory relationship is the most important factor to success in a PhD in Australia. The Big Book Thesis, written under the guidance (supervision) of one or more academics, sometimes, depending on institutional and disciplinary mores, in the form of a committee, is the sole object of examination for Australian PhD students; thus the success of their supervision is crucial to their success in the degree. Supervision is situated within the framework of both disciplinary and institutional ideology, and is also subject to pressures created by limited resources at both the local and institutional level. Additionally, although there is a substantial body of literature on supervision, most academics would not be aware of its breadth or depth, or would have only a superficial knowledge of it. But, while here may be a theory-practice gap in supervision, there is a yawning theory-practice divide in policy. Institutional policy is not only ignorant of theory, but, in addition, rarely takes account of the student experience of being supervised, being rather based in expedience and institutional beliefs about the HDR experience. This presentation looks at how these triple pressures of ignorance, expedience and ideology affect the practice of supervision.
Keywords: supervision practice; supervision pedagogy; supervision policy; management of HDR degrees; institutional policy on HDR degrees

The role of research administrators in international HDR student success

Michelle Brocker

Swinburne University of Technology

Abstract of oral presentation

Much has been written on the significance of the relationship between HDR candidates and their supervisors. An under- recognised, discussed, researched and reported area concerns the nature and the importance of the role played by research administrators in HDR student satisfaction and success. Administrative staff play a key role in assisting international HDR students to make informed choices during the degree and scholarship application process, on enrolment and throughout their candidature, particularly regarding skills training, progress review and resource provision. Research administrators also often play a significant part in supporting international students experiencing issues related to the transition to a new language, academic culture and way of life. This presentation will explore the nature of the relationship between international students and research administrators, focussing on its importance in shaping the student experience. It will also raise questions for consideration around the structure, resourcing and funding of administrative services with the research environment,
including:
- The structure of the HDR central and faculty offices – does it facilitate or hinder effective interaction with students?
- The perception of the administrators place in a university's research community - where do they fit and are they valued?
- The personal and professional attributes of research administrators – are approachable, empathetic staff hired, appreciated and rewarded?
- Training opportunities provided to research administrators - are staff supported and offered relevant, up-to-date training in issues related to international students?

Finally, the presentation will offer practical possibilities for how universities can maximise HDR student satisfaction and success by facilitating positive, mutually beneficial relationships between international candidates and administrators.

Keywords: The student experience; the management of research degrees; institutional policy on research training; international research students; research student satisfaction and success; HDR administrators; the research and scholarship of doctoral education

Researcher development workshops –administrators need not apply

Cecilia Stenstrom

University of NSW

Abstract of oral presentation
The focus of researcher development and training tends to be on academic development however, many graduate research programs and projects within universities tend to require the integration of academic and administrative functions. This presentation will outline the evolution of the University of New South Wales approach to researcher development and training access particularly in, though not limited to the Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine areas. The University of New South Wales Training and Development Framework has progressed over the past three years from a highly selective program based approach to a 'pick and choose' model allowing for increased reach, involvement and individuals being able to target their specific development needs. It has also resulted in administrators and researchers attending the same workshops. Responses to the co- administrator and researcher workshops will be summarised, advantages and disadvantages from the two participant groups perspectives explored and recommendations for next steps outlined.
Keywords: Researcher development and training; administrator development and training; development and training access; academic and administrator functional and training integration; instructional design

Moral compass framework that informs decision-making by people involved in shaping the higher education environment

Pam Green
Swinburne University of Technology

Abstract of oral presentation

The paper focuses on a moral compass framework that informs decision-making by people involved in shaping the higher education environment (Bowden & Green, submitted for publication) and is explained using the doctoral education system as example, and supervisor and candidate experiences from a qualitative research study as illustration. The framework has been derived from the integration of a range of theoretical constructs: Rittel and Webber's (1973) 'wicked' problems; Bowden's (2004) capability for the unknown future; Baillie, Bowden and Meyer's (2013) threshold capability development; liminality (Meyer & Land 2006); mindfulness (Langer & Moldoveanu 2000; Green & Bowden 2012); as well as the authors' interpretation of moral compass and collective morality. The framework can be applied to a wide range of contexts, with broader, potentially universal implications for professional life. It relates individual decision-making using a moral compass to notions of collective morality and moral development at all levels of a system through the newly defined roles of moral advocate and moral mediator. Their roles include facilitation of individual moral compass development, and the development and application of collective morality within the system.

Keywords: Moral compass; decision making; framework; supervisor and candidate's experience

The role of peer support groups in the development of graduate attributes in the research degree

Elke Stracke

University of Canberra

Vijay Kumar Mallan

University of Otago

Abstract of oral presentation

Doctoral study is a learning process for graduates who are expected to meet outcome goals set out by universities. Many universities see the outcome goals being achieved through a mix of skills, attributes and knowledge. In this paper we suggest that peer support groups (PSGs) can play a central role in realising graduate attributes in the research degree. The literature indicates that top-down embedding of graduate attributes has met with only limited success. PSGs offer a complementary, learner-centred opportunity to improve and enhance graduate attribute outcomes of universities. By focussing on three particular PSGs we aim at bringing a more learner-centred perspective into the discussion around graduate attributes. In this paper we present the experiences of research students in three PSGs in New Zealand, Australia, and Malaysia, and the results of an exploratory opinion survey that required past and present PSG members to share their learning experiences about the development of graduate attributes. The participants favoured five attributes: communication, critical thinking, self-motivation, research organisation, and teamwork. By taking a bottom-up approach, this paper shows that PSGs offer an opportunity to improve the graduate attribute outcomes of universities. Viewing the development of graduate attributes through the lens of the students adds to our understanding of how PSGs help them to develop graduate attributes and contribute to university efforts to instil these attributes by taking into account experiential learning.

Keywords: doctoral education; graduate attributes; higher education; peer support groups; research students

The higher education academy feedback for enhancement: surveying the experience and development of postgraduate researchers

Paul Bennett

The Higher Education Academy

Abstract of oral presentation

Nearly 50,000 students from 122 higher education institutions used the Higher Education Academy's Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) in 2013. PRES aims to obtain systematic feedback from current postgraduate researchers in order to inform enhancements to the quality of their experience. This paper will explain the new survey design and the evidence supporting it, provide some headline results about the experience and development of postgraduate researchers in the UK, and reflect on how Universities are using the results to inform enhancement. Originally derived from the Australian Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire, PRES was redesigned and relaunched in 2013 to reflect the growing employability and research skills agenda and to align it with the Researcher Development Framework. In addition to the widespread consultation and quantitative analysis that helped create a survey that is both robust and useful, the paper will outline the cognitive testing undertaken with – and led by – postgraduate researchers themselves.

Headline results from PRES 2013 will be presented, including both the strengths and challenges for enhancement revealed by the survey, and discussion on the challenges for supervisors, institutions and policy will be invited. The paper will then explore how the results are used to inform enhancement, recognising that survey results are not the last word on the postgraduate experience, but a vital starting point for engaging postgraduates more deeply in discussions, decisions and actions that enhance the quality of their experience and opportunities for development.

Keywords: Postgraduate experience; researcher development; student surveys; quality enhancement

To agree or to strongly disagree: What are the most effective types of research higher degree student satisfaction surveys?

Dani Milos

Flinders University

Jeri Kroll

Flinders University

Abstract of oral presentation

Student satisfaction surveys are one of several tools for measuring the quality of research higher degrees at Australian universities. The Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ), administered by Graduate Careers Australia, is a national survey collecting the experiences of graduates on seven aspects of their research degree: supervision, intellectual climate, skill development, infrastructure, thesis examination, goals and expectations and overall satisfaction. This survey is almost entirely based on a Likert Scale model (strongly agree to strongly disagree), meaning that the concerns of research students are not always clearly represented. While some universities administer their own exit surveys to gauge research higher degree graduates' estimation of their experiences, Flinders University, among other Australian universities, has no such survey. This paper argues that in order to understand the research student experience and respond to their feedback, a more comprehensive survey protocol needs to be developed. We argue that there is a need for an annual student satisfaction survey based on a relative importance scale and qualitative responses as well as a survey administered at the end of candidature. The benefits of such surveys, which we are currently developing, will include a better understanding of the experiences of research students. This understanding can then inform the procedures of Graduate Research Schools and faculties and suggest ways of improving services to meet the needs of our research higher degree students before they graduate.

Keywords: Research higher degree; student satisfaction survey; exit survey

The journey plot: an innovative mixed-method approach for assessing transition in doctoral learning

Kylie Shaw, Jill Scevak, Allyson Holbrook, Sid Bourke, Janene Budd

The University of Newcastle

Abstract of oral presentation

The notion of 'journey' has been used to describe personal experiences of the doctorate (Batchelor & Di Napoli, 2006) and to map the terrain, providing a commonality of process which lies beneath disciplinary contexts (Miller & Brimicombe, 2003). However, whilst the journey has been used to elucidate personal experiences of students completing their doctorate, there has been little attention on how to compare journeys of multiple respondents across disciplines. This paper examines an approach used in two large-scale studies to track the journeys of students engaged in research, using a mixed method approach. This approach pioneers a two way analysis of data which in all but one reported study (that of Shaw, 2010) has been treated purely qualitatively, employing the journey tracking method in more than a simple descriptive fashion and embedding it in a much wider spectrum of analyses than previously undertaken. The value of this new measure lies in its capacity to make the process of research visible. The journey plot highlights students' orientation to research through their understanding of the nature of the journey, and the highs and lows experienced.

Keywords: Doctoral learning, transitions, journeys

The proof is in the pudding: an evidence based approach to improving the quality of research higher degree supervision

Rachel Symons

University of Sydney

Abstract of oral presentation

The University of Sydney is committed to continuous improvement in the supervision of research higher degree students. To this end we have implemented an evidence based, student-focussed, and collegial approach to the development of policies, procedures and guidelines relating to the research supervision. This approach includes: creation of cross disciplinary working parties tasked with writing policies and guidelines; subject- specific surveys of supervisors and students; and the use of student feedback to inform the deliberations of working parties. How do we know that we have been successful? We have analysed and reported quantitative and qualitative data from the Student Research Experience Questionnaire (SREQ) at both faculty and institutional level for over a decade. This allows us to track student satisfaction with their supervision and provides us with demonstrable proof of this success, as well as identifying opportunities for further improvement to the student experience. In this paper I will delineate the process used by the University to develop policies and initiatives, and show how student feedback, obtained through the SREQ and other surveys, is used to improve the student experience of supervision. I will provide examples of successful initiatives we have instigated including: the development of policies and guidelines relating to supervision; the implementation of faculty specific workshops and development programs for both new and experienced supervisors; and supervisor accreditation through the Supervisor Register. All of these have resulted in an increasing awareness of, and concomitant improvement in, the quality of supervision across the University.

Keywords: Supervision; Evidence-based; Student-focussed; Student feedback; Policy

Student perceptions and capacities in a 'quality' advisory relationship

Kelsey Halbert

James Cook University

Abstract of oral presentation

Higher Degree Research (HDR) students and their supervisors must respond to increased pressures for timely completion, a spotlight on the scope and depth of research training and a profound increase in HDR enrolments across Australia. Existing research and evaluation of supervisory experiences are focused at departmental rather than individual level and are mostly quantitative (Lee & McKenzie, 2011). This paper presents more specific qualitative understandings of doctoral students' experiences at a regional Australian university.

My recent research indicated that HDR students from across the university viewed supervision as the influential factor in their doctoral satisfaction. This is no real surprise however there is a need to tease out the differences and tensions in perceptions of supervision quality. The characteristics of a 'good' supervisor nominated by students indicate a balance of 'academic and emotional support'. Key characteristics included accessibility, approachability, knowledge of the field and of the research process, interest and enthusiasm, regular contact, respect for and valuing of the students ideas. Students' notions of 'the good supervisor' can identify some common characteristics but also some variance depending on the individual learning style and previous experiences. As a result, students' perceptions of and expectations for supervision can be very different across and amongst disciplines and stages of the candidature. This paper discusses the implications of these perceptions in relation to quality agendas.

Keywords: Research supervision; research education; doctoral experiences

The pedagogy of doctoral supervision: conceptualising the quality of the student-supervisor relationship

Liezel Frick

Stellenbosch University

Eva Brodin

Lund University

Ruth Albertyn

Stellenbosch University

Abstract of oral presentation

This paper explores the pedagogy of doctoral education in terms of the quality of the pedagogic relationship between doctoral students and research supervisor(s). We argue that both doctoral supervisors and students take part in negotiating their relationship, but that supervisors often take the lead in establishing this relationship.

Literature suggests that supervisors are often assumed to know what makes this pedagogic relationship productive and ultimately successful, but that – in reality – these relationships are often problematic, which may influence the quality of the doctoral process and its outcome(s). We argue that power and identity are key functions in the dynamics of the relationship and the quality thereof. We use transactional analysis theory (TA) as a point of departure from which the quality of doctoral pedagogy is explored. We furthermore contend that supervisors need to recognize their own identity positions (which we conceptualise as Guide/Warden, Autonomous/Reliant and Explorative/Pedestrian) and how these positions influence their supervisory function. Knowledge of the identity positions of their students at a specific stage will help supervisors to negotiate, be responsive and adapt to these relative positions. We make the proposition that supervisors do not often position themselves only within one of these positions, as supervision requires dynamic flexibility in the supervisor's own identity positions in order to fulfil their supervisory functions. Thus we suggest that supervision quality may be enhanced by the supervisors' ability to reflect upon their own identity positions and hence encounter the students' identity positions in negotiating and constructive ways.

Keywords: Doctoral supervision; student-supervisor relationship; identity

Opening doors for improved doctoral student progress: Thresholds concepts for crossing the research barrier

Maria Northcote

Avondale College of Higher Education

Catherine McLoughlin

Australian Catholic University

Abstract of oral presentation

The journey through a doctoral candidature can be a challenging and emotional experience for both the candidate and their supervisors. Doctoral students are often known to experience 'stuckness', reach 'brick walls' and experience 'mental blocks' at various stages in their research. These barriers can prevent the progression or 'learning leaps' of the candidate through key threshold research milestones of the doctoral degree. Supervisors typically take on the role of guide, coach and mentor throughout the process while enacting their conceptions of the research process. Identification of the threshold concepts and skills required of a postgraduate candidate can assist the developmental journey experienced by both students and their supervisors.

Findings from an analysis of the guidance provided to potential and current doctoral students, a collection of milestones, skills and desirable competencies emerged.

However, further analysis indicates that essential threshold concepts identified in the research literature are not in evidence on university websites. There appears to be a disconnect between the emphasis on procedural milestones on these sites, which are intended as guidelines for potential students, and essential research concepts and skills (that is, threshold concepts) that students require on the doctoral journey. Awareness of these transformative stages in a typical doctoral program of study may enable supervisors to assist their students to advance through these conceptual barriers. The research recommends that identification of the threshold concepts and skills required of a postgraduate candidate can assist the developmental journey experienced by both students and their supervisors.

Keywords: doctoral students; postgraduate students; postgraduate supervisors; threshold concepts; research milestones

Measuring Doctoral Student Satisfaction with Progress

Janene Budd, Jill Scevak, Robert Cantwell, Sid Bourke, Allyson Holbrook, Kylie Shaw

University of Newcastle

Abstract of oral presentation

Efforts to assist PhD students to monitor their progress through the challenges of doctoral research are not new, but there has been little empirical study of their effectiveness for students or their utility as predictors of completion or withdrawal. Further, there has been inadequate study of the individual differences associated with how PhD students monitor and self-regulate their behaviour through candidature.

This longitudinal study examined, using online surveys across a 12 month period, the relationships between measures of PhD student satisfaction with progress, well-being, state hope, enrolment status, and the perceptions of students of the survey process. Over 700 PhD students from universities across Australia, New Zealand, UK, Canada, and South Africa participated in this study, representing all stages of candidature and a wide range of disciplines.

While satisfaction with progress, well-being, and state hope levels were positively correlated, their relationships with stages of candidature, age, and enrolment status at 12 months varied. These findings highlight the value of different measures for different purposes, and their ability to alert students to problematic levels or patterns of scores which may affect the quality of their PhD experience. Most importantly, the results provide evidence of how students have used these measures to monitor their progress, to increase their awareness of the impact of various factors on their candidature, and to implement changes to address problems with their progress.

Keywords: PhD candidature; satisfaction with progress; well-being; self-regulation

Supporting the PhD Journey: What Acknowledgements Tell Us

Lilia Mantai, Robyn Dowling

Macquarie University

Abstract of oral presentation

The quality of the PhD experience is of intense interest to researchers and universities alike, and both identify the role of support networks as crucial to PhD experience and PhD completion. Our aim in this paper is to explore the types of interdependencies that PhD candidates identify as important in a successful PhD journey. To do so we use an under-utilised yet rich data source: PhD thesis acknowledgements. The paper employs a sample of 79 PhD acknowledgements drawn from diverse disciplines within Australian universities. We illustrate the forms of social support provided, who and what is acknowledged as providing support, and the intersections between the forms and providers of support. Key findings of the paper are that three types of support are evident – academic, technical, and emotional – and that supervisors, families, friends and colleagues are acknowledged for providing all three forms of support. The study confirms the critical place of candidates' networks in the PhD journey, broadens the view of what constitutes support and identifies the range of individuals involved in the process. Further, it identifies potential in acknowledgements as a source of evidence of social support.

Keywords: acknowledgement; higher degree research; student support; doctoral journey

A balancing act: The study-work-life challenge for international postgraduate research students at Monash University and RMIT

Janice Boey

Monash Postgraduate Association

Abstract of oral presentation

This paper examines the overseas education experience of international postgraduate research students (referred to in this paper as IPGRS) studying at two highly internationalised Australian universities. It places particular emphasis on the ability of these students to balance and integrate research study with many aspects of life that take place outside the university, such as employment and family responsibilities. In the context of growing IPRGS numbers relative to the proportion of all postgraduate research students across Australia, and the crucial need to attract more research students to Australia to ensure the ongoing international competitiveness of Australia's higher education sector (Australian Education International, 2013), there is a need to understand the different and complex ways in which successful international higher education participation may be linked to various aspects of life. Using data from a social survey of 190 IPGRS and supplemented with four qualitative focus group interviews, this papers reports on the study-work-life dimension as experienced by IPGRS and the strategies taken that make the onerous act of balancing study-work-life feasible for IPGRS.

Keywords: student experience; international postgraduate research student; employment; family responsibilities

Why do some new ideas stick? Or, what higher education can learn from public health policy

Sarah Stow

RMIT University

Inger Mewburn

Australian National University

Abstract of oral presentation

Ask any administrator or academic working in higher education about their latest project and you'll inevitably hear them complain about the glacial pace of adoption of new measures, policy or processes, even when those changes deliver positive outcomes for both academics and students alike.

In public health policy, where arguably the stakes are higher, this issue has received some attention. In a recent article, Atul Gawende explores the reasons why the medical profession adopted anaesthesia so quickly and yet took nearly 30 years to recognise the value of hygiene and aseptic surgery? Both profoundly changed the way medicine is practiced and improved the outcomes for patients but one took nearly a generation longer to become accepted and adopted into widespread practice.

Through case studies, we illustrate how an analysis of public health policy can lend us insight into some of the entrenched, well-intentioned, but often minimally effective educational research training practices that universities adopt. We explore how solutions now being offered to some of the intractable issues in public health might provide ways forward for engaging meaningfully and successfully with academic staff, where success is defined by long-term measurable change in practice which leads to measurable improvements for the outcomes for candidates.

 Keywords: policy; change management; resistance; process improvement; human capital

An Australian perspective on risk in research education

Kevin Brett

Australian National University

Abstract of oral presentation

Research training is central to the purpose of a university though research, by its very nature, carries a high level of risk. The increasingly international nature of research education raises interesting challenges for quality assurance and the effectiveness of the national regulator. A study of how risk related to higher degree research (HDR) is approached and managed by universities might inform the current debates about risk-based regulation in higher education. This paper reports on a study of how risk in the context of HDR is interpreted by senior managers and executive members from six Australian universities. The data were collected in 2010–11, at a time when Australian higher education was on the cusp of a move from quality assurance predicated on fitness for purpose to a risk-based regulatory framework. The tensions between changing Australian Government regulatory policy and institutional practice, and the contradictions inherent in conflicting constructions of risk held by the protagonists, are explored in the context of contemporary risk theories. The study indicates the extent and diversity of opinion as to what constitutes risk specific to research training, and how this risk is managed. The various perspectives reflect institutional views on risk, as well as approaches to risk management consistent with interviewees' professional roles. These perspectives, taken together, suggest an emerging framework for risk management that may serve quality assurance requirements appropriate to research education.

Keywords: quality assurance; risk; higher degree research

Summer research scholarships- an excellent introduction to a higher degree by research

Christine Anderson

University of Sydney

Abstract of oral presentation

The Sydney Medical School Summer Research Scholarship (SRS) scheme was established in 2004 as a means to recruit talented students from science-based disciplines into postgraduate research study and ultimately into research careers, as well as to encourage PhD enrolments at institutes and centres which had the capacity to support more students. This presentation will provide an overview of the SRS including its rationale, implementation and evaluations provided by students as a means to illustrate how such schemes can be administered to achieve positive outcomes.

Each year Sydney Medical School funds up to 60 scholarships across its network of clinical schools and institutes. The students are offered an 8 week apprenticeship with an accomplished career scientist during the summer vacation. Students are exposed to a broad range of basic research skills during their project, including data collection, lab work, analysis, presenting research outcomes and writing reports.

Evaluations and analysis of student feedback related to the scheme have indicated that it provides a good pathway to higher degree research as well as providing the opportunity for students to publish papers and present at conferences. As a result, the SRS has proven to be an excellent research training pathway and has been strongly supported from within the Faculty and as well as by external donors.

Keywords: Summer Research Scholarships; Student experience; Research administration; higher degrees by research

Quality – what does this mean in HDR?

Jennifer Scott

Monash University

Abstract of oral presentation

'Quality versus quantity' is a phrase commonly used with regards to Higher Degree by Research (HDR) training. It is a driver for HDR student recruitment that focuses on the skills and attributes of an individual, rather than simply aiming for the largest possible cohort. What defines quality though? And how do you measure this? Does a 'quality' applicant lead to a 'quality' student and successful completion?

The term 'quality' can also be applied to HDR supervisors. To ensure the delivery of excellent research training we require the finest supervision from our academics. However, what defines a quality supervisor?

This presentation will explore the interpretation of quality as it applies to HDR candidates and supervisors, and what support or training we can provide to create the best possible research training environment.

Working with researchers - how to get things done

Hugh Kearns

Flinders University

Abstract of oral presentation

This session is based on a workshop that was run for ARMS(WA) in 2013 and received extremely positive feedback. It highlights some of the strategies research administrators can use to work successfully with researchers. These strategies are based on many years' experience of working both with researchers and research administrators as well as the latest psychological and educational research. They include:

A model called the second person shift - which means learning how to look at something from another person's point of view - in this case trying to understand things from a researcher's point of view. In most cases they are not trying to be difficult - they just have other priorities.

The difference between what SHOULD happen and what really happens. We get annoyed when things don't happen in the way we want. We tend to blame others. We say they SHOULD. And while it's easy to blame other people it doesn't make a whole lot of difference. This is where people say 'but it's not fair'. But what do you do even if it isn't fair?

Strategies that do work: The paper provides a look at some of the approaches administrators have tried that have had success and the opportunity to share some good practice.

This session provides an opportunity to reflect on your own experiences and hear about the experiences of your colleagues who face similar issues

Keywords: second person shift, strategies for researchers and research administrators

The PhD – is it out of alignment?

Rachel Spronken-Smith, Sharon Sharmini

University of Otago

Abstract of oral presentation

Aspects of doctoral education have undergone substantial change in recent years, and we argue that as a result many PhDs programmes may be out of alignment. We draw on the concept of 'constructive alignment' (Biggs, 1999) who proposed that learning outcomes should be well aligned with teaching and learning methods and the assessment regime. The learning outcomes for doctoral candidates have expanded considerably in recent years in response to the desire to graduate candidates with a wider skill set, well equipped for a range of jobs beyond academia. Corresponding to this, in some programmes, the teaching and learning activities have altered, so rather than just doing a supervised project, candidates now often take workshops and courses to gain a broader skill set. However, the assessment has remained much the same, narrowly focussed on a written thesis and, in some cases, an oral defence. The rise of professional doctorates has allowed a rethinking of doctoral education. For example, the outcomes might include professional competency so the teaching methods involve professional practice and the assessment often uses a portfolio approach, allowing examiners to be assured candidates are meeting the various outcomes. Professional doctorate portfolios may include evidence of having met certain competencies (e.g. clinical), as well as leadership, project management, and communication in a range of modes etc. But where does this leave doctoral education for traditional PhDs? In this session we will discuss this issue to envision what doctoral education could look like and how alignment might be achieved.

Keywords: constructive alignment; PhD; doctoral education; outcomes; assessment

Application of doctoral scholarship in health and social care practice settings in the UK

Mary Dobson, Jackie Campbell, Michelle Pyer, Jackie Parkes

University of Northampton

Abstract of oral presentation

Within the health and social care sector in the UK there is a clear imperative for advanced, independent and specialist practitioner status to be linked with educational achievement at doctoral level. Specifically, professional workers need the opportunity to develop the skills required to apply the research-based, analytical approaches to problem solving that are the hallmarks of doctoral level study within a practice context and to demonstrate improvements in service delivery. Professional doctorate programmes are essential to the development of such skills where there is a strong element of work-based learning that, in turn, is mediated by intellectual understanding and critical reflection. The professional doctorate, as compared to the traditional PhD route, offers students the opportunity to make a unique contribution to their subject area which is both grounded in and applied to professional practice rather than the generation of pure 'academic knowledge'.

Despite the intuitive alignment between the professional doctorate study and application of knowledge in practice, there is a paucity of literature documenting how such students apply such learning in the workplace.

In order to explore this issue further qualitative data were collected from health and social care practitioners currently registered for a professional doctorate programme in the UK. The research explored their experiences of doctoral study within the context of their professional roles with particular reference to the translation of scholarship into practice.

Findings of the study will be discussed in relation to personal and professional factors and the students' perceptions of the context of research within the professional role.

Keywords: Professional doctorate, practice-based research

Pedagogical implications in the supervision of MBA research projects

Ria Vosloo

University of Johannesburg

Renier Steyn

University of South Australia

 Abstract of oral presentation

The Masters of Business Administration (MBA) and similar degrees where coursework is part of the study requires students to obtain knowledge acquisition and to generate of knowledge through research. This implies significant challenges (Manathunga, Kiley, Boud and Cantwell 2012). The research project in coursework based masters programmes has a relatively low weight in the curriculum but is one of the main obstacles to completion of the qualification. There are many specific challenges in supervision of MBA research projects including student preparedness for independent research, the academic literacy of MBA students (De Coning 2010) and the fact that students have no choice about doing such a research project. If the challenges implied by massification are superimposed the situation becomes more complex. Supervisory practice is influenced by the mode of study (Hammond et al 2010) and the pedagogy of a supervisor might differ, depending on the situation.

In this study supervisory roles, as one of the elements in the pedagogical framework developed by Bruce and Stoodley (2012) will be investigated. A focus group, consisting of academics with experience in supervision of both limited scope master's research students and doctoral candidates, was used to explore the difference in the roles played by supervisors. The various roles that supervisors play in supervision of MBA (and other limited scope masters research) and doctoral research has been investigated and compared. There are significant differences, especially if massification is considered as a mediating variable.

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Keywords: Pedagogy; MBA Research; Doctoral Research; Supervision

Factors differentiating HDR students in study motivation and communication

Catherine Zhou

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Keith Thomas

Victoria University

Abstract of oral presentation

Higher-degree-research (HDR) students are the driving force of research development in Hong Kong. In the past decade, the composition of the HDR student population in Hong Kong has changed greatly mainly because of the increasing enrolment of Mainland China-sourced students. This change encourages educators and researchers to renovate the HDR education supporting mechanism. Few studies have put focus on the HDR students of Hong Kong universities. Using demographic factors and disciplines, this study examines the first-year HDR student experience in two aspects: (1) the motivation to enter the research program and (2) willingness to be blended into the new academic community. Significant difference is found between local (Hong Kong) and non-local (Mainland China and overseas) students. The study motivation of non-local students is more related to career development and the improvement of life standard. At the same time, they are more willing to communicate with research supervisors about the career development plan, interact with peers, and be part of the new academic community. Significant difference is also found in the cross-discipline analysis. Students in arts and social science have a more active study motivation, such as 'I want a chance to develop as a person, broaden my horizons, and face new challenges,' and 'I will be able to study subjects in depth', compared with students in engineering and science. They also present stronger intention to communicate and interact with others.

Key words: Research development in Hong Kong, mainland China sourced students, motivation, integration

Is there a mismatch between doctoral students' conceptions and actual experience of PhD study?

Jill Scevak, Allyson Holbrook, Janene Budd, Sid Bourke, Kylie Shaw, Robert Cantwell

University of Newcastle

Abstract of oral presentation

Doctoral study is intended to produce new knowledge in various fields, such as scientific, human, cultural, moral and ethical. If the expectations associated with doctoral study are concerned primarily with making a significant contribution to the field, then the question 'What does it take to generate an original contribution?'

The aim of this study was to explore individual doctoral students' conceptions of doctoral study. Interview data was collected from a sub-sample of 106 doctoral students at varying stages of candidature who undertook a telephone interview as part of a larger group who were surveyed about doctoral learning. The candidates were questioned directly about their initial expectation of what they expected was involved in doing a doctorate. The results revealed differences between students' conceptions of the doctoral task as well as mismatches between their conceptions of doctoral study and their actual experience. Students enter the world of PhD study with naïve conceptions of what a PhD is, they are able to say it's different but only in quantitative forms; as a result they are in the dark/unprepared for the intellectual and emotional challenges that they will encounter Implications for supervisor pedagogy are discussed.

Keywords: Expectations; doctorate; mismatch

Motivations and outcomes of PhDs for older mature age students: becoming experts by doing a hobby

Joelle Vandermensbrugghe

University of Canberra

Abstract of oral presentation

This presentation reports on a study exploring older mature age students' motives for starting a PhD, as well as outcomes of the PhD. The study was motivated by a desire to explore the significance of doctoral degrees against the background of changing educational priorities. Little qualitative research has been carried out about older mature age doctoral students, who represent about 14% of the doctoral population in Australia.' Why do these students engage in a doctoral degree' and 'what do they get out of it?' are some of the questions the study sought to explore. The study adopted a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, as set out by Paul Ricoeur. Data for the study was derived from open interviews conducted with six PhD graduates, who started a PhD when they were over 50 and had graduated at least three years before being interviewed. Identity negotiations – with self and others – were found to inform many of the graduates' directions taken. The study also found that enjoyment of learning and developing knowledge were major motives, as well as major outcomes of the degree. The enjoyment derived from research and study encouraged graduates to see themselves as 'hobbyists'. This definition sits in contradiction with that of 'experts' but has not prevented them from continuing to be actively involved in their chosen field, building on developed skills and knowledge and strengthening their identities as 'experts' by riding on the credibility conferred to the degree.

Keywords: Mature age students; doctoral degrees; higher education; identity; educational outcomes

Theorising doctoral supervision: A sociocultural approach

Richard Walker

University of Sydney

Kimberley Pressick-Kilborn

University of Technology, Sydney

Erica Sainsbury

University of Sydney

Abstract of oral presentation

Sociocultural theories, which have their origins in the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, have been important for understanding human development, learning and motivation. As doctoral supervision involves the intellectual development (in addition to other forms of development) of the novice researcher, as well as their learning and motivation, it makes good sense to consider that sociocultural theories might contribute to existing models of effective supervision. In this presentation we develop a sociocultural approach to doctoral supervision which draws on the unified sociocultural framework which has guided our own sociocultural writings in learning and motivation (eg. Walker, Pressick-Kilborn, Sainsbury & MacCallum, 2010). It also draws on our relationships as doctoral supervisor (Richard Walker) and former doctoral students (Kimberley Pressick-Kilborn, Erica Sainsbury).

This unified sociocultural framework explains the relevance of the following concepts for doctoral supervision: culture and cultural practices, canalisation and self-canalisation, the zone of proximal development, transformative internalisation and externalisation, interpersonal relations, inter-subjectivity and co-regulation. Taken together, these concepts offer a theoretically and empirically valid model of doctoral supervision which explains aspects of the supervision process not cohesively addressed by other models including: how doctoral students become enculturated into the research practices of their discipline; how supervisors adjust their support during the course of a student's candidature; how interaction with other doctoral candidates is beneficial for the research student; and how students develop an identity as a researcher. The better understanding of doctoral supervision provided by the unified sociocultural approach also provides a basis for improving the supervisory process.

Keywords: Sociocultural; pedagogy; doctoral

Policy on Postgraduate Research: Adding 'Relevance' to the Mix

Lisa Looney

Dublin City University

Abstract of oral presentation

The Irish policy context from the early 2000's was one of support for greatly increased numbers of doctorate places, and in recent years emphasis has shifted to development and adoption of a national framework for doctoral education, regional clustering of provision and alignment with national and institutional priorities. The last 10 years have delivered significant systemic change, much of it facilitated by a highly engaged network of Deans of Graduate Studies, under the auspices of the Irish Universities Association (IUA). Irish researchers have been to the fore in Europe in developing models of structured PhD programmes and the IUA was active in developing the European Commission's Principles of Innovative Doctoral Education which will be reflected in funding criteria for international doctoral networks and programmes under Horizon 2020.

Against this backdrop, this paper explores the concept of relevance as part of an overall doctoral education framework and, as promoted by policy leaders, as a measure of quality : the ambiguities around how it is defined; the perceived benefits to doctoral candidates and to the economy, and what they reveals about how it is defined; how it maps onto a range of candidate types and discipline areas; barriers to delivering on the perceived benefits and implications for government policy, educational institutions and industrial, commercial, non-profit, social and public sector partners.

Keywords: policy drivers in research; researcher experience; impact of policy; institutional role in research quality

Wrangling the literature: Quietly contributing to HDR completions

Jennifer Warburton

University of Melbourne

Peter Macauley

RMIT University

Abstract of oral presentation

For many higher degree by research candidates the experience of searching the published literature can be overwhelming and unnecessarily stressful.

Experienced researchers draw on deep disciplinary knowledge, a schema of prior experience, and their networks to locate relevant information and sources.

Inexperienced graduate researchers may lack access to these internal roadmaps of terms, authors and methodologies and require guidance to identify key papers, authors and terms associated with a topic.

Advanced information literacy is a critical factor for student success, particularly to support the literature review process and the need for effective information management skills has never been greater. The quality of doctoral candidates' literature reviews, their knowledge and their ability to undertake substantive and 'do-able' research is linked.

Whilst do-it-yourself information and communication technologies, Google and 'Google- like' search engines have led to easier information access, and heightened user expectations, are HDR students equipped to effectively navigate through, and manage the plethora of research sources available?

This presentation will share findings and recommendations of a case study profiling PhD candidate usage of the University of Melbourne Library's research consultation service. The study explored whether consultations conducted at the 'point of need' made a difference in the early stages of PhD candidature and questioned whether consultations contribute to improved research ability and successful outcomes. The presentation will also question assumptions made by candidates and supervisors in relation to information-related research skills.

Keywords: Literature reviews; information literacy; research skills; library support

RGRAD: University of Canberra's online, interactive tool to manage research candidature

Anushya Kumar, Jane Macintosh

University of Canberra

Abstract of oral presentation

This paper introduces an online-portal based solution to manage research candidature called RGRAD developed by the Research Student's Office (RStO) at the University of Canberra.

The University of Canberra's strategic plan for HDR students aims at increasing student numbers, research intensity and providing an enriched and immersive student experience. The coursework-integrated PhD was introduced in 2013 as part of this plan. The challenges that arise with increasing student numbers and introducing a new program are management of research candidature, timely completions and increase in administrative load.

Students value their research experience when they have sufficient academic/ administrative support provided by the university, are able to set clear goals; track their progress at any given time and are able to interact with their supervisors on and off- campus.

RGRAD as a streamlined, interactive solution helps

- provide up-to-date information about the progress of a student against the timeline of candidature and the mandatory milestones.

- support HDR students, who are off campus, maintain communication with their supervisors and records and retains the correspondence.

- allow supervisors to access their students' profiles at any given time.

- maintain a repository of supervisor profile, their supervisory load and registration level.

- management staff within the Faculty/ University Research Centres (URCs) access records of Faculty/URC HDRs

RGRAD helps manage student candidature in a strategic and successful way. It responds to the evolving landscape of national/international student expectations and outcomes.

The paper will elucidate RGRAD's journey from inception to implementation, it's alignment with the university's strategic plan with the feedbacks received so far.

Keywords: research; students; candidature; university; Canberra; online; timely; completions; supervisors; strategic; administrative; management

A holistic system for managing, measuring and monitoring quality in doctoral training programs

Juliet Lum, Kim Tan

Macquarie University

Abstract of oral presentation

Managers of centralised doctoral training programs are faced with two major challenges: dealing efficiently with numerous registrations for multiple courses, and ensuring that courses are of high quality and meet actual needs of the institution's higher degree research (HDR) candidates. Every year the range of doctoral training and support opportunities increases, but institutions can be limited in the number they offer due to insufficient resources and personnel required for their administration and quality evaluation.

In this paper, we present a holistic HDR event management system that alleviates these challenges by automating several processes associated with the administration and evaluation of workshops. While this cost-effective solution performs several routine event registration functions and communications with HDR stakeholders, what is distinctive about the system is that it tracks the quality and effectiveness of each HDR event by automatically administering a feedback survey to attendees after each event and graphically presenting results of all events to date to management staff. The system thus provides a continually updated snapshot of the quality of the doctoral training program, which is not only valuable for reporting purposes, but moreover highlights areas for improvement to more closely align the program to the needs of the current HDR candidate body.

The system demonstrated in this paper is straightforward to replicate and adapt for individual institutions' needs, and should be considered by HDR teams keen to manage, measure and monitor the quality of their doctoral training programs more effectively and efficiently.

Keywords: doctoral skills program management; event management system; quality assessment; higher degree research training program

UQ HDR Scholarship Rounds

Tracey Castle

University of Queensland

Abstract of oral presentation

Prior to 2010, scholarship applications for HDR students at UQ were only considered once a year. If unsuccessful, applicants were required to withdraw their application for both admission and scholarship and reapply in the future. Under this model applicants were disadvantaged by the long timeframe between scholarship rounds, the additional effort required to submit a new application for admission and scholarship if required, and, in some cases, the long time to await an outcome.

Therefore, in late 2010, the UQ Graduate School introduced multiple scholarship rounds per year in order to consider applicants for APA, IPRS and various other Graduate School scholarships. The UQ Graduate School currently holds 3 scholarship rounds per year: February – April; June – August; and October – December.

Under this model, unsuccessful applicants will only have a short time to wait until the next round. The UQ Graduate School also implemented a renomination system, allowing applicants to reapply for a scholarship in a future round without the need to reapply for admission.

For UQ, the main benefits are that scholarship workload is spread over the multiple rounds, and the UQ Graduate School are in a position to accurately budget the number of scholarships available to award in each round.

This presentation will discuss the processes associated with the current model and applicant eligibility.

Keywords: Scholarships; best practice

Shadow writers in doctoral education?: shades of grey

Claire Aitchison

University of Western Sydney

Susan Mowbray

University of Western Sydney

Abstract or oral presentation

The growth and diversity of the postgraduate research student population is placing increasing pressure, both material and pedagogical, on institutional resources to support student writing. At the same time, the expectation for doctoral students to publish during candidature places them under increasing pressure to produce publications while writing their thesis. This confluence of factors has been paralleled by a growth in the provision of non-institutionally based writing support services specifically aimed at doctoral students to help them with their writing. Many of these services are offered online, and, as an emerging 'industry' they operate largely unmonitored, influencing and impacting on doctoral writing practices in unknown and often unacknowledged ways.

This research reports on an analysis of 158 online writing support provider sites and data from follow up interviews and surveys. The study shows the existence of a range of suppliers including reputable editing and writer development services, a growing number of student-friendly on-line community forums, and a large number of suspect 'doctoral writing support services' offering more questionable services. Research participants often spoke about the challenges of operating in the grey zone between what they considered legitimate writing help and less acceptable practices. The growing prevalence and uptake of such market-based writing services prompts questions about the roles and responsibilities vis a vis writing and research scholarship. These include, for example, questions about the institutional /individual expectations for students' writing and writing development; the relationship of authorship to knowledge creation and ownership; and concerns about how we understand, monitor and develop authorship in doctoral research.

Keywords: writing; postgraduate students; non-institutional writing support

Writer's block: A light-hearted look

Hugh Kearns

Flinders University

Abstract of oral presentation

Who hasn't suffered from writer's block at some stage? Isaac Asimov for one! 'I had writer's block once. It was the worst 10 minutes of my life.' This session is a light- hearted look at the condition that afflicts many researchers and research students and the many creative reasons they give for not writing. 'I waiting until I feel ready'. 'I just need to read one more paper'.

Fortunately there is a wealth of advice for blocked writers such as Gene Fowler who helpfully suggests: 'The writing is easy. All you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until the drops of blood form on your forehead.' Some commentators dispute that writer's block even exists. Allan Gurganus claimed 'You don't get writer's block if you don't believe in it. I've never heard of anyone getting plumber's block, or traffic cop's block.'

There is practical advice too. When Asimov was asked what routines he used for writing he replied: 'It is always necessary from me to turn on my electric typewriter and get close enough to it so that my fingers can reach the keys.' And Ernest Hemingway provided one of the most valuable suggestions: 'I always stopped when I knew what was going to happen next. That way I could be sure of going on the next day.'

This session provides excuses, strategies and a bit of humour. Finally, 'Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.'

Keywords: Writer's block; writing; writing strategies

Academic objectivity and research writing

Wendy Bastalich

University of South Australia

Abstract or oral presentation

The emphasis upon efficiency in doctoral education in the past twenty years has been accompanied by a new problematic, that of 'skills deficits', the 'poor management' practices of supervisors, and a lack of effective 'self-management' of students, bringing new training and regulatory measures to address them. There has been comparatively little reflection on the insights raised within the higher education literature about the role of academic subjectivity and its relation to writing and supervision in supporting successful outcomes for doctoral candidates and their supervisors. This paper reflects on my work with doctoral students' writing in the social sciences and humanities and suggests that problems with student writing, particularly within the literature review, are more helpfully understood in terms of students' attempts to conform to dominant discourse about what it means to be a good student and a good academic or researcher, discourse which fails to prepare students for the reality of academic writing conventions. This can frequently be addressed, and more appropriate academic writing practices adopted, by showing students how to conform to academic conventions within the writing of the research proposal, thesis or exegesis. The paper advocates a shift in approach away from student and supervisor management or self-management, and a conception of students as possessed of a deficit, towards more direct engagement with student writing.

Keywords: student; experience; outcomes

Building the 'teaching-research nexus' in a research-intensive university: the Clinician Scientist Track at the University of Queensland, Australia

Diann Eley

University of Queensland

Abstract or oral presentation

The University of Queensland (UQ), School of Medicine has implemented an innovative research intensive pathway, the Clinician Scientist Track (CST), for a select cohort of students to pursue a part time research MPhil degree concurrently with their full time four year medical degree. This program is uncommon in Australia but is congruent with the spirit of creating clinician scientists through the MD-PhD programs established over 40 years ago with the pioneering work of Duke and Stanford Universities in the USA.

The rationale for the CST was two-fold. The first was to address the recognised global decline in clinician scientists by providing a research intense pathway for exceptional students with the ability and interest in a research academic career. The second aimed to drive the teaching-research nexus into reality by utilising the research intense environment at this university.

The development of the program involved modification of UQ policies to allow our students to enrol concurrently in an undergraduate and postgraduate degree. Once approved there was immediate interest among students who recognised the benefits and career potential of the CST and found themselves eligible to enrol.

To date there are 42 enrolled MPhil candidates with the majority (90%) upgrading to a PhD at confirmation. Student research represents 33 different research areas and approximately 22 research groups, centres and institutes in UQ and internationally in

NZ, USA and UK. This paper will discuss the program's future alongside early lessons learned in implementing the CST as an alternative and flexible pathway to increasing the number of clinician scientists.

Keywords: teaching research nexus; concurrent degrees; increase numbers of clinician scientists; MPhil; MD-PhD

Benchmarking the completions process

Nigel, Palmer

Australian National University

Abstract of oral presentation

Research degree completion has come to be definitive of a successful research higher degree outcome. In practice however 'completions' can be far from definitive, and in fact may be premised on a range of enrolment events as part of a completions process.

A substantial amount of time can elapse between the initial submission of a thesis for examination and a degree conferral being recorded by the institution. Initial submission of a thesis may coincide with the final recorded date of enrolment, but this may be far from the final recorded enrolment event. Receipt of final examination reports may be taken to indicate completion through satisfying academic requirements of the degree, but there may still be program requirements in addition to this. While representing the final stage in the process for students, degree conferral is unlikely to be used as a completion indicator for performance measurement purposes, despite being the final event in what could be regarded as a 'completions process'.

Drawing on a benchmarking initiative supported by the Good Practice Framework (Luca & Wolski, 2013), this paper identifies enrolment events associated with the research degree completions process among five universities in Australia. Findings are intended to assist in defining and reporting evidence of completion and how the phases identified in that process may influence reported degree completion times.

Keywords: Research doctoral degrees; degree completion rates and times; benchmarking

Empowering the leadership role of research education coordinators

Kevin Ryland

University of Technology, Sydney

Abstract or oral presentation

Changes in research education have generated the need for roles in schools and faculties beyond that of supervision or selection and allocation of students. Research education coordinators taking on new responsibilities hitherto little recognised. They are becoming local leaders in research education. However, to date there has been little focus on such leadership at the school or faculty level. What is it that such coordinators do and how can they be better equipped? A framework of distributed leadership was adopted to address this issue as it reflects the situation where many research education coordinators can only exercise influence, as they do not have direct responsibility or authority for outcomes.

The session reports on the outcomes of an OLT-funded project 'Building local leadership for research education'. An analysis of the activities required at the local level of research education identified what was currently being undertaken and what might be missing. It mapped the activities undertaken by research education coordinators and identified the leadership needs of such roles. The session reports on the outcome of the project that included a series of resources to assist coordinators to develop their roles. The project disseminated these at a series of state based workshops and there was a call for the development of a community of research education coordinators to provide support and advice for it members. The launch of such a network will be made at this session. The session will conclude by identifying further work that could be undertaken in this area.

Keywords: Leadership; research education; coordination

Factors influencing to effective doctoral supervision in Management in China

Ying Zhang

The Australian National University

Abstract or oral presentation

With the dramatic increase in the number of Chinese doctoral students, Chinese doctoral education suffers from the lack of the amount of effective doctoral supervisors, especially in a popular discipline: Management. The effective doctoral supervision benefits to improve the students' quality, increase the PhD students' and the employers' satisfaction, and the development of discipline and institution. As a result, Chinese effective doctoral supervision receives an increasing amount of attention by government, institutions and academic. However, there is little published research on Chinese doctoral supervision. This research aims to fill the knowledge gap and establish a model pertaining to doctoral supervision in Management in China through an exploration factors influencing to effective supervision. The findings of this research are based on the outcomes of 39 interviews from three groups: PhD students, doctoral graduates, and doctoral supervisors, who were studying or working at a Chinese leading university. This paper will present the first two groups' results. The current results suggest that six motivation factors influence doctoral supervision. These factors are supervisor practices; supervisors' factors; students' factors; factors related to labour market requirement, university, and Chinese society; the relationships between supervisor and students; and support services. A different set of sub-factors, which are not included in the existing literature, namely being a positive moral example or engaging moral education; and TONGMEN peers who are guided by a same supervisor are contributed to effective supervision of Chinese doctoral students.

Keywords: Doctoral supervision; management; China

Developing supervisors through mentorship

Marion Jones, Jennie Billot, Madeline Banda

AUT University

Abstract of oral presentation

There has been increasing international emphasis on enhancing the capacity and capability of postgraduate supervision. As a consequence, greater focus is being placed on the quality of supervision and how this is linked to the succession planning of supervisors. Processes that support new and less experienced supervisors are integral to this issue. This presentation outlines a research study at a New Zealand University that examines the professional development of supervisors using a mentoring approach. The aim is to identify how best to implement a University framework that effectively supports supervisors through institutional processes and policy. The qualitative research approach involved data collection from both mentor and mentee supervisors. A mentor in this instance is an experienced supervisor who acts as a support through the supervision process. Study findings indicate that what is understood and practised does not always align with the intentions of the current relevant policies and protocols. Indeed, there are multiple interpretations of the roles and responsibilities of the mentor, indicating a need for greater clarity and consistency of how supervisors are mentored.

Keywords: Postgraduate supervision; mentoring; professional development

Some issues related to knowledge transfer in postgraduate research and education

Dennis Mulcahy, Silvia Pignata, Navin Rajendhiran, Sead Spuzic, Nithyakumaran Vaikundam, Kym Fraser

University of South Australia

Ramadas Narayanan

CQ University

Faik Uzunovic

University of Zenica

Abstract of oral presentation

Postgraduate education is recognised worldwide as an important component of research and a powerful strategy to increase fundamental knowledge and generate innovation. Knowledge processing is one of the most significant factors impacting on social and economic sustainability. However, according to the Australian Council of Learned Academies, insufficient attention is being paid to communication of research results in Australia. This suggests a need to address issues that might hinder the sharing and application of newly created knowledge. Examples of impediments that have obstructed the transfer, and the use of the results of postgraduate research are discussed, and strategies for overcoming these barriers are proposed. The perspective of interaction between unmanned and manned systems, and the rise of the open networks of interdisciplinary knowledge, present new avenues for the transfer and application of knowledge at unprecedented rates. However, the actual purpose of knowledge should not be lost; more attention to misalignment in beliefs and intentions is needed to improve knowledge transfer and application

Keywords: postgraduate; education; research; knowledge; transfer

The Examination Process: Achieving a quality and timely submission

Susan Gasson

Queensland University of Technology

Abstract or oral presentation

The notion of sensemaking (Weick, 1979) is applied to consider the change process associated with the development of a new online form to support thesis examination at one university. Taking a socio-cultural perspective, the paper explores the drivers for the new business processes. These included growth in student numbers, globalisation of research and the need to share research outcomes. The selection of a revised process is next considered and involves a cost benefit analysis comparing positive workload outcomes for users versus infrastructure and resourcing impacts for the university.

Completing the cycle the criteria used to judge success of change are reviewed including improved quality assurance and reporting versus maintenance costs. The paper concludes by identifying future drivers for further change. The contribution of the work is a better understanding of the phenomena, contexts and processes that inform change in the management of research training in universities. The paper considers the benefits achievable through review of business process and added impact of integrated software tools. The role and potential of online functionality in the current research training environment is also explored. It is shown that such tools can support and enable a quality research training environment by creating an accessible and interactive interface; prompting reportable quality assurance measures and responding to the current key performance indicators and trends present in the higher education research environment.

Keywords: Thesis examination; online forms; research training environment; quality assurance; business process review; timely completion

Managing conflicts of interest in thesis examination

Catherine Crawford

The University of Queensland

Abstract of oral presentation

Managing potential conflicts of interest (COI) has evolved substantially in Australian Universities in recent years.

A real, perceived or potential COI arises where an opportunity is provided for someone to give preference to their own interests, the interests of another person, or organisation, over the interests of integrity of the thesis examination.

Perceptions of a COI may be important, especially whether a conflict actually exists. Perceptions can adversely affect relationships inside and outside of an institution. Real, perceived or potential COIs can reflect negatively on an institution.

The fundamental principle behind institutional conflict of interest policies is, could a third party perceive our choices of thesis examiners as anything but impartial? Importantly, COIs are about perceived collaborations and not necessarily the subject matter of the thesis.

Each individual has a responsibility to ensure, wherever possible, that no actual, real or perceived COI arises either before or during the examination by declaring any or all conflict.

In the end, it all comes down to the issue of responsibility and that any other interest should not conflict with that responsibility.

Keywords: conflict of interest; thesis examination; perceived conflict of interest

Lifting the stone on the PhD viva process in Irish higher education institutions

Michelle Share

Trinity College Dublin

Abstract of oral presentation

The Bologna Process sought to harmonise qualifications across the EU, with an emphasis on transferable skills and preparation of graduates for the knowledge economy. This has been accompanied by rapid growth in the numbers of PhD students and changes in the nature of the doctorate. Whereas in a number of European countries the doctorate has received attention in terms of quality assurance processes, this is less so in Ireland.

This study aimed, for the first time, to understand the viva voce examination of Irish PhDs. Based on a sample of three Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), it used qualitative content analysis to classify PhD examination policies and qualitative interviews to examine the role and perceptions of six PhD viva chairpersons.

Analysis of PhD regulations indicates similarities between HEIs on some aspects; this is reflected in the perspectives of viva chairpersons. Regulations vary on a number of different levels: the relationship of the viva to the written thesis; classification of awards; and the role of key players in the examination process. Institutions combine strengths and weaknesses in their regulations. Chairpersons provide an important function in the examination process that also benefits their own practice.

Developments in doctoral education have not extended to its administration, which remains largely traditional. There is a need to establish a coherent framework for understanding doctoral examination practices in Irish HEIs. This will help to ensure the equivalence of doctoral awards; enhance transparency; build the capacities of supervisors and examiners and, for students, ensure equity and fairness.

Keywords: Viva; PhD assessment; chairpersons; regulations

'Attacks in the Doctoral Viva': Critical Narrative Insights from Experienced Doctoral Examiners

Wee Chun Tan, Vijay Kumar Mallan

University of Otago

Abstract or oral presentation

This paper reports on a case study from a larger doctoral research project that aimed to investigate examiner practices in the doctoral viva (oral examination) at a Malaysian research university. In this case study, we explored the interview narratives of how two experienced examiners; one from the Humanities and one from the Sciences, revealed their attacking goals in the viva. We use the word 'attack' because candidates are often expected to 'defend' themselves in the viva.

Doctoral examiners play a significant role in the viva. They determine whether a candidate under examination possesses doctoral-level quality. In many universities (e.g. in the UK and Malaysia), examiners are empowered to recommend a re-viva along with pass, fail, or other outcome. Given the powerful role of examiners, however, to date there has been little research on the process of how examiners engage in the viva.

Quality examiner practices in the viva are still shrouded in mystery.

Qualitative interviews were conducted with experienced doctoral examiners from cross disciplines at the university. Using critical discourse analysis (CDA), the interview narratives were analysed to arrive at a critical understanding of the attacking goals in the viva, and how the goals were narrated by the examiners.

The findings of this case study will provide guidance, pedagogical and research implications for doctoral examiners and researchers. Further research on examiner practices in the viva is needed to better support quality viva practices.

Keywords: Doctoral examiners; Doctoral viva; Critical discourse analysis; Narratives; Examiner practices; Doctoral assessment

Communication Accommodation to achieve Research Student Autonomy

Grace Mccarthy, Rodney Clarke, Ann Rogerson

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Abstract of oral presentation

Universities throughout the world are grappling with ways to improve the quality of research supervision and thereby improve successful completion rates. Much effort has been spent on defining the research skills students are expected to develop and how to assist students improve them, e.g. Willison (2012). The concept of developing researcher autonomy has also been the focus of research, e.g. Gurr (2011).

As supervisors, we help our students become skilled autonomous researchers through discussions and feedback, in other words, through our communication skills. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) can be applied in research supervision to improve the communication process and ultimately both the student experience and the student outcomes.

Communication Accommodation Theory provides a framework that 'predicts and explains many of the adjustments individuals make to create, maintain or decrease social distance in interaction' (Giles and Ogay 2007). CAT provides a way to articulate expectations of both supervisor and research student in relation to preferred modes of communication, e.g. directive or non-directive, and to address the power relationship inherent in the relationship e.g. (Willemyns et al 2006). The supervisor can respond to questions such as 'What should I do?' along the lines of 'Let's see. What are the options?' This approach encourages students to transition to using their own judgement and discernment skills rather than just providing answers. Over time, the student develops a habit of identifying and evaluating options, proposing solutions, and finally taking responsibility for their choices.

Keywords: research student autonomy; communication accommodation theory; research supervision; supervisor student relationship

Quitting Talk: an analysis of conversations about leaving research degree study

Inger Mewburn

The Australian National University

Abstract of oral presentation

The decision to leave a research degree is informed by a complex array of factors and emotions, about which we have relatively little understanding (Lovitts, 2002). Attrition is a constant problem for universities around the world, with some estimating up to 1/3 of candidates fail to complete (DETYA, 1997). This paper analyses the 'quitting talk' that occurred in the comments of a blog post 'should you quit your PhD?' by

BJ Epstein, published on the Thesis Whisperer Blog on the 7th of November 2012. The blog post has attracted 29,000 unique visitors still gets, on average 98 hits a day and there are currently 132 comments from candidates around the world who are either contemplating quitting, or have quit already. This conversation, which could be considered a large focus group discussion, presents a unique opportunity to explore the nature of decision points around quitting and what kinds of circumstances in candidate's lives might prompt it. Surprisingly, while most candidates who do give a reason for leaving claim that financial reasons are to blame, in fact it seems motivation to continue is far more influenced by the values within each research culture, particularly in relation to future employment prospects and interest in the research itself. This micro- study puts important 'flesh on the bones' on the debates around attrition and helps us better recognise quitting talk so that we can intervene before the decision to leave becomes inevitable.

Keywords: attrition; retention; research students; blogging; social media; conversation analysis

Why I am still here: The Resilience of Women Research Students

Elizabeth A. Beckmann

Australian National University

Abstract or oral presentation

The Resilience of Women Research Students (RoWRS) is a unique personal and professional development program run at the Australian National University since 2010. RoWRS was envisioned as a practical response to national research and commentary about gender imbalances in the higher education workforce, especially post-PhD losses (e.g. Dever et al., 2008; Shaw and Stanton, 2012), and to the need among women research students for gender-based support (e.g. McCormack, 2001; Birch, 2011). The multi-session, evidence-based RoWRS program was thus designed to provide peer support, role modelling and psychological tools to support resilience ('the ability to face adversity with hope'; Deveson, 2003, ix) in the context of doctoral study and progression into academia. To date, about 150 women research students, including many international students, have participated at ANU, with the program now being trialled at other universities. This paper will describe the program, and report on evaluations that indicate RoWRS gives participants a suite of skills and strategies identified as key elements of resilience, a stronger belief in themselves as successful PhD candidates, and a more realistic understanding of what an academic career entails.

Keywords: women research students; women doctoral students; resilience; resilience training; personal development

Research writing for international research scholars: more than 'grammar'

Monica Behrend

University of South Australia

Abstract of oral presentation

In Anglophone universities, despite the increasing numbers of international higher degree by research (HDR) students for whom English is an additional language, not enough is known about how these students manage to successfully negotiate the challenges related to writing research. While expectations are that any students commencing a research degree should be sufficiently prepared to write research, in reality these students need to negotiate a range of new norms and practices which are largely unknown to them as neophyte research students operating within unfamiliar cultural and institutional settings. The purpose of this paper is to examine the ways in which students and their supervisors successfully negotiate this writing domain, particularly through drawing on institutional resources, such as generic writing workshops marketed as 'English for Research Writing' and individual consultations with research writing specialists. This paper argues that research writing is much more than getting the 'grammar' correct. Research writing includes learning how to: determine disciplinary nuances of language choices, become a productive writer even if suffering writers' block and experiencing emotional struggles, and access available resources in a timely manner. This paper concludes with a discussion of addressing ongoing issues related to research writing in order to facilitate more engagement with the development of research writing throughout the candidature.

Keywords: research writing; English for research writing; grammar; disciplinary discourse

Graduate Research School structures – the UNSW direct engagement model

Margaret O'Byrne, Elizabeth Martens

The University of New South Wales

Abstract of oral presentation

UNSW's Graduate Research School's (GRS) model of direct engagement with faculties and schools is unique amongst graduate schools dealing with large numbers of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates. The GRS has a hybrid structural model with both functional teams and portfolio based staff. Functional teams manage the high volume processing requirements of HDR Admissions, Scholarships and Thesis Examination - while the Candidature Management team directly supports individual faculty higher degree committees that include postgraduate coordinators (PGCs) from each of the approx. 60 schools/units who enrol HDR candidates. UNSW's Dean of Graduate Research (or nominee) attends all 9 faculty higher degree committees – the largest of which meet on a monthly basis.

This presentation will discuss the advantages and challenges of the UNSW HDR management model.

Keywords: HDR; administration; structure

Writing and researching in the contact zone: This is what international doctoral students have told me

Meeta Chatterjee-Padmanabhan

University of Wollongong

Abstract of oral presentation

The present paper draws on a qualitative study with six international doctoral students. Interviews and textual analysis were used to investigate some of the lesser known aspects of their struggles. Language and writing, not unexpectedly, was a major discussion point. However, there are other aspects of doctoral work that are less explored. The sense of erosion of the 'self' was a major concern that emerged. International doctoral students arrive at doctoral research and writing with fully-fledged professional and/or academic identities in their disciplines. However, the researching and writing of a doctoral thesis entails re-learning to be a student in another language.

This presents enormous personal anxieties. In addition to this, students who undertake to do qualitative studies report that they find themselves ill-equipped for the task of writing sophisticated descriptive texts required of the genre. Moreover, doctoral researchers may use their country of origin to collect their empirical data from a non-English speaking populace after having engaged with literature in English and acquired their theoretical frameworks produced in Anglophone academic environments. They then face the challenging task of translating their empirical data into English. This tends to be time consuming. Difficulties can relate to more than linguistic equivalences. There may be a misfit between the theories that emerge from Anglophone countries and the empirical data that is encountered by the doctoral students in the countries in which the research is conducted. These aspects of doctoral writing will be discussed.

Keywords: International students; doctoral writing; research

Gender and the doctoral experience: A critique of alterity

Cassandra Loeser, Rowena Harper

University of South Australia

Abstract or oral presentation

Early work on gender in doctoral education emerged from feminist perspectives and sought to highlight gendered inequities in participation rates and outcomes such as academic tenure. Over the last 20-30 years, however, social and political shifts have seen women pursue doctoral education in increasing numbers at rates which approach and often exceed those of men (England, Allison, Li, Mark, Thompson, Budig & Sun 2001; Hoopes 2010; Jaschick 2010; Avraham 2013). Since the early 2000s there has been a subsequent turn in the international literature which explores men's apparent (under)achievement relative to women as a 'crisis of masculinity' in doctoral education (de Vise 2010). This alleged reversal of the 'gender gap' in doctoral education, while contested by some (Mastekaasa 2005), has served to widen the focus on gender as a subject for analytical consideration to include the doctoral experiences of both men and women.

Importantly, the literature has moved beyond implicit suggestions that advocating for equitable participation of women and men in doctoral education is the ultimate aim of critical inquiry; while participation rates and doctoral outcomes remain important indicators of institutional and social practices, they are alone insufficient for understanding doctoral education in the new millennium. Three identifiable strands are evident in the literature, each of which offers an important way of thinking about gender and the contemporary doctoral experience, and each of which this paper will critically review. One strand identifies the doctorate itself, the pedagogies that underpin it, and the academic context more broadly as gendered in particular ways (Leonard 2001; Wisker, 2005; Johnson, Lee and Green 2000: 146; Leonard 2010). A second strand in the literature examines students' increasingly diverse experiences throughout the stages of doctoral candidacy and the ways in which these are influenced by issues of gender. A final strand within the literature examines the effect of gender on outcomes from the doctoral experience, that is, completion times, employment, tenure, promotion and salaries (Potvin and Tai, 2012; Wisker 2005: 220). This paper will critically review these three strands in the literature on gender in doctoral education. In so doing, the paper will illustrate that while some of the traditional disadvantages facing women have diminished, the doctorate remains a 'different process for men and women' (Wall, 2008: 219). Moreover, it will propose that the move away from a focus on women's disadvantage to the student experience of the doctorate will usefully broaden future discussions of gender to encompass more diverse conceptions of subjectivity. Specifically, it will be suggested that traditional rhetorics of male and female doctoral students as binarised 'opposites' are limited in their capacity to fully explore subjectivity, and instead, the doctoral student experience can be expanded to incorporate gender and its intersection with 'race' and ethnicity, socio-economic status, geographic location, sexuality and (dis)ability. The paper makes use of particular interventions in feminist literature, gender studies, the sociology of education and cultural studies that help to disaggregate gendered hierarchies and binaries, and open doctoral education to a more nuanced analysis of the power and complexities of gender.

 Keywords: gender; doctoral experience; doctoral education; alterity; subjectivity; power

The 2003 commencing higher degree by research cohort

Ian Buchanan

Department of Education

Abstract of oral presentation

This paper examines the characteristics and academic outcomes, where they can be determined, of the cohort of candidates who commenced a higher degree by research (HDR) course of study in the 2003 reporting year. The study uses unit record data from the Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS) to examine candidate characteristics and track completions and continuing enrolment of candidates up to 2012, the latest year of available data.

To 2012, nearly 64 per cent of those candidates who commenced a Doctorate by Research in 2003 had completed one, with a further 1 per cent having obtained a Masters by Research degree and 3.5 per cent incomplete but currently enrolled. Just over 40 per cent of those who commenced a Masters by Research degree in 2003 had completed one by 2012, with significantly, a further 17 per cent completing a Doctorate by Research, while 2 per cent had not completed but were currently enrolled.

 Keywords: HDR; doctorate by research; masters by research; completion rate

Profiling the new normal: A perspective from narrative and from enrolment metrics

Nigel Palmer, Helen Marsden, Inger Mewburn

Australian National University

Abstract or oral presentation

Ideas about the 'typical' or 'normal' candidate underpin the development of many research higher degree strategies, policies and programs. These ideas, acknowledged or not, often inform assumptions regarding degree outcomes, levels of engagement and judgements about risk. But are these assumptions true?

While metrics for patterns of participation in research degrees can provide a useful means for testing our ideas about the typical candidate, they can also have a masking effect, particularly where based on unreliable data or reporting methods.

This paper combines quantitative with narrative analysis as a way of understanding and engaging with the new normal subjectivities of research higher degrees. Combining quantitative with narrative analysis can help better inform the development of research higher degree policies, programs and support strategies, and provide a more developed understanding of the relationship between performance measures, identity and diversity.

Keywords: Research doctoral degrees; enrolment metrics; narrative analysis; research higher degree policy and program development

Co-constructed multi-media on-line researcher development programme: A non-traditional mentoring innovation

Emmie Smit

University of the Free State

Abstract or oral presentation

The UFS' Postgraduate School (PGS) foster quality postgraduate education and support by initiating intellectual innovations and transformation. The School's strategic plan includes aims to optimize the postgraduate experience.

This paper reviews an on-line e-mentoring project to empower emerging postgraduate scholars on the distance QwaQwa campus in central South Africa. Through peer - and group - mentoring within an on-line academic community the PGS aims to increase their levels of qualification, and research outputs and overall satisfaction with the level of accomplishment of the UFS's commitment to academic excellence.

Research methodologies that value mentoring and reflecting as practice-improving procedures, formed the milieu wherein a resource-lacking issue developed into a co- constructed resource-providing innovation. Theories, concepts and constructs of Social Innovation, Action Research and Appreciative Living were utilised.

Broader implementation of this convenient time- and cost-effective virtual addition to the existini PGS hub will support non-traditional emerging researchers that are balancing fulltime employment, part-time studies together with personal and social responsibilities.

Keywords: Social innovation; action research; appreciative living; postgraduate; research development; on-line mentoring

Online support of HDR professional development: Recent initiatives & reflections on community-building

Cassily Charles, Lisa McLean

Charles Sturt University

Abstract or oral presentation

CSU is the largest sole provider of distance education in Australia, and in contrast to the 1:10 average Australian ratio of external to internal research candidates, the ratio at

Charles Sturt University is more than 1:2. Research candidates who are formally enrolled 'on-campus' may also find that their circumstances mirror those of external students, as they are spread across CSU's 17 campuses and affiliates around Australia. Charles Sturt University has an established history with distance education, which has influenced its embrace of online and blended modes of learning, and increasingly these are being extended to support research candidates. In particular, online professional development for HDRs has been the site of several key initiatives during 2012 and 2013, at the levels of institution, faculty and school. Notable examples include an extensive calendar of online workshops, online writing groups, online professional doctorate coursework, growing use of social media and a synchronous online presentation competition. In addition to the explicit aims of these online initiatives, community-building has been a valuable, and often unforseen, outcome for both internal and external HDRs. This paper will discuss the practicalities and pleasures of developing online programs which foster connection for all research candidates, wherever they may be, while supporting their research literacy development.

Keywords: online; community-building; distance education; professional development; research literacies

Providing a premium admission experience – can that boost HDR cohort quality?

Lucian Hiss

University of New South Wales

Abstract of oral presentation

While top quality HDR applicants choose the institution at which they wish to complete their PhD based on the research standing of the institution and the supervisor they want to work with, are there other variables that administrators can influence to attract the desired candidature? In 2014, UNSW's Graduate Research School is looking to transform the way we manage HDR admissions with the goal of improving the experience for prospective candidates, supervisors and schools and ensure the candidates in highest demand are not turned off by delays and convoluted administrative hurdles.

This presentation will focus on the process of responding to stakeholder feedback, reviewing our processes and the challenges of obtaining support for HDR tailored systems in a systems environment dominated by the needs of the coursework students.

Keywords: HDR admission system; attract desired HDR candidature; revamped HDR processes and systems

Developing expert scholars: The role of reflection in creative learning

Liezel Frick

Stellenbosch University

Eva Brodin

Lund University

Abstract of oral presentation

Reflection is a critical process in refining artistry in any discipline. It involves thoughtfully considering one's own beliefs and experiences in applying knowledge to practice. Also, it includes an ample amount of creative learning, which seems to be essential in both becoming and being an expert scholar. However, even though there seems to be an obvious relationship between creativity and reflection, this relationship has not received much attention in research yet. Neither has the role of creative learning in becoming an expert scholar been recognized to a wider extent so far. In this paper we therefore conceptualize the relationship between reflection and creativity and depict how these faculties develop within the frame of doctoral education, where novice scholars are prepared for becoming expert scholars. It appears that the traditional emphasis on knowledge and skills may have marginalised the aspects that truly cultivate experts. Understanding the differences in novice and expert learning can enhance the quality of programmes and help both novices and experts to reach learning outcomes. Different educational strategies are therefore appropriate at different skills levels to ensure optimal learning. As such, we provide a conceptual framework and integrative model of the reflective creativity cycle, in which the developmental relationship between reflection and creativity is illuminated.

Keywords: Reflection; creativity; doctoral education

Supervising the creative doctorate

Gina Wisker

University of Brighton

Gillian Robinson

Anglia Ruskin University

Abstract of oral presentation

This paper is based on research conducted with doctoral students who have produced creative doctorates, and with supervisors who have supervised creative doctorates.

We 1) rescrutinised data from two earlier projects : 'doctoral learning journeys' and the international 'parallel' projects each using the same methodology and methods (2007- 2010);2) conducted new face-to-face and email interviews with 6 doctoral students identifying as 'creative' and 3 supervisors who have supervised/are supervising their work. Our research reveals information about the variety of creative doctorates, from those based in art practice to those exploring the creative processes in everyday professional practice, for example higher education manager mavericks; those which deliberately deploy conventional doctoral formats and those which push the boundaries of such formats and are creative in their presentation. We explore evidence of the moments of conceptual threshold crossing (Wisker and Robinson, 2009, Kiley and Wisker 2008) when doctoral students undertaking creative based research problematise accepted constructions of knowledge, engage creatively with theory, practice, the personal and professional in their work to make something new. We explore evidence of supervisors' experiences of the complexities of working with such candidates and their sense of effective practices of 'nudging' doctoral students engaged in research which deploys the creative to make learning leaps, face challenges, and take risks yet not undermine their chances of success with the doctorate in often conventional university contexts. We ask questions about creativity in doctoral learning, supervisory 'nudging' and the tensions between creative work and university requirements and examination.

 Keywords: supervision; creative; conceptual threshold crossing; maverick

Relational Practices in the Supervision of Creative Research Higher Degrees

Jillian Hamilton, Sue Carson

Queensland University of Technology

Abstract of oral presentation

The inclusion of creative practice as an examinable outcome of Higher Degrees by Research in 1998 has led to unprecedented growth in enrolments in creative disciplines (visual and performing arts, design, creative writing, film and digital media). While disciplines and supervisors have welcomed the opportunities and innovation that this emergent field has brought, they have also faced challenges in defining and establishing a rigorous approach to a form of research that is unlike 'traditional' models. Supervisors must simultaneously supervise both the candidate's creative production and scholarly writing and they must guide candidates in establishing a coherent relationship between these constituent components of their thesis. They must also assist candidates to negotiate the relationship between professional aspects of their creative field (such as exhibitionary practices and commercial contracts), and the new knowledge requirements of research in the academy. Practice- led research requires negotiating new types of relationships between the candidate and the supervisor around research methods, process, and the timing and form of research outcomes. Effective working relationships must also be established between supervisors, who may have different areas of expertise, bring different inflections to a research project, and offer complementary forms of support to the candidate. So far there has been little focused research into how supervisors have begun to negotiate these relationships.

This paper presents findings from our recently concluded Office of Learning and Teaching funded project: Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative practice higher research degrees (LE:12-2264). This joint project–led by Queensland University of Technology with project partners, Auckland University of Technology; University of Melbourne; University of New South Wales; and University of Western Sydney–set out to capture, articulate, and share the practices and effective strategies that have been developed by 'early adopter' supervisors of creative practice HDRs. Drawing on interviews with twenty-fi experienced and new supervisors of creative practice HDRs across five Australasian universities, and case studies collected from twenty supervisors from a wider cross-section of universities, we present key findings from the project on negotiating the relational aspects of supervision. We explain how the supervisor interviews and exemplars of practice have been synthesised into a set of recommendations for supervisor academic development and a published booklet for new supervisors entitled '12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees'.

Keywords: supervision; creative practice; research degrees; practice-led research

PhUZd on Facebook: Using social media for creating a community of scholars amongst research higher degree nurses and midwives. Flourished or fizzer?

Anthony Tuckett, Amy Spence

University of Queensland

Abstract of oral presentation

The adoption of social and new media technologies by society's membership has transformed the way we communicate. The era of one of these, Facebook, presents challenges and opportunities in the context of creating a community of research higher degree scholars. The University of Queensland School of Nursing and Midwifery initiated PhUZd on Facebook as a mechanism to build a research culture amongst its disparate research higher degree cohort. The aim of PhUZD is to provide a contemporary locus for students to converse professionally but informally about their research, publications, conferences; to debate and dialogue about research methods and methodology and what matters to them as a research higher degree scholar. This poster will describe PhUZd on Facebook and the attendant challenges and opportunities of it; and answer the question: Has PhUZd flourished or is it a fizzer?

Keywords: social media; technology; nursing

Communication and co-operation between culturally diverse research students

Christiane Niess, Anna Chur-Hansen, Deborah Turnbull, Sofia Zambrano Ramos, Clemence Due

The University of Adelaide

Abstract of oral presentation

Previous studies have demonstrated that international Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students may face difficulties in becoming part of peer student and academic culture and that there may be a lack of integration and communication between international research students. This poster presents the results of interview research conducted in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Adelaide. The research included a sample of 6 staff involved in international HDR matters and 7 international HDR students. In particular, the project examined opinions about areas such as the importance of building and maintaining relationships with supervisors and peers, as well as participating in the social life of the HDR community within the University more broadly. Thematic analysis of the interview data returned a number of themes.

Specifically, staff recognized the HDR student/supervisor relationship as central to success and that supervisors need more training to cope with culturally diverse students. In regards to integration staff emphasized that interaction between HDR students needs facilitation. The student themes reiterated much of what is already well known in the tertiary education sector. For example, students indicated that Australian English and Australian cultural approaches are challenging for international students. Also identified were issues including isolation from other HDR students - even in the same discipline – due to language difficulties and culture differences. More broadly, both staff and students recognized the need to view each HDR student as an individual, while students were more likely to speak about the loneliness, coping mechanisms, and the need for support to build and maintain friendships. In addition, some students expressing the need for more assistance from the Faculty of Health Sciences and the University in helping International students to make connections with others above and beyond academic connections.

Keywords: International students; higher degree by research; supervision

The Postgraduate Certificate in Researcher Professional Development: a revolutionary approach to supporting academic excellence with employer relevance

Claire Nimmo, Campbell Reid

University of Strathclyde

Abstract of oral presentation

The introduction of the Researcher Development Framework and Statement (RDF/S) in 2010 has supported UK Higher Education Institutions in achieving a step-change in the sector-wide recognition of researcher development and its importance and impact (www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf). Leading on from the legacy of the 2001 Joint Skills Statement (www.vitae.ac.uk/jss), the RDF/S articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers. It was developed by and for researchers, in consultation with academics and employers, and has informed Strathclyde's unique approach which aims to revolutionise the researcher development agenda.

In 2013, the University of Strathclyde launched a formalised, institution-wide PGR credits framework and qualification mapped and weighted to the RDF/S. Designed to support student-centred development, the unique approach enables a bespoke training experience aimed at improving quality and success during and after the PhD. Embedded within the standard duration of doctoral programmes, the Postgraduate Certificate in Researcher Professional Development has clear benefits to the student, Strathclyde and the wider economy. Doctoral researchers receive an additional academic qualification in research-related and transferable skills which impacts positively on the student experience, quality of research outputs and future career prospects. In addition to the obvious recruitment benefits, the institution ensures effective quality assurance and rigour of researcher training. This is supported by bespoke systems to enable consistent record-keeping and progress monitoring. The economic benefits come from the pipeline of more highly skilled and trained doctoral graduates entering the workforce.

Offering dynamic training - through a flexible programme mapped to a recognised framework at a European level - helps graduates stand out in an increasingly competitive employment market, whilst benefitting the individual during the doctorate and adding value for the institution.

This poster will offer a case study of Strathclyde's innovative approach to PhD training, focussing specifically on innovative ways to differentiate doctoral graduates as employers demand for higher skills rises.

Keywords: Coursework in the PhD, researcher development, professional development

Writing groups for off-campus PhD students?

Olga Kozar, Juliet Lum

Macquarie University

Abstract of oral presentation

Off-campus modes of study are becoming increasingly popular with more and more doctoral candidates spending significant proportions of their candidature away from their institution. While having clear advantages, such as the ability to continue employment and to fulfil other responsibilities, off-campus study tends to hamper candidates' integration into an academic community and their access to research training and support. Doctoral research writing groups are one type of research training and support that tend to exclude off-campus students, as they are usually run on campus or at least in face-to-face settings. This is unfortunate as such groups have been shown to afford numerous benefits to participants, not only in improving their academic writing skills, but also in increasing their awareness of disciplinary conventions, boosting their confidence in peer review, and reducing feelings of social isolation.

This poster reports on a study that both investigates the feasibility of running online writing groups for geographically dispersed doctoral students and explores the extent to which degree of facilitation (facilitated/ semi-facilitated) and mode of communication (synchronous/ blended/ asynchronous) may affect a group's perceived effectiveness.

The study analyses data obtained from a number of doctoral writing groups run for off-campus students, including survey responses, semi-structured interviews and observations. Preliminary findings of the study are presented and discussed.

 Keywords: writing groups; collaborative environment; distance PhD students; off-campus PhD students; doctoral education and training

Understanding one's own academic identity before contributing to the development of others': is this the key element to hdr supervisor development?

Eddie Blass

University of New England

Angele Jones

Swinburne University of Technology

Abstract of oral presentation

A recent review of the literature on higher degree research supervisor training and development identified a number of interesting trends and themes. The majority of recent studies reviewed stemmed from Australia, UK or the Scandinavian countries and there was a general consensus that most probably there is no single model of supervision training and development that will fit the needs of all supervisors. The themes identified in the reviewed literature included discussions on the nature of research and supervision, how the supervisors' own experiences of being supervised affects their supervision style, how supervisory skills are developed and what a pedagogy for supervisor development might be. In this paper, the focus is on the impact of these factors on the notion of the academic identity, both that of the supervisor and the development of the student's academic identity (or not) through the PhD process. While it may not be possible to develop a one size fits supervision training and development model we explore the idea that assisting supervisors to develop and understand their own academic identity, and how this plays out in the Academy, supervisors can be more deliberate in how they support the development of the academic identity of their students.

Keywords: Supervision; academic identity; professional development; PhD students

Developing a methodology to research the lived experiences on the PhD Journey: critical reflections from the students' perspective

Angele Jones

Swinburne University of Technology

Abstract of oral presentation

This poster reports on the development of a methodology to research lived experiences on the PhD Journey. Over the past decade there has been significant growth in the number of PhD students as well as research into the experiences of PhD students that focus on quality research, timely completion and the 'vexed' issue of attrition, as well as student and supervisor experiences during their journey or post completion, to identify issues encountered that effect successful completion. The research reported on here used an inductive approach to illuminate 'how' a diverse cohort of current PhD students in Australia report on their experience of doing a PhD. Participants engaged with the researcher and reflected on their experiences iteratively over a period of 3 to 12 months using various methods to share their experience. This poster maps the experience of a novice researcher learning the craft of becoming a qualitative researcher. Sharing those moments of being 'stuck' in, not only, progress but in a mindset, and how the act of doing research altered that mindset, while critical reflection in the doing illuminated the self, as researcher, and opened up broader horizons of self-understanding.

Keywords: PhD student; methodology; lived experience

iResearcher – Research organizer for graduate research candidates

Muzaffar Igamberdiev, Athar Qureshi

University of South Australia

Abstract of oral presentation

In academic world, the postgraduate research is often considered as a project based research. Researchers at the universities who conduct these studies (postgraduate candidates) often face wide range of challenges from the day one at the university, namely idea conceptualisation, research methodology identification, standardised proposal preparation, presentation and defence, standardised research publication and most importantly putting together their thesis. Furthermore, the identification of the road map to perform research project in an efficient manner along with putting it together in a way that conforms to academic standard is the key anxiety among the research candidates. This phenomenon builds-up due to the absence of key life-lines readily available for the candidates to jump start their project. Moreover, the amount of guidelines, information and workshops currently available to candidates to help in their research provided by their universities is scattered all over the place and is not in a uniform system. Therefore, such a systematic approach is the need of the time; however, limited attention has been given to it. We propose an online research project portal framework that will enable the candidate to fulfil the above need. The system will contain all the project management functionalities as well as the range of customisable components which a project may need throughout its lifecycle (e.g. templates, styles, survey tools, libraries, guidelines, to-do-lists, tracking, relevant trainings et cetera) in one place. This portal will be readily available for any commencing candidate. Range of academic units (e.g. divisions, schools, labs et cetera) will be able to customise the portal according to the type of research before offering it to the researcher. Researchers on the other hand will be able to personalise the portal as per their visual as well as project needs. Furthermore, the system will be an integrated relationship between the candidate and the supervisors. It will help the academics to supervise better, evaluate the performance efficiently and monitor the progress in real-time. Candidates will gain organised research, time-lined tasks, innovative performance, enhanced contribution and will be able to diminish any social and cultural academic pressure and hence, completing their project on time.

Keywords: graduate research organization; online research application; research candidate task management

Developing Independent Researchers at UCL - An impact case study

Daniela Bultoc

University College London

Abstract of oral presentation

One of the key outcomes of a modern doctorate is developing independent researchers trained to have a unique set of high level skills appropriate for both academic and non- academic careers. A challenge that both institutions and researchers face is 'the second year motivation dip' when researchers are most likely to lose motivation in continuing their study and drop out of their degree.

At UCL, the Skills Development Programme provides transferable skills training that aims to support researchers in managing their research project and finish on time while developing them as independent researchers and equipping them with the necessary skills for their chosen career. There are two distinctive features of UCL's research training that enable us to build successful independent researchers: the use of the Research Student Log, a research project management tool specifically designed for supervised research programmes through which both students and supervisors are able to keep track of the research project; and the use of the Skills Self – Assessment Tool which has been integrated in the milestones of the research project and has been mapped on to Vitae's national Researcher Development Framework . UCL researchers are encouraged to take ownership of their development and so far, about 95% of researchers have engaged in skills self-assessment.

This poster will give an overview of how we engage researchers with UCL's Skills Development Programme and showcase an impact case study with an example of a training workshop that looks at developing the mental toughness and resilience of researchers. The workshop is particularly aimed at researchers in their second year of study to address student motivation and the drop-out trend linked to this stage. The presentation will detail the impact and evaluation measures which include one-to-one professional coaching, pre and post evaluations tests and longitudinal evaluation.

UCL's Graduate School delivers over 700 research skills courses through its Skills Development Programme and takes around 12,000 registrations a year for a community of over 4,500 research students, making it probably the largest skills programmes in the UK and the rest of Europe. The Graduate School has been commended for the support given through the Research Student Log and the Skills Development Programme that has been nominated in the Times Higher Education Awards for Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers.

Keywords: research training; transferable skills; motivation; successful completion; independent researcher

'Research online student and supervisor support (ROSSS)'

Sharon Chirgwin, Suzanne Belton

Menzies School of Health Research

Abstract of oral presentation

In order to address the need for improved engagement and support for over 70 Higher Degree by Research students scattered all over Australia, Menzies School of Health Research successfully gained a research grant to design and trial an on-line site using Blackboard that could provide static and real time information, on-line social and academic interactions but most importantly create a community of learning where there is a sense of belonging. This site which is undergoing trials in 2014 is intended as a template that can be adapted and developed across a range of disciplines.

Keywords: On-line student support; engagement and support; template for other disciplines

Social Support in the PhD Journey

Lilia Mantai

Macquarie University

Abstract of oral presentation

My research aims to investigate the role of social support in Australian doctoral journeys. PhD candidates report isolation and loneliness in doctoral education despite opportunities to interact with peers. Evidence suggests that doctoral candidates make use of different forms of social support on their doctoral journey, which extends beyond the immediate higher degree research environment. Further, doctoral candidates increasingly use technology as facilitators of social support. Firstly, my paper introduces a new model of social support in the PhD journey. Secondly, I present a review of Australian universities' higher degree research department websites that shows how different universities address doctoral student support needs. This systematic online review answers questions, such as: how are HDR candidates addressed and portrayed, what support services are linked from the website, what types of support and training does the HDR department offer to its candidates, whether any services are provided for students by students, and how academic community is expressed via the websites. Thirdly, I discuss PhD candidates' perspectives on the types of social support available at their university and the types of social support that they use and value as discussed in focus groups with PhD candidates. The website review and the focus group findings are compared and discussed against the presented model of social support resulting in implications for further research.

Keywords: social support; student support; doctoral research

Journeying the bumpy thesis roads: Learning and exploring together

Rosalie Holian, Warren Staples, Judy Burnside-Lawry

RMIT University

John Dalrymple

Swinburne University of Technology

Abstract of oral presentation

There are many sources of individual differences in expectations between Academic Supervisors and HDR candidates, including age and experience, gender and culture, and 'personality'. These influence preferences about how 'best' to undertake both new and familiar tasks and how to negotiate between alternative options. When there are two active supervisors, as co-supervisors or as a primary and secondary supervisor, the effectiveness of the working relationship between these supervisors can add further complexity to the issues with which a HDR candidate has to deal. There can be important differences between supervisors' points of view, ontological, epistemological, and personal, and there may be no one right way. Supervisors and candidates need to become an effective working team to be able to balance the demands of staying focussed on progress and completion, providing support and advice and developing both cognitive and emotional intelligence. Discussing and clarifying expectations early on is vital, and since needs and preferences can change these must be regularly revisited. Areas of potential misunderstanding can be about small or large issues, from research title to methodology, advice about literature, when and where meetings occur, and how detailed or informal feedback should be. HDR candidates should not be made to suffer avoidable distress but successfully dealing with these problems can be a source of 'good' stress (eustress) and personal development. Addressing and resolving challenges in working relationships while at the same time completing a thesis is a great accomplishment.

Keywords: expectations; relationships; HDR supervision

Empathy and/or sympathy: Research administrators as initial emotions and in the successful completion of research degrees in Australia

Domi Córdoba

University of Melbourne

Abstract of oral presentation

It is often argued that the trials and tribulations of thesis writing may bring Graduate Research students into a catharsis that goes beyond the strictly academic success upon completion. Should Australian Universities be successful at increasing completion rates, it is important that the stakeholders involved in the management of students' candidature (such as students, academic staff, and administrators) coordinate their respective efforts efficiently. They should also provide effectively adequate resources at sustaining a culture of empathy and/or sympathy. As students set up to circumnavigate across vastness of data and literature and acquire professional skills along the way; another journey may begin, that of self-awareness or emotional growth.

This paper looks into the role of research administrators, not only as first port of call to respond to policy and procedures, but more importantly, as mediators of Graduate Research candidates' emotions. By providing research administrators with adequate tools to identify early signs of emotional distress in students, administrators may play a crucial role in adding valued experience in their research journey.

I examine how empathy/sympathy is a valuable tool to identify the research experience and emotional needs of students from multi- cultural, multi-social and multi–economic backgrounds in Australia. I will draw on literature and will align it with any current data available on this topic at the University of Melbourne Counselling Office.

In particular, I look into the positive impact of a genuine interpersonal experience between students from a non-English background and administrators on research progress by recurring to a strong network of counsellors and other experts in the field of psychology in assisting students to obtain research experience, despite national efforts to quantify research performance.

Keywords: empathy; sympathy; candidature management; mental health

Improving the graduate teaching assistant experience: Who and what matters

Catherine Zhou

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Keith Thomas

Victoria University

Abstract of oral presentation

The role of the graduate teaching assistant (GTA) is central to undergraduate teaching, but it is also an ambiguous role in Hong Kong universities. This paper reports a study that examined the experience of Hong Kong-based GTAs, based on higher-degree research students who either originate from the Mainland China (non-local student) or from Hong Kong (local student). The respective experiences are examined across two broad areas: (1) teaching performance and (2) the challenge in balancing teaching duties and research commitments. Findings from this study suggest that professional development support is necessary for both groups in order to improve teaching performance. The study also reveals the need for a conversation between faculty, staff, and the university administration in order to reduce the ambiguity and stress related to the two often competing responsibilities. Specific support for non-local GTAs is highlighted linked mainly to their relative language ability and general unfamiliarity with the local educational environment.

Keywords: Higher-degree-research student; teaching assistant; teaching; research

Helping doctoral students to teach: Bridging the gap between PhD candidature and early career academic

Dominique A. Greer, Abby Cathcart, Larry Neale

Queensland University of Technology

Abstract of oral presentation

Doctoral development is strongly biased towards honing research skills at the expense of systematically developing teaching competency. As a result, aspiring academics feeling unprepared for the pedagogical requirements of early-career academic roles. When early career academics begin their careers without adequate teaching development, they suffer from low teaching self-efficacy and reduce undergraduate and postgraduate students' achievement of learning outcomes.

In this paper, we argue that quality doctoral education should allow teaching competency to be developed alongside research skills. Systematic, competency-based teaching development should begin during PhD candidacy to enable early career academics to successfully transition into academia and deliver competent learning experiences. In response to this challenge, academics at the Queensland University of Technology developed the Teaching Advantage Program (TAP) tailored exclusively to doctoral candidates. The program was designed using an action research method within a Theory of Cognitive Apprenticeship framework to improve the teaching self-efficacy of doctoral students. Evaluations suggest that advanced doctoral students who attend this voluntary intervention experience significantly improved teaching self-efficacy and report more confidence in their ability to perform in an early-career academic role.

Keywords: doctoral development; teaching development; teaching self-efficacy; teaching advantage; action research; theory of cognitive apprenticeship

In at the deep end: Comparing different approaches to developing doctoral candidates' teaching skills

Abby Cathcart, Elizabeth A. Beckmann

Queensland University of Technology

Abstract of oral presentation

Research students exert a key influence on learning and teaching in Australian universities: half of all undergraduate teaching is done by sessional academics, many of whom are HDR students (Probert, 2013). The Higher Education Standards Framework requires that providers ensure teaching staff 'have a sound understanding of . . . professional practice . . . [and] an understanding of pedagogical or adult learning principles' (Teaching Education Quality and Standards Agency, 2011). Yet only 16% of HDR students have undertaken professional teaching development (Edwards, Bexley, & Richardson, 2011.

By comparing experiences at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and the Australian National University (ANU), we argue that supporting the teaching development of doctoral students is central to providing good learning experiences for all students. The QUT Teaching Advantage program provides doctoral candidates with skills in teaching, coordinating and forging an academic career. At ANU, two historically successful programs for doctoral students—the Graduate Teaching Program (1995-2012) and Pinnacle (2008-2012)

—have been superseded by a more broadly-aimed Academic Professional Development program for staff and students, linked to an international professional recognition scheme. By reviewing key program criteria—such as content, mode and nature of delivery, cohort characteristics, assessment and outcomes—and drawing on a content analysis of participant feedback, we examine the impact of participation on doctoral students' teaching experiences and perceived readiness for academic careers. Implications for doctoral students, supervisors, institutional policy-makers and the higher education sector are discussed.

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Keywords: doctoral candidates; teaching; academic development; standards; quality

The Postgraduate Certificate in Researcher Professional Development: a revolutionary approach to supporting academic excellence with employer relevance

Claire Nimmo

University of Strathclyde

Abstract of oral presentation

The introduction of the Researcher Development Framework and Statement (RDF/S) in 2010 has supported UK Higher Education Institutions in achieving a step-change in the sector-wide recognition of researcher development and its importance and impact (www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf). Leading on from the legacy of the 2001 Joint Skills Statement (www.vitae.ac.uk/jss), the RDF/S articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes

of successful researchers. It was developed by and for researchers, in consultation with academics and employers, and has informed Strathclyde's unique approach which aims to revolutionise the researcher development agenda.

In 2013, the University of Strathclyde launched a formalised, institution-wide PGR credits framework and qualification mapped and weighted to the RDF/S. Designed to support student-centred development, the unique approach enables a bespoke training experience aimed at improving quality and success during and after the PhD.

Embedded within the standard duration of doctoral programmes, the Postgraduate Certificate in Researcher Professional Development has clear benefits to the student, Strathclyde and the wider economy. Doctoral researchers receive an additional academic qualification in research-related and transferable skills which impacts positively on the student experience, quality of research outputs and future career prospects. In addition to the obvious recruitment benefits, the institution ensures effective quality assurance and rigour of researcher training. This is supported by bespoke systems to enable consistent record-keeping and progress monitoring. The economic benefits come from the pipeline of more highly skilled and trained doctoral graduates entering the workforce.

Offering dynamic training - through a flexible programme mapped to a recognised framework at a European level - helps graduates stand out in an increasingly competitive employment market, whilst benefitting the individual during the doctorate and adding value for the institution.

This presentation will offer a case study of Strathclyde's innovative approach to PhD training, focussing specifically on innovative ways to differentiate doctoral graduates as employers demand for higher skills rises.

Keywords: Development; professional; skills; training; employability; researcher

How might coursework in the PhD be related to employability?

Margaret Kiley

The Australian National University

Abstract of oral presentation

This paper reports on an OLT-funded project which sought to understand the increasing phenomenon in Australia of the introduction of coursework into the PhD. The study involved six different types of Australian universities with: interviews with Deans of Graduate Studies; extensive workshops and focus groups in two of the universities; an online survey of candidates in five of the institutions, analysis of a different approach in one of the six universities; and workshops with over 100 colleagues in the mainland states of Australia.

Findings from the work with staff indicated that there were many different understandings and practices of 'coursework' ranging from generic research methods through to advanced disciplinary knowledge, and what might be described as 'soft skills' including employability skills.

One finding from the research of particular relevance to this paper is the response from candidates regarding the additional support they felt they needed during candidature to assist them in their career aspirations. Most commonly reported was help required in being able to relate doctoral research to employer requirements. Furthermore candidates reported that they considered that to be competitive for the career they wished to pursue, which for approximately 60% was in Education, they needed additional publications, and teaching knowledge and skills.

This paper will discuss the curriculum and pedagogical implications of the findings with a particular, but not exclusive, focus on employability.

Keywords: employability; coursework; doctoral research

Dr Who: Frauds in research education - The imposter syndrome explained

Hugh Kearns

Flinders University

Abstract of oral presentation

The imposter phenomenon was first described in 1978 by Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes in a famous paper, 'The Imposter Phenomenon in High-Achieving Women' which drew on their observations that many clever and successful women were secretly feeling like imposters or frauds. The concept resonated with many people and led to many further studies with some (Matthews, 1984) reporting that up to 70% of the population experience imposter feelings at some stage.

The doctoral experience creates ideal conditions for developing a crippling imposter syndrome. Perfectionism, a sense of isolation and a research culture that can be highly critical combine to lead a large number of research students to identify with the imposter syndrome.

While the construct was proposed over 40 years ago and people can readily relate to it there is no clear model that describes how it develops and operates. Drawing on work with thousands of research students at leading research-intensive universities across the world, in-depth interviews with research students and their supervisors and the latest psychological research this paper proposes a model for how the imposter syndrome develops and how it persists despite abundant evidence to the contrary.

Based on this model, strategies are described that have been effective in challenging the imposter syndrome and reducing its negative effects. These can be used by individuals themselves, their supervisors and those supporting research students.

Keywords: Imposter syndrome; imposter phenomenon; frauds

The Passionate Knowledge Worker: Exploring tensions between Australian Future Fellows and HE knowledge and innovation policy discourse

Denise Cuthbert

RMIT Univeristy

Tebeje Molla

Deakin University

Robyn Barnacle

RMIT Univeristy

Abstract of oral presentation

This paper reports on findings from analysis of data drawn from surveys of 325 Australian Research Council Future Fellows and prevalent constructions of the PhD, research and innovation and higher education policy discourses. Our analysis points to gaps and disjunctures between the ways in which the doctoral experience, the experience of doing research, and being a (highly productive) researcher are described by the Future Fellows in our sample, and the way in which these endeavours are framed in Australia HE policy and in statements about doctoral education produced by several Australian universities. We find that the Future Fellows speak of both the doctoral endeavour and their subsequent research careers in language which is highly affective, altruistic, non-careerist, and which signals curiosity and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. This is at odds with the political and institutional framing of these endeavours which focus on utility, employment and their place within the national innovation system. In considering these gaps and disjunctures, we ask whether this markedly different framing is inevitable and to be expected, or whether it indicates significant misunderstandings on both sides which need to be addressed.

Keywords: Researcher motivations; higher education policy; knowledge generation in a knowledge economy; doctoral education; passion for research

An innovative approach to developing the writing and publication skills of research students in science and technology disciplines: demonstrated success of an embedded program

Margaret Cargill and Ron Smernik

University of Adelaide

Abstract of oral presentation

Scientific writing is a crucial skill that postgraduate students in science and technology disciplines need to complete their degrees and to succeed in their subsequent careers, but developing effective training models remains a challenge. This paper reports the development, implementation and evaluation of an innovative program in the University of Adelaide Faculty of Sciences. The program uses the text 'Writing Scientific Research Articles: Strategy and Steps', co-authored by one of the authors of this paper (Margaret). However, whereas the text is commonly used to support intensive (1-5 day) article writing workshops, the delivery format for our postgraduate students is very different, with the program embedded throughout candidature as a series of monthly 2-hour sessions delivered by a well-published research scientist (Ron). We see multiple benefits in this delivery mode: (i) it establishes the idea that writing is critical to being a scientist from the very start of candidature; (ii) it enables students to gradually develop and gain confidence in specialist writing skills in anticipation of their need and without saturating their ability to assimilate information; and (iii) it regularly brings writing to the attention of students and provides a regular forum to address problems. Evaluation of the program over the first two years of operation demonstrated high participant satisfaction and confirmed multiple benefits to students, including increased confidence in writing and a thorough understanding of peer-reviewed publication. In time, we expect to see measurable improvements in PhD completion rates and times, and in publications arising from postgraduate degrees.

Keywords: Scientific writing, science and technology, postgraduate training

Pedagogical challenges in training doctoral supervisors

Lena Berggren and Agnetha Lundström

Umeå University

Abstract of oral presentation

At Umeå University, we have been doing courses for doctoral supervisors since 1997. The course is two weeks, runs three times a year with around 75 participants in total annually and is organized by the University Centre for Teaching and Learning. The course is in effect mandatory since it is a prerequisite for promotion to Associate Professor within all faculties. This poses a pedagogical challenge, since not all course participants take the course by choice. Furthermore, quite a few of the participants on the course have no previous teaching experience on lower study levels. This means that they are completely new to thinking about themselves as university teachers, and since one of our starting points is that supervision is a pedagogical enterprise this is also a challenge. A third challenge is the fact that not all participants have previous own experience from supervision.

This paper will explore how these challenges are being met. We will give examples of how we work to introduce pedagogical theory and a professional mindset concerning supervision as well as examples of how we work to give practical experience within the limits of the course. To date, the course has been very favourably received and it is often described as an 'eye-opener' in the course evaluations. The paper concludes with a discussion on how the participants relate to doctoral supervision as a pedagogical enterprise by drawing on the reflections in one of the course assignments, a self-reflection on what it means to be a 'good' supervisor.

Keywords: Supervisor training, pragmatics of supervision, pedagogics of supervision, pedagogical challenges of supervision

Addressing diversity in doctoral writing support: Implications for postgraduate research training and supervision

Linda Li

University of Canberra

Abstract of oral presentation

Successful completion of a doctoral degree demands substantial original research presented in a thesis demonstrating high level academic writing capacities. This necessitates academic writing support for doctoral students, which is increasingly important for Australian universities as the student body becomes larger and more diverse, and the pressure for on-time completion is intensified. Doctoral students' needs for writing support are diverse and complex. This complexity is reflected in the students' varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds, prior educational and professional experiences, disciplines and thesis topics, research designs and methodologies, stages of candidature, and levels of confidence in academic writing. To address such diversity, thesis writing needs to be constructed as a supported journey of self-discovery during which students' academic writing development is scaffolded with skilled advising and empathetic guidance. This paper argues that support for doctoral writing should be grounded in a clear and contextualised understanding of the specific writing needs of doctoral students from their particular perspectives, with a genuine respect for their prior educational backgrounds and their intellectual and personal development as individuals. It presents the pedagogical approach and teaching strategies applied in a structured yet flexible thesis writing program to guide diverse cohorts of doctoral students to acquire explicit knowledge of the thesis genre, academic writing conventions and disciplinary writing practices, and develop productive writing skills for quality and on-time completion. Implications for postgraduate research supervision are also discussed.

Keywords: doctoral writing support, diversity, academic writing development

Using learning plans to support doctoral candidates

Margaret Kiley

The Australian National University

Natasha Ayres

Edith Cowan University

Abstract of oral presentation

Learning Plans, known by a range of titles for example, Personal development profiling, Training and personal development plans, and Research Framework for Doctoral Education, have been introduced into doctoral education in a structured manner over the past decade. This paper reports on research related to implementing learning plans at an Australian university to support doctoral candidates' development. We addressed the following questions:

- Why might learning plans be developed?
- What are the main components of a learning plan?
- How can learning plans be effectively introduced and supported?

The implementation of generic learning plans that can be modified by discipline and individual doctoral candidates arose from university-wide discussions regarding the possible implementation of coursework in the PhD. Discussions with staff suggested that they preferred the individualised nature of a personal learning plan, which allowed each candidate to build on identified areas of strength and need, rather than more formalised coursework.

As a guide to our work we undertook an extensive review of the literature which will be reported in the paper, along with evaluative comments collected from candidates and staff regarding the effective use of the learning plans and the possible benefits.

Preliminary findings suggest that particular considerations include the need for supervisor development in the use of the plans as well as the coordination of learning opportunities throughout the institution in ways that support the specific aspects of the plan.

Keywords: doctoral, PhD, learning plan

What employers want: Using job adverts to talk about doctoral employability

Inger Mewburn

Australian National University

Rachael Pitt

La Trobe University

Abstract of oral presentation

The research workforce, and by extension research careers, are a topic of intense international, national, and local concern and development. Naturally the doctorate, as the pinnacle of formal research training, is integral to these considerations. Amongst the many discussions taking place in this space, the purpose and form of the modern PhD remains a consistent theme. Particularly as a means of preparing researchers for diverse roles across varying employment outcomes.

This exploratory study analysed job adverts for roles specifying a PhD as a required or desired criteria. This approach permits a new level of discussion in the employability literature, beyond the aspirational or 'wish-list' groupings of skills posited by employers and governments for their ideal research workforce. By focussing on what is actually stipulated as required for these roles at the time of advertising them, an alternative picture emerges of what employers really want in PhD-qualified employees. This, in turn, provides new directions for those considering an employability curriculum to support PhD students seeking employment in specific sectors.

Keywords: Employability, research training, research careers, careers

Designing and assessing the learning outcomes of transferable skills at the postgraduate level

Catherine Zhou

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Abstract of oral presentation

In 2013 transferable skills became a new focus of the research postgraduate curriculum at the School of Engineering in the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

Accompanying the new curriculum is the design and assessment of student learning outcomes of the new Professional Development Course. According to the 2010 Strategic Leaders Global Summit, 'the primary objective of quality assessment is to ensure and improve the quality of (post)-graduate training and student learning and professional development. Evaluation must go beyond the assessment of research quality to address topics such as: … Student Learning Outcomes, including transferable skills …' This study is conducted by the Centre for Engineering Education Innovation within the School of Engineering. Nine learning outcomes were designed to align with the ABET accreditation criteria and the university-level education objectives. They assume that students have met all the undergraduate-level learning outcomes of the university before entering the postgraduate program. Both quantitative and qualitative research is conducted to observe student learning progress and the change of their skill level. The findings are also used to improve the course design so as to ensure its effectiveness. The results of the pre-test on the students admitted in the fall of 2013 show that overall those with more research experience are more confident in the development of these skills. In terms of teamwork particularly, students with more research experience have stronger intention to support team members and tailor their own work plan according to the team's goal. However, no significant difference is found between any specific groups regarding the skill of solving conflicts within a team.

Keywords: Transferable skills, learning outcomes, assessment

The hardest step is over the threshold: Supervision learning as threshold crossing

Susan Carter and Sean Sturm

The University of Auckland

Abstract of oral presentation

Are there threshold passages in supervision? If we accept 1) that teachers learn to teach and 2) that supervision is teaching, can we locate threshold passages for supervisors, where they initially falter and then cross a learning threshold, being transformed irrevocably as they do so (Land, Meyer, & Baillie, 2010)? Are there specific learning moments in the doctoral process that supervisors typically find difficult? Or are there simply, as with any intense human relationship, 'wicked problems' (Rittel & Webber, 1973) that the parties must work together to (re)solve?

Though doctoral candidates (and their research projects) are by definition unique, they share 'generic doctoral thresholds' (Kiley & Wisker, 2009, 433) as, for example, when they come to understand 'the significance or relevance of the project' (Kiley & Wisker, 2009, 435). As academic developers who teach supervisors, we would argue that we can learn much about supervision – and about the identity of supervisors – by seeing the learning it entails as threshold crossing, a lesson that comes easily to us as literary scholars 'in exile,' as it were, in academic development. Supervisors are not merely 'keepers of the threshold,' who counsel and appraise their supervisees; they too learn from the process of supervision. In this paper, we investigate data from a pilot study at our institution using literary models of threshold crossing.

Keywords: Supervision, Learning advising of supervisors, Threshold learning for supervision.

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Theorising the 'inter' in intercultural supervision: place, time and knowledge in intercultural supervision

Catherine Manathunga

Victoria University of Wellington

Abstract of oral presentation

Supervision pedagogy in many universities around the globe has increasingly become intercultural as more research students travel to other countries to complete their doctoral studies and as access to PhD studies widens locally. This paper seeks to theorise the in-between cultural spaces where supervisors and students meet and negotiate their cultural and scholarly identities – the 'inter' in intercultural. Drawing principally on postcolonial theory, I argue that academics require more nuanced, critical and theoretically-based understandings of the contact zone (Pratt, 2008) of intercultural supervision. If this contact zone is to provide a strong and respectful space for culture to become a place of thought and research, then supervisors and students require more culturally responsive understandings of place, time and knowledge.

Postcolonial, feminist and cultural geography theories about place, time and knowledge allow us to reach beyond Western understandings in order to validate diverse cultural epistemologies (Chakrabarty, 2007; Connell, 2007; Massey, 2005; Smith, 1999; Singh, 2011). This allows culturally diverse students opportunities to open up the space of knowledge creation to produce original, transcultural knowledge. All of these factors both enrich and complicate the complex patterns of power circulating in intercultural supervision. The contact zone of intercultural supervision can also be an unhomely space (Bhabha, 1994) of ambivalence for supervisors and students and there may be moments of assimilation as well as transculturation. This paper applies these understandings of place, time and knowledge to student and supervisor interview data collected from a research intensive university in Australia.

Keywords: supervision pedagogy; intercultural supervision; postcolonial theory; place; time; knowledge

Issues in doctoral supervision: Strategies for crossing intellectual thresholds

Marcia Johnson

The University of Waikato

Abstract of oral presentation

This presentation describes a New Zealand qualitative case study exploration of threshold concepts in doctoral research writing – specifically the point(s) at which students can become 'stuck'. A key goal of the research has been to develop deeper insights into which strategies can be effective for building the types of writing and thinking competencies doctoral students need for success.

Kiley (2009) argues that doctoral candidates face a number of challenges and that surmounting them both requires, and facilitates, personal transformation – an adjustment to how they think and communicate in conceptual spaces. Similarly, threshold concepts have been linked to ontological shifts (Meyer, Land, & Baillie, 2010), changes in identity, and hence understanding of what it means to become an artist, engineer, or an academic scholar. It is important that students successfully cross intellectual thresholds and until they do so, they are unable to solve new problems or address different situations. In a conceptual sense, students are lost ('stuck') – wandering in a mental space of incomplete understanding. Drawing on survey and interview data with doctoral students in New Zealand, Canada, and the United States and interviews with doctoral supervisors in New Zealand, two threshold concepts related to doctoral research writing were identified in this research.

I have called them 'talking to think' and 'developing self-efficacy' (Johnson, 2013). During the presentation both threshold concepts will be presented from the perspectives of students and supervisors, and the initiatives that we have introduced to help students, and improve supervisory practice, will be explored and discussed. [249 words]

Keywords**:** Doctoral writing; threshold concepts; doctoral supervision

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'Strangers' or immediate colleagues: who is most helpful in developing PhD students' oral presentation skills?

Judy Ford and Satomi Ohnishi

University of South Australia

Abstract of oral presentation

The ability to communicate the results of research is possibly as important as the research itself and the development of effective oral communication skills is equally as important as written skills. But what is the best way to develop excellent skills and who is the best adviser, close colleague or 'stranger'?

In a study conducted over a period of six years, 72 PhD students in physical chemistry gave at least three evaluated presentations after each of which they received written feedback. The audience for each presentation was a mixture of academic and technical staff, and PhD students. Between them they represented several sub-disciplines which differed sufficiently from one another that a common understanding of all discipline- specific words and concepts could not be assumed. Written feedback was solicited for each presentation and later subjected to analysis. The feedback was classified into that given by those who were 'familiar with topic' and those who were 'not familiar with topic'. The paper will present a content analysis of the feedback examining differences in the phrasing of comments using a number of dimensions, for example: positive versus negative, encouraging versus critical, and instructive versus questioning. For seminars given by individual students, we looked for changes in responses between the seminars and between the two types of audience members. We also looked for differences in the nature of the feedback given to male and female students. We discuss whether a 'colleague' or a 'stranger' is more helpful in the development of oral presentation skills at various stages in competency.

Keywords: Oral communication skills; PhD training; feedback; competency; content analysis

Building research cultures in doctoral education: the role of coordinators

David Boud and Kevin Ryland

University of Technology

Abstract of oral presentation

While much has been discussed about the building of research cultures in universities more generally, the specific place of research students within them has been less of a focus. At one end of a diverse spectrum of practice, students take their place as fully functioning members of research groups and benefit from total immersion in the culture of the group, but more commonly they are more peripherally located within the research enterprise. What can be done to build the research culture for students? In particular what can be done beyond the research group of which they may be part?

As part of a study of research education that was part of an OLT-funded project 'Building local leadership for research education', a needs analysis of research degree coordinators in four universities identified that 'Creating a research community/culture for HDR students' was rated top both in terms of importance and the need for it to be developed further. This led to the development of a set of case studies about research coordination based on successful initiatives, drawing on experiences in both Australian and UK institutions. The paper draws on these case studies to analyse the issues identified to build research cultures and the roles of research degree coordinators within them. Drawing on the conceptual framework of distributed leadership, it identifies the importance of: multiple players being involved, the need to build such cultures over many years and the importance of strategies for mobilizing both supervisors and research students themselves.

Keywords: Research Education; research culture; HDR students; PhD; doctorate

Collegiality – How does it influence the development of supervisors?

Ria Vosloo

University of Johannesburg

David Root

WITS

Abstract of oral presentation

In the process of developing and growing their supervisory skills and competences academics have to interact with their colleagues in a variety of ways. This experience can be positive in the development process but it can also be a source of anxiety for the junior academic. There is also a risk that honest feedback can be withheld as collegiality is prioritized over development needs. Understanding how collegiality can influence the development of supervisory skills and competences in academics is therefore important in maximizing the benefits of any interventions to build supervisory capacity.

The development of supervisory capacity within a school or department can be seen as more than the development of the supervisory capacity of the individual. Other aspects to consider include the flexibility of the school or department to provide supervision at the various postgraduate levels, across a range of specialist areas and to a heterogeneous student body. The normed expectations and 'way that supervision is done here' should also be clear and transparent to all academics.

In a situation where a school is undergoing rapid growth and where many junior academics are being brought into the school, the process of building a shared and normed understanding of the expectations, processes and procedures around supervision is important. When new academics outnumber existing academics, and where many have only limited supervision experience and may come from many different context the situation can become very complex to manage.

This paper reports on how both the new and existing academics experienced collegiality and its influence on their growth and development as supervisors.

Keywords: Collegiality; supervisory capacity; new academics

The well-being of inexperienced doctoral supervisors: Perspectives from the demands- resources model

Henriette Vandenberg

University of the Free State

Abstract of oral presentation

The complexity of doctoral supervision poses several intellectual, emotional and relational challenges to the well-being of first-time doctoral supervisors. These challenges are even more pronounced in resource poor environments, with high work and supervision loads, limited support and training opportunities for inexperienced supervisors and insufficient policy guidelines. This often results in high levels of stress, negative experiences of the supervision process and disengagement from the supervisory role. This interactive research study reports on a supervisor capacity building process conducted at the Postgraduate School, focusing on the development of supervisory skills and confidence of inexperienced supervisors and establishing a supportive, encouraging learning community that promote positive experiences of supervisors and their candidates. This action research study used the Demands- Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) as guiding theoretical framework to explore the experiences of 23 inexperienced supervisors participating in a supervision community of practice at the postgraduate school, to assess their support needs and to plan a skills development program for them. The results highlighted the potential stress buffering impact of resources such as training opportunities, support from senior colleagues and the increased confidence in their supervision abilities despite high demands. The premise of the Demands-Resources model is that individuals with sufficient access to personal and organizational resources develop a greater sense of competence, personal growth and motivation to learn. The importance of a balance between the demands and resources was clear in some participants who felt overwhelmed by very high demands and gradually disengaged from their research supervision responsibilities.

Keywords: Supervisor well-being; supervisor training; mentoring program; demands-resources model; role overload

Supervision practices in emerging significant scholars - Voices from Scandinavian archaeology

Per Cornell and Tove Hjorungdal

Gothenburg University

Abstract of oral presentation

This discussion focuses on how we can keep up, assess and spread dynamic and flexible models of postgraduate supervision. Our own experiences from many years of teaching at all levels, using of beneficial models derive from praxis-oriented and critical pedagogies. These are pedagogies aiming at giving support to the students' long and flexible process of becoming independent and significant scholars. In their theses, new doctors in archaeology are expected to contribute something new in their field, to be able to convey new approaches and interpretations. Recognized pedagogies are thus in good accordance with our own ideas of how scholarship is practiced and advanced. Speaking and assessing in tutorials and seminars is a main practice in our supervisions in developing students' own voice in scientific arguments and negotiations. We discuss and work on useful experiences we have followed on intellectual development.

Keywords: Dynamic; praxis-oriented models; supervision; experiences from archaeology

An ethnographic study of supervision leadership style in a Chinese EFL research community of practices

Hongbing Peng

Jinan University

Abstract of oral presentation

The study aims to explore the supervision leadership style perceived by a group of 24 mainland Chinese graduate students and a group of 13 mainland graduate supervisors as a result of their supervision experiences while studying and supervising in a Chinese EFL research community of practices. Discourse system (DS) proposed by Scollon and Scollon (2000) is applied as the overall analytical framework. Ethnography which includes in-depth interviews, case study, participant observation and in-house documents analysis is employed as primary research method to substantiate the complexities underlying the supervision relationship. The findings show a number of complaints supervisors and supervisees both have towards each other. The findings also reveal the inadequacy of the school graduate supervision system and the non- materialistic yet unhealthy academic culture in that Danwei community of practices.

The findings suggest a Chinese culture-specific paternalistic leadership style which is centralized, informal, non-standardized, personalized and non-contractual fails to regulate and restrict supervision behavior and practices well. The research is further triangulated by perceptions of a group of 11 international graduate students pertaining to their supervision experiences with their western supervisors in a civil society of community of practices. It is argued that paternalistic leadership in a Danwei society should be gradually and inevitably transformed into contractual leadership in a civil society so that interests of both supervisees and supervisors can well be protected and an academic professional supervision relationship can be established under a set of contractually well-defined and explicitly-stated responsibilities and rights followed strictly by its community members.

Keywords: Paternalistic leadership; contractual relations; discourse system (DS); graduate supervisor-student relationship; complaints; Danwei community of practices

From 'quiz-type' questions to 'friendly interviews': A story of striving for quality data

Pam Bartholomaeus and Rosmawati

Flinders University

Abstract of oral presentation

Interviews require skilful communication and guidance by the researcher if they are to provide valid data for a qualitative research project. This paper reports on an international student's preparation to conduct interviews for a mixed methods study in the field of education in Indonesia. While interviews are often a key part of qualitative or mixed methods research, the focus when developing the research is usually on decisions about identification of interviewees, the form of the interviews, topics to be covered, and questions for the interview schedule. The narrative for this paper begins with a doctoral student's conduct of a trial interview, translation and transcription. The resulting text indicated to supervisors that the interviews needed more and careful preparation. Differences in the forms of interpersonal communication commonly used in Australia compared with those of Indonesia, and between researcher and participant in the Indonesian context, were recognized as important. Some intensive work followed, including revising topics to be covered in the interview and careful drafting of initial questions and reserve questions. This experience indicates the importance of identification of cultural differences that will impact on qualitative data collection by international students

Keywords: student experience; supervision practice and the pedagogy of supervision; research skills; qualitative research; interviewing

'I will seek clarification of this in the viva': Purpose and process of the Viva through the lens of examiner reports

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Abstract of oral presentation

Currently in Australia, PhD examination does not, as a rule, include a viva. However, the question of reintroducing a viva is being raised as new technologies mean previous obstacles, such as isolation, become less relevant. This paper attempts to inform this debate and explore in depth the language about the viva in examiner reports.

From a cross-national study of the impact of the viva in PhD examination, information from two institutions in New Zealand and two in United Kingdom was collected and analysed to explore how processes differ and how the viva is referenced within the report text.

For this, the text of 688 examiner and convener reports (388 from NZ; 300 from UK) was coded to identify all comment referencing the viva. This text was then on-coded to tease out the specific nature of this comment (verification, integration, closure) and to answer the following questions: Do examiners refer to the viva in their reports and, if so, to what extent? Are there differences between countries in the nature and extent of this comment? What types of issues are they looking to the viva to solve? Does reference to the viva complement other comments in the reports, and are differences in process reflected in differences in reference to the viva?

Keywords: Doctoral examination; viva; examiner reports; cross-national study

How examiners understand the contribution of the viva to doctoral examination

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Abstract of oral presentation

At the level of final PhD examination, there are few systems without a formal viva or equivalent. In this study we sought the understandings, through interviews, of 24 NZ examiners about the role of the oral in doctoral examination and the goals of assessment at that level. This paper specifically examines the contribution of the oral to overall thesis assessment as perceived by the examiners. The oral and the thesis examination report have common purposes in checking for candidate understanding, verifying candidates' workmanship, and further developing the thesis. It has already been demonstrated in previous publications that thesis reports contain a significant formative element. In addition the oral appears to offer two unique types of 'embodied' information, one is affirmation that the thesis is genuinely the candidate's work and the other is more 'integrative' and about the researcher as a professional. Examiners refer to engaging with the research persona – the 'ownership and knowledge' of the work, and identify the role of the assessment in developing the 'professional' beyond the written evidence, as captured by the following quotation 'this additional interaction with the examiners …has pushed them to put their thesis together in a way that they hadn't quite necessarily, in its written form.'

The findings have implications for re-assessing the criteria for assessment and the value of the viva in light of ongoing debate and critique of doctoral examination.

Keywords: Viva/oral; doctoral examination; assessment

Emphasis in examiner reports: Does the viva make a difference?

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Abstract of oral presentation

This paper brings together information from two studies of PhD examination. The first study included 599 examiner reports on PhD theses examined across five Australian universities, where a viva is not part of the examination regime. The second study included 500 PhD examiner reports across two countries, New Zealand (300) and the UK (200), both of which have a viva as part of their examination processes.

The content of each of the examiner reports was coded across 29 indicators grouped into four categories: Examiner and process, Assessable areas covered, Dialogic elements and Evaluative elements. The percentage of each indicator in each report was calculated and used as a surrogate measure for examiner emphasis on this aspect of the thesis. The percentages of each indicator were then compared across examination regimes – those with and without a viva – to determine any significant differences.

The indicators for which differences in examiner emphases did exist were then examined to determine the extent to which the differences could be explained by candidate demographics (eg, gender, age), candidature (BFOE, enrolment, candidacy time) or examiner information (eg, gender, location, recommendation). The questions then addressed were the extent and importance of any residual differences in examiner emphases (1) between the viva and non-viva examination regimes, and (2) between New Zealand and the UK.

Keywords: PhD examination; viva; examiner reports; cross-national study

Informal Peer mentoring during the post-doctoral journey: perspectives of two early career researchers

Carolyn Gregoric and Annabelle Wilson

Flinders University

Abstract of oral presentation

Successfully adjusting to life beyond the PhD can be daunting for graduates who are not well supported. Early career collaborations between students provide an opportunity to improve the transition from postgraduate study to work.

This paper reports on the redefinition of an informal peer mentoring relationship between two doctoral students post-graduation. By mutual agreement, their interdisciplinary peer mentoring relationship which began during PhD studies, continued as they sought to establish careers. The early career researchers meet less frequently than they had when both were undertaking their postgraduate studies. However, email support increased.

This relationship created a safe 'space' outside the work environment and assisted with coping with the challenges encountered as early career researchers and university staff members. Work effectiveness increased through this process through discussing and acting upon ideas for co-publication and grant funding opportunities. The early career researchers also supported each other and shared experiences as they both applied for jobs. Furthermore, the mentoring relationship enabled each early career researcher to increase motivation for their respective fields of study by having a space to discuss and work through challenges, as well as celebrate achievements.

Informal peer mentoring relationships could improve the quality of the student and early career researcher experience. This long term peer mentoring experience demonstrates the personal and professional growth of graduates can be enhanced by collaborations instigated during studies. Encouraging collaborations between doctoral students could be encouraged by universities as a psychosocial and career development strategy for post graduate students during their studies and beyond

Keywords**:** Mentoring; early career researchers; collaboration

Lessons learned from a multi-institutional collaboration to develop a national framework for research supervisor support and development

Janet Carton and Alan Kelly

University College Cork

Abstract of oral presentation

The nature of graduate education in Ireland has undergone a fundamental restructuring in the last seven years, with a significant increase in numbers of students undertaking research degrees, many on newly developed structured PhD programmes. Partly as a result of these developments, requirements for support have in recent years focussed increasingly on the role of supervisors, who now bear extended responsibilities relating to development of student skills and preparation of students for careers outside of academia. This clearly has implications for institutional responsibility and support mechanisms for both graduate research students and their supervisors. In general, there is an absence of agreed and/or standardised approaches to supervisor support and development across Europe. In response to this need in the Irish context, a unique inter-institutional project has developed a national framework to provide structured guidance and support for academic supervisors of research students. The resulting framework has been adopted by Universities and Institutes of Technology across Ireland. This collaborative project ultimately involved seven Higher Education Institutions, who share responsibility for the majority of PhD education in Ireland. A review of existing national and international good practice informed the development of an agreed framework which, in most cases, was delivered in the form of workshops. Two major themes were addressed: (1) the relationship between the supervisor and the institution, and the relationship between the supervisor and the research student; and (2) the concept of the research student life-cycle, from recruitment to viva voce and beyond. Workshops were piloted in the seven participating Institutions and revised according to participant feedback, prior to launching the framework curriculum at a national level. Participating Institutions agreed that in-built programme flexibility was key to facilitating institutional specific. This unique collaborative project culminated in the development and publication of a practical guide which outlines the framework and its elements: http://www.nairtl.ie/workgroupDocs/SupervisorSupport_Guide.pdf. Furthermore, the project has drawn attention within Irish HEIs to the importance of supervisory practice being a recognized topic for staff professional development. Implementation of a framework which facilitates core support and development for supervisors across cultural and strategic institutional diversity has not been without challenges. A number of key lessons have been drawn from this inter- institutional exercise including the importance of exploring the pedagogy of supervision, the impact of reflective practice and the need for structuring effective evaluation mechanisms, which collectively will impact on future program development and institutional enculturation. As adaptation of the Structured PhD progresses across the Irish HE sector, recognition of the need for consistency around supervisory supports via Institutional and governmental policy is increasing. The challenge for the next phase of the project is to expand delivery and participation between institutions, extending the cross-institutional collaboration, in the light of lessons learned thus far.

Keywords: Unique inter-institutional collaboration; national framework; supervisor support and development; key lessons

The importance of honours supervision in supporting students transitioning from undergraduate coursework to postgraduate research degrees

Lynne Roberts

Curtin University

Abstract of oral presentation

There is a paucity of material available to support supervisors of honours dissertation students in Australian universities. Most universities provide policy and procedural documents, but limited information is provided on the practice of honours supervision. Previous research suggests a disjuncture between supervisor and student expectations of the honours supervisory relationship and uncertainties surrounding good supervisory practice. In 2013 Dr Lynne Roberts was awarded an Office of Teaching and Learning National Teaching Fellowship to identify, develop and disseminate best practice in supporting honours and coursework dissertation supervision. In this presentation Lynne will draw on interviews conducted with honours students, supervisors and dissertation coordinators in Australian universities to highlight the importance of honours supervision in supporting students transitioning from undergraduate coursework to postgraduate research degrees. For many students the honours project provides the first opportunity to design and conduct research. Guidance and support by supervisors aids in the development of research skills and internalizing of researcher identities, providing a strong foundation for postgraduate research.

Keywords: Honours supervision; transition; interviews

Supervisor training: Reflections on practice and future developments

Cathy Gibbons

University of Nottingham

Abstract of oral presentation

Practicing within a team as a Researcher Developer within a UK University Graduate School, I use this paper to reflect on supervisor training that has been developed largely in response to requests from Schools and Departments for training. In this paper I will examine our 'regulatory compliance' and practice sharing approach and question its relevance and usefulness, highlighting some of its limitation. I will further seek to examine good supervision models, identify approaches that will be meaningful to experienced supervisors and, given our mandatory cohorts of new supervisors (many who are new to educational processes), examine which models we would seek to adopt or develop in research supervision training. Importantly as a practitioner I will also be examining how these models could be put into practice.

Keywords: Supervisor training; reflective practitioner; researcher development

Does supervision training work? Steps towards a framework and an evaluation of a long-running induction workshop

Alistair McCulloch and Cassandra Loeser

University of South Australia

Abstract of oral presentation

Both induction and continued professional development (CPD) for the supervisors of doctoral students have long been considered good practice and are now enshrined in both institutional policies and national Codes of Practice. The activities involved take many forms and, while individual elements of induction and CPD are frequently evaluated in terms of content, presentation and catering, little is known about their medium and long-term impacts on professional practice. This significant omission poses problems for those arguing for enhanced supervisor training and also for those defending supervisor training in periods of institutional cost-cutting. The paper begins with a discussion of the nature of supervisor induction and CPD before moving on to the issue of how they might be evaluated. In its penultimate section, the results from an empirical study of the medium and longer-term impact of a long-standing doctoral supervisor induction program (Supervising@UniSA) at the University of South Australia are discussed and the paper concludes by suggesting ways in which this important area can be taken forward.

Keywords: Supervisor training; doctoral supervision; impact of staff development; professional development

An impact evaluation of research capacity development training on researcher excellence among postgraduate students at a South African university: Preliminary findings

Chantell J. de Reuck

University of the Free State

Abstract of oral presentation

'Research excellence' is often endorsed as a means of proclaiming an ideal for the highest attainment of quality in research at higher education institutions. This proclamation, however, pushes the focus onto the output of the researcher, as a measure of institutional productivity, whilst seldom taking cognisance of the development of the researchers themselves and their needs for achieving excellence within their research. The knowledge and skills required to work in a 21st century knowledge-based economy as a quality researcher requires an ever evolving set of skills.

The University of the Free State made an institutional commitment to excellence in postgraduate education, and established the Postgraduate School (PGS) in 2011. One of the overarching goals of the school is to elevate the standards of postgraduate research. To meet this goal, the PGS offers a variety of workshops aimed at the development of professional research skills among students. These workshops cover the critical areas of writing skills, research methods, information management, ethical practices, research supervision, project management, and career development.

This paper gives an overview of some preliminary findings of an evaluation of the research capacity development training (N=107) provided by the PGS in 2013, and discusses these findings in light of how these training efforts aid the development of quality researchers.

Keywords: Research; research excellence; research development; research skills; researcher capacity building; impact evaluation; postgraduate students

An engineering research postgraduate program with a professional and global outlook

Catherine Zhou, Margaret Chau, Christopher Y. H. Chao

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Abstract of oral presentation

Transferable skills, also classified as generic skills or professional skills, have been the focus of the new postgraduate education trend worldwide. The new trend emphasizes students' employability and highlights that education should infuse students with global perspectives and interdisciplinary development, in addition to the traditional thinking that focuses on students' research competencies within the area of specialization.

Following the new trend, the School of Engineering of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology revamped the research postgraduate curriculum by introducing the Professional Development Course and the requirement of taking postgraduate- level courses from other disciplines such as science, business and management, and humanities and social science. The new curriculum aims at enhancing students' transferable skills in such areas as communication, entrepreneurship, and research ethics and also encouraging students' interdisciplinary interaction. The course content is customized to meet students' engineering-specific and research-specific learning needs. The Centre for Engineering Education Innovation within the school takes the responsibility of assessing student learning outcomes through education research to ensure the quality and improvement of the new curriculum. Accompanying the new curriculum is the university's new supporting infrastructure, the key component of which is the common area where research postgraduate students are exposed to a variety of professional activities and interdisciplinary intellectual events in diverse forms.

Keywords: Postgraduate; transferable skills; inter-discipline

The role of the PhD in developing an academic career

Angela Brew

Macquarie University

David Boud

University of Technology, Sydney

Karin Crawford

The University of Lincoln

Lisa Lucas

The University of Bristol

Abstract of oral presentation

How do people become academics and what is the role of the PhD in this process? It is commonly assumed that the PhD prepares people for academic careers. However, a survey of academics in six UK and six Australian universities has demonstrated that the PhD is not particularly effective in preparing academics for independent research and teaching. So how does the PhD influence them? This paper critically examines the PhD experience of academics using rich qualitative data from interviews with 27 mid- career academics in Australia and the UK. Using an Archerian conceptual framework, it explores the role of the PhD in developing the skills needed, in getting going with publication and in providing opportunities for teaching and mentoring, all of which may be problematic. The role of the PhD supervisor prior to, during and after a PhD is not straightforward. They can have positive effects, e.g. if they encourage applying for an academic position, or provide ongoing mentoring; but they can also have negative effects, e.g. if they prevent work being published or are absent during the PhD period.

In this paper we aim to paint a picture of the role of the PhD in how academics establish and maintain their academic careers. We highlight critical incidents which influence academics in developing their particular academic identity.

Keywords: academic formation; academic identity; constraints and enablements reflexivity

Supervision: a critical space for Pasifika students

Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki

The University of Auckland

Abstract of oral presentation

Existing literature argues that effective supervision is essential to successful postgraduate study (Grant, 2003). Further, a functional relationship between student and supervisor is a key element in ensuring students have positive experiences and successful completion of their postgraduate journey. Hence relationships between individuals and peoples are at the core of supervision. For Pasifika students, it is a journey that requires careful navigation between their world and that of academia. Inter-connectedness is a familiar practice to Pasifika peoples (Nabobo-Baba, 2008). However, academia has long being known as an isolating environment especially for students from underserved communities including those from Pacific island nations. Pasifika students are often at a loss for how to maintain supervisory relationships. In my institution, timely and successful completions are problematic issues of priority for Pasifika postgraduate students. Kidman (2007) argues that being a Maori doctoral student usually means being alone, making it important to normalise Maori cultural presence in academia. Here I propose that the Pasifika concept of inter-relational space or *va* (Thaman, 2008) can be a guiding concept for maintaining supervisory relationships and mutual respect.

The experiences of Pasifika students are explored in this paper. Narratives of Pasifika students who are currently in supervisory relationships show their current participation patterns and factors that influence their success at postgraduate level. Strategies for building supervisor-student connections from this data will give an insight into how we can enhance Pasifika experiences in postgraduate supervision. It is also interesting to examine how students view Pacific knowledge systems and ways of being as valid forms of engagement within the supervisory relationship.

Keywords: Research; scholarship; student experience

Great Expectations: Recognizing the Supervisor's Role in Postgraduate Research Supervision

Noritah Omar Bujang Kim Huat, Aini Ideris

Universiti Putra Malaysia

Abstract of oral presentation

A successful supervisory relationship is one of the most rewarding experiences in a postgraduate student's life. As in any relationship, both parties must be committed to the great expectations set at the beginning of the research, and work together towards the common goal – the successful completion of the research, which fulfils the potential of both the research and the research student. However, it must be acknowledged that the supervisory relationship is a unique one, in that it starts on an unequal footing. The postgraduate research journey, especially the PhD journey, begins with the supervisor having the upper hand as the one with (arguably) 'more' knowledge, skills and experience in the world of research. As such, for the most part, it is the supervisor who needs to shoulder the responsibility of managing this relationship. This paper spotlights the supervisor's critical role in a supervisory relationship, and postulates the need for the supervisor to realize their role and responsibility as a guide and mentor. This realization is not necessarily automatic or natural, as supervisors themselves may be at different stages of their own personal and professional journeys in academia. This paper also scrutinizes the efforts made by a Malaysian research university in helping to nurture the supervisory relationship, through its compulsory training programs and its recognition of excellent supervisors. A bold move by the university is in its award of Role Model Supervisors to 34 experienced supervisors who have been identified as 'excellent supervisors' via the common institutional rating of years of service and the number of students who graduated on time under their supervision. The paper explores the value of this award as a point of self-reflexivity for the supervisors, but also proposes a more dynamic understanding of what makes an excellent supervisor.

Keywords: Role Model Supervisor; Supervision; Expectations; Role; self-reflexivity

Improving postgraduate supervision in an open and distance learning (ODL) environment

Prem Heeralal

University of South Africa

Abstract of oral presentation

In an open and distance learning (ODL) environment postgraduate students, in the main, study part time and are often far removed geographically from the university and their supervisors. There is very little face to face contact between the students and supervisors. Supervision takes place at a distance. Postgraduate students are not able to complete their qualifications in the minimum time required. The purpose of this paper is to examine how supervision of postgraduate students can be improved in an open and distance learning context so that students complete their qualification in the minimum time required. A qualitative approach was used to collect data from postgraduate ODL students. The results indicate that students are generally satisfied with the supervision that they receive, however, the following areas need to be considered in order to improve postgraduate supervision: proposal writing, research methodologies, data analysis, and the appropriate allocation of supervisors. The following recommendations are made: supervisors need to have more face to face contact with students, supervisors should be allocated to students on registration and regional workshops conducted by the university should specifically address the issues of proposal writing, research methodologies and data analysis.

Keywords: feedback; support; postgraduate; communication; supervisor

Ethical Questions for Supervisors when Students Struggle to Make Progress

Lise Bird Claiborne

University of Waikato

Abstract of oral presentation

This paper focuses specifically on difficulties faced by supervisors when doctoral candidates do not make 'timely progress' towards completion. Ethical difficulties may arise for both students and their supervisors when research does not seem to be advancing to the level required of the doctoral program. This study reports on one aspect of a collaborative project involving experienced supervisors from three universities in Aotearoa New Zealand who took part in online discussions about difficulties in thesis supervision. Participants were seven senior academics who had at least five years' experience as supervisors. For reasons of confidentiality, discussion centred on situations abstracted from practice rather than specific cases involving students. Most supervisors had experienced self-doubt, anxiety and despair when doctoral candidates seemed to plateau despite the implementation of various academic and motivational strategies. In other situations there was a process of letting go as the student moved away from study towards different goals in life. Difficulties in dealing with such situations were analysed in terms of Foucault's ethical work on the concept of fidelity to the discipline through which a desired academic self is constituted and in the light of feminist questions about a political ethics of care that includes institutional responses to governmental and global concerns. Possibilities for re-visioning supervision emerged through the collaborative, reflexive examination of our own located practices as we shared the burden of constraints as well as hopes for transformation of what the doctorate might be.

Keywords: doctoral supervision; ethics of practice; doctoral attrition

Choosing a nursing/midwifery research higher degree supervisor: literature guidelines

Wendy Abigail and Pauline Hill

Flinders University

Abstract of oral presentation

Objectives

Each year there are very small numbers of nursing and midwifery candidates who face the issue of choosing an appropriate supervisor. Making appropriate choices is vital for successful degree completion. This paper aims to provide guidance for prospective research higher degree (RHD) nursing candidates on the issues surrounding choosing an appropriate supervisor for their higher degree

Method

An electronic literature review of databases such as CINHAL, OVID and Science Direct was conducted to assess guidance available to help with supervisor selection. Articles were searched from 1999 to 2013. The search terms included combinations of PhD, thesis, supervision, student, nurse researcher, guidance, support, candidate, choosing, and selecting.

Articles which examined clinical supervision were excluded as the focus was on academic research rather than clinical practice supervision. Articles chosen included those which discussed some aspect of nursing RHD candidates choosing a supervisor.

Results

There were 16 nursing articles which met the criteria. Thematic analysis found three major themes which were 'the supervisor's research background', 'personality', and 'management factors'. Within the themes, sub-themes were identified which provided advice, considerations and suggestions for RHD nursing candidates.

Conclusions

This literature review found there are many issues to be considered. With the small numbers of RHD nursing candidates commencing each year, it is vital that potential issues with supervisors are minimized where possible. With careful consideration of a supervisor's background, personality and management factors, nursing RHD candidates may be more prepared when seeking a suitable RHD supervisor thus potentially increasing RHD completions.

Keywords: Research Higher Degree; nursing; midwifery; PhD; supervision; supervisors

Filtering Feedback: Working with HDR students as they make sense of their supervisors' comments

Heather Jamieson

University of Wollongong

Abstract of oral presentation

Feedback is integral to HDR candidature. While constructive in intent, the literature shows that it may have a negative impact on the writing process and the student and be hard to interpret and act upon. In the increasingly common situation of team supervision, it may also be conflicting. This presentation uses case studies of three HDR students who have recently completed their degrees to consider some of the elements of feedback. Points of comparison for the three cases are that all the students sought or were referred for regular writing consultations with an academic language and learning (ALL) advisor, they were writing their theses in English as a second or additional language, and they all had two or more supervisors. The case studies explore the process of giving, receiving and interpreting feedback from the perspectives of the students, the supervisors and the ALL advisor, using their written reflections, interview material and data collected during writing consultations. Some thoughts are how these cases studies accord with the literature on feedback in the HDR context are offered in conclusion.

Keywords: feedback; HDR students; supervisors; academic language and learning (ALL)

Promoting Research and Scholarship: A Perspective from the South

Shireen Motala

University of Johannesburg

Abstract of oral presentation

The need to increase the quantity and quality of scientific research output in Southern African higher education has been well documented. The tipping point for African research and innovation is not merely the ability to fully access and use the new abundance of global knowledge and ideas, but to make an active and significant contribution to its creation. From an African perspective, the conduct of research is highly concentrated, with three countries, Eqypt, Nigeria and South Africa, collectively accounting for over 80% of total output of scientific research papers. Comparing research output between universities in the SADC region, South Africa with the best and most extensive infrastructure in the region, ranks highly, accounting for 75% of its output. There is also an imbalance within South Africa, with a small number of high performing universities contributing to a large proportion of the research output. It is clear that the region needs to move beyond being a consumer to being a producer of knowledge. Investment in research infrastructure, including ICTs, is critical to this. This paper addresses research capacity development in the South African context, and argues that an expanded and holistic support must be provided to postgraduate students, if we want to meet the human resource needs of the country and promote research and scholarship. In particular, the scholarship of teaching and learning at a postgraduate level has to be foregrounded, if we are to achieve this goal.

Keywords: Postgraduate support; research; scholarship

Pathways to research degrees: Qualifications and experiences of current research students

Jo McKenzie, Robyn Gallagher, Charlotte Robinson, Sandy Schuck, Nicky Solomon

UTS

Abstract of oral presentation

Pathways to research degrees have come under much discussion recently, in the context of the Bologna 3-2-3 model and the Australian Qualifications Framework amongst other influences. In Australia, the value of the traditional Honours pathway is under scrutiny and the increasing diversity of PhD cohorts has been noted (Group of Eight, 2013; Kiley, 2013). While possible pathways can be examined from the perspective of stated university entry requirements, it is particularly useful to explore the actual pathways taken by current higher degree students to enter their degrees. This paper reports on the findings of an online survey of HDR students from one Australian metropolitan university of technology. The survey asked current students to report their highest qualification prior to entry, any professional, creative and research experience that they used as evidence in their application, the evidence that they thought was important in being accepted and the point in their education or career when they felt they were on a path to HDR study. Responses were received from 339 students, with more than 90% enrolled in PhDs. While there were disciplinary differences, only 20% reported Honours as their highest prior qualification, with 38% reporting a Masters by Coursework. Many reported significant prior work experience, creative outputs and or publications prior to entry. The paper will report on these findings, along with illustrating the diversity of educational, professional and personal points at which the students considered themselves to be on a path to research study.

Keywords: pathways to HDR; research students' perceptions of pathways; research students' entry qualifications and experiences

Universities collaborating not competing? An InSPiRE-ing concept from the West

Natasha Ayers

Edith Cowan University

Abstract of oral presentation

Western Australia can be an isolating place to undertake research. For the first time Western Australia's five universities have combined their collective expertise to run a research training conference called InSPiRE: Inter-uni Summer-School for Postgraduate Research Excellence. Edith Cowan University (ECU)'s Graduate Research School worked with its peers from The University of Western Australia, Murdoch University, The University of Notre Dame Australia and Curtin University to host the inaugural InSPiRE summer school from 11-15th February 2013. The unique concept involved 200 PhD and Masters students from across Australia attending a different uni each day with a conference style format. The feedback was extremely positive, with students appreciating the networking opportunities, exposure to the other universities as well as the research skills training. This paper will present the findings from the post-event online survey and discuss the process involved in establishing this collaborative model. Areas of improvement for InSPiRE 2014 and other spin-offs from the collaboration will also be explored. InSPiRE 2013 gave students access to inspirational speakers, training opportunities and networking events to encourage postgraduate researchers to develop new collaborations and networks for their future careers.

Keywords: research training; networking; collaboration

Social Network Analysis and Research Collaboration; Bridging the Divide

George Carayannopoulos and Grahame Pearson

University of Sydney

Abstract of oral presentation

The research and development sector in higher education faces extreme pressures in an era of fiscal austerity where the ability to produce high quality research will become an even more important driver of university reputation and standing. Within this context there appears a significant yet perhaps underdeveloped study of where and how collaboration occurs within and across universities. This collaboration may take many forms including internally in a school or department, across departmental, cluster or faculty lines, across Australian universities and or with international collaborators. For the purpose of this paper, collaboration can be viewed across the three key domains which a universities research reputation is invariably based on; grant funding, publications and higher degree research supervision. This paper will present an overview of the theoretical framework of Social Network Analysis (SNA) moving away from traditional matrix styled performance reporting and argue that this framework which has been developed to understand complex systems can be used in better understanding the nature and scope of research collaboration across within the key domains. It will provide a link between the areas of research collaboration and social network analysis and provide an example of how this framework can be used to illuminate the nature and scope of research collaboration and to describe research clustering strength and weaknesses.

Keywords**:** Research Collaboration; Social Network Analysis; Analytics; Cluster

PELA: A JCU graduate research school pilot program to support research students from a non-English speaking background

Elizabeth Tynan and Kellie Johns

James Cook University

Abstract of oral presentation

The Post-Entry Language Assessment (PELA) was introduced by the JCU Graduate Research School in 2013 as part of a pilot program to test a new mechanism for early identification of support requirements for research students from a Non-English Speaking Background (NESB). The PELA is a simple academic writing test that diagnoses the abilities of incoming international research degree candidates who either are just at or below the JCU English language entry standards (based on IELTS and TOEFL, aligned with most Australian universities). The results of the PELA are used to direct students to relevant personalized writing support structures. The internationalization of higher education has seen a growing number of postgraduate research students from a diverse range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds enrolling at JCU. The university is committed to supporting these students through orientation and preparatory programs. Research suggests that international NESB research students often encounter diverse and greater challenges in their postgraduate research experience than their domestic native English speaking counterparts, particularly in their efforts to develop their academic writing skills in English to meet the embedded demands of thesis writing. Although language is not the sole defining factor or predictor of academic success, there does appear to be an aptitude threshold, below which students are unlikely to manage their study. This pilot study carried out during 2013, the preliminary results of which are presented here, has begun the process of developing a systematic approach to identifying and supporting international research students from NESBs so that they can become independent academic writers faster. Further, the project will form the basis of a responsive, effective and sustainable language and learning support model for this diverse student cohort. This research has improved our understanding of 'best practice' to support international NESB students undertaking research degrees. We expect over time we will see improved retention and completion rates for international HDR candidates as well, and an easing of the workloads for the candidates, their advisors and university support staff.

Keywords: graduate research; non-English speaking background; writing support

Creating productive communities: 'Discussing Supervision @ Vic' and 'Shut Up and Write' groups at Victoria University of Wellington

Lizzie Towl

Victoria University of Wellington

Abstract of oral presentation

Spread across four campuses and six largely independent teaching faculties, Victoria University is, for a university situated in a single city, surprisingly devolved. The Faculty of Graduate Research (established in 2010) has responsibility for administrating the doctoral degree, supporting doctoral students and providing training for supervisors. Although we offer a full complement of training sessions and workshops for both staff and students, we have had some trouble encouraging staff in particular to participate in these workshops and so we felt like we needed to try a different approach.

In the last year, we've instituted initiatives at Victoria to supplement our program of workshops, seminars and information sessions. 'Discussing Supervision @ Vic' and 'Shut Up and Write' have two key features in common: they're designed to build networks across the university, and they're grounded in an ethos of self-improvement and positivity. These groups are practical and positive, and provide a forum within which students and academics belong to an academic community outside of their own schools, faculties and disciplines. 'Shut Up and Write' is a well-established international movement, and we simply adopted and applied the established procedure. 'Discussing Supervision @ Vic' combines research from a University of Waikato study (Spiller, Byrnes and Bruce Ferguson, 2013) with feedback from Victoria staff about what would best suit them and their needs as supervisors.

In this presentation, I will outline these two groups, their benefits and challenges. I will focus particularly on the design of the 'Discussing Supervision @ Vic' group and where the design and feedback-based focusing process has led us.

Keywords: Supervision; writing; networks; isolation

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'Drop and give me 20,000 words': the thesis boot camp program

Liam Connell

University of Melbourne

Abstract of oral presentation

Since June 2012, the Melbourne School of Graduate Research has offered four Thesis Boot Camps per year. Described as a 'no excuses, no-time-for-procrastination, take- no-prisoners three day intensive writing program', Thesis Boot Camp is aimed at late candidature PhD students who are amidst the third year writing-up battle and stuck alternatively in writer's block, thesis fatigue, or just needing make significant first-draft progress on their thesis in a short timeframe.

However, Thesis Boot Camp has a secondary pedagogical aim in that it offers PhD students from across the University the necessary tools and strategies to transition from writing like 'the good student' and begin writing like the effective and authoritative academic. Encouraging students to break free of years of bad (and inefficient) writing habits in making substantial progress on their manuscript, Thesis Boot Camp also provides students an experiential opportunity to approach academic writing in a wholly new way. Finally, the program brings together an interdisciplinary cohort of PhD students caught in many of the same struggles, and provides a forum for students to offer mutual peer support and collectively engage with their identity as emerging scholars.

In coordinating this program, we have learned a great deal about the impediments common across disciplines that slow down late-candidature progress toward thesis completion and the way these are intimately bound to the writing process itself. This paper will describe the pedagogy behind Thesis Boot Camp and suggest some future directions for intensive academic writing programs aimed at HDR students, both at Melbourne and potentially beyond.

Keywords: writing; support; thesis; identity; academic; pedagogy; intensive; skills; workshop

How can I get the most out of my PhD? Broadening student experience and skills

Amanda Richardson

University of South Australia

Abstract of oral presentation

Undertaking a PhD is a large commitment. In addition to the specific skills directly related to their immediate project work, HDR students are also expected to develop generic skills in areas such as effective communication and presentation skills, manuscript writing, project management and career planning. Many HDR candidates rely on their supervisor/s to assist with the learning and development of these skills; however it is unlikely that supervisors will be able to fully assist with development of all these skills. Therefore it could be argued that it is somewhat a 'luck-of-the-draw' in terms of who your supervisor is and whether or not they can provide the additional skills you may need. Possible options to complement what candidates already receive from supervisors include introducing structured coursework, encouraging additional extra- curricular training, or providing 'in-house' training, thus ensuring graduates finish with a broad set of skills that can be employed in a wide range of career pathways.

The School of Health Sciences at the University of South Australia provides a training scheme to address this generic skill development for HDR students. The Telemachus Research Training (TRT) program complements the university wide research skill development programs and runs weekly seminars covering a wide range of topics facilitated by research and teaching staff in the school; thereby exposing HDR students to a broad range of research expertise, approaches, experiences and ideas. This presentation will outline the purpose and structure of this training program, and elaborate on the benefits of this program as reported by students.

Keywords: HDR candidate training; generic research skill development; student experience

The tyranny of distance: one doctoral student's journey in distance education-from undergrad to postgrad

Brian Basham

Griffith University

Abstract of oral presentation

This presentation is an autobiographical journey of a mature adult learner travelling through the distance-learning education from an undergraduate degree to a postgraduate doctorate.

My journey began in 2004, when I commenced an undergraduate program through a Queensland-based university while living and working in Victoria. I have continued my journey is it distance-based student to complete my masters, and now working on my doctorate still with a Queensland-based university.

The presentation will discuss the level of isolation one student feels as they move further up the educational qualification ranks. It will also outline some of the opportunities that are not available to doctoral distance-learning students.

The presentation will make a number of suggestions to provide support, outside that offered by doctoral supervisors, to distance-based doctoral students; including recommending universities develop cross-institute collaboration for doctoral students based on their location not the university of choice. The presentation will also offer a plea to universities to embrace technology so that distance-based students can still benefit from the number of workshops/presentations conducted on campus.

Keywords: student experience; doctoral journey; distance-education; autobiographical journey

The Rural PhD Experience: How a Feminist Researcher 'Jumped the Gulf'

Kerre Willsher

University of South Australia

Abstract of oral presentation

Introduction

The topic of this research is childhood disability, families and rural communities: a reflexive approach. This research reports upon in–depth interviews with rural parents who are coping or have coped with, children with disability. The researcher's standpoint is as a woman who had a brother with disability and was raised in a rural area where resources are scarce. A Reflexive Feminist Standpoint interpretation which validates the lived experience of all participants was used.

The Research Journey

In common with the research participants, the researcher faced many problems that occur in rural locations including sparse populations, fewer resources and family obligations, resulting in difficulties in securing an adequate sample size.

With good supervision and lateral thinking, the study evolved to effectively overcome the problem of sample size. For instance, the study was extended interstate and included semi-structured interviews of parents and sibling carers of older children with disability. A community focus group also took place. Community responsibilities had a 'flip side to the coin' in that they also provided resources.

Conclusion/plans for the future

The moral of the story is 'press on' to the 'Land of the Unexpected'. Be prepared to re-adapt. The data has been rich and fascinating providing ample scope for the further development of resources for parents and families.

Keywords: Disability; rural families; community resources; reflexivity; feminist standpoint interpretation

From hounding to harnessing: Changing perceptions of doctoral policy-makers and administrators amongst the academic community

Tracy Riley and Julia Rayner

Massey University

Abstract of oral presentation

Massey University's Graduate Research School (GRS) and the Doctoral Research Committee (DRC) have been perceived, by some doctoral supervisors and coordinators, as obstructions impeding academic activity; not accepting students that fall slightly short of the necessary academic entry requirements; declining examiners because of conflicts of interest; sending out reminders and more reminders of responsibilities relating to administrative due diligence; etc. etc. As a new Manager of the GRS and new Chair of the DRC our challenge is to change this perception by creating a sense of shared responsibility and collegiality, and ultimately provide our students with an outstanding and quality assured doctoral experience. We have set about doing this in three ways. Firstly, we are streamlining our administrative processes and making them more user friendly. Doctoral forms have been re-written to simplify them, making them more engaging and targeted. We are also digitizing them, making them easier for the user and less labour intensive for administrators, allowing them to dedicate time to more value added tasks. Secondly, we are working hard to build both formal and informal relations with academic staff, particularly heads of units. This has been achieved through morning teas to share ideas on best practice, as well as generic and tailored workshops. Through this process we are reaching greater agreement on our third area of change, re-addressing responsibilities. By providing academic units with regular reporting on the status of their students, they are more able to respond directly to their students' issues in an informed manner rather than relying on the GRS and DRC to deal with student concerns.

Keywords: Policy makers; doctoral research committee; digitizing; streamlining; collegiality; quality assured doctoral experience; academic units; change

What is needed in the student, supervisory panel and research environment to ensure success in multidisciplinary doctorates in the absence of a requirement for preparatory coursework?

Caitlin Dowell

University of South Australia

Abstract of oral presentation

The changing nature in most research fields is such that it is now commonplace for doctorate projects to be multidisciplinary and in disciplines that may not be represented at the undergraduate level.

This poses a challenge for the student and the supervisor in determining if any gaps arising in specialist knowledge for the student will be acquired in the course of the PhD, or if the student should engage in coursework prior to commencing the PhD to provide a foundation for the research focus.

Additional coursework such as a Masters degree, prior to commencement of a PhD is expensive and increases the length of candidature. It is also likely that not all of the courses in such a degree will be pertinent to the planned project or cover all of the required areas in projects that span a broad range of disciplines.

A decision-making tool has been created that provides a set of criteria to be met for the student, the supervisory panel and the research environment if the PhD is to be successful and to determine if formal preparatory coursework should be required.

This tool will be presented using health economics as a case study of a field where it is common that students progress to a PhD without undergraduate foundations in all aspects of the discipline.

Keywords: student; supervisor; research environment; multidisciplinary doctorates; preparatory coursework; decision-making tool

An examination of a cloud-based software innovation for academic writing, providing an adaptive, soft architecture for personal and collaborative productivity

Linda Glassop and Pam Mulready

Composeright Pty Ltd

Abstract of oral presentation

Academic writing is not a linear process, nor does it usually start with writing. Primarily, academic writing involves literature searches (via the library and online databases), identifying research questions to pursue, designing and executing research projects, collaborating with other scholars, examining and interpreting findings, and all before any findings are reported in formal publications.

The tools that currently support the academic writing process are based on an antiquated industrial model that demands mastery over multiple stages in the production process; traverses a range of databases, writing and bibliographic software; and requires considerable organizational skills for managing a multitude of documents and resources. This antiquated writing model is documented in a range of style guides (e.g., AGLC, APA, CSE, MLA, NLM, Chicago, Harvard, Oxford, etc.). For writers to gain mastery over these style guides requires a significant amount of time and the development of specialized authoring competence. Academic writing has, therefore, become the province of technicians skilled in the rules, regulations and architecture of a variety of software tools, rather than building knowledge within a scholarly community. Some software has emerged (ComWriter) that heralds a new era in academic writing. ComWriter is a cloud-based platform that offers an integrated system (replacing multiple tools) centered around working on a writing project; not producing a document. ComWriter offers a one-stop writing environment for searching library databases, collaborating with peers and supervisors, organizing notes, structuring writing projects to suit individual needs, developing and maintaining a personal library of writing resources, incorporating references (directly from online databases housed within the environment), making and tracking notes and tasks, and, most importantly, formatting output to academic discipline standards with little effort on behalf of the writer. The soft, fluid architecture offered by ComWriter will eliminate significant amounts of time wasted on importing and exporting bibliographic data from library databases, personally maintaining bibliographic data, managing sticky notes and other support resources, spell-checking and changing language, sending endless versions of documents to collaborators and supervisors, and ensuring output is formatted correctly to the standards set down by disciplines and journal editors. Scholars will no longer need to focus on how output looks, but can direct their entire attention to the process and aim of academic writing: the quality and content of creating new knowledge.

ComWriter provides a truly integrated online writing environment to support academic research requirements. An environment where the style of referencing becomes irrelevant, the formatting of captions and cross-references works seamlessly, where bibliographic data becomes the search for appropriate resources, and writers can build their own templates that fit their writing needs (e.g., an entire dissertation in a single file). At last, academic writing will be freed from the branding of output based on print media rules and regulations, and constrained by tools designed for writing in a bygone era.

Keywords: academic writing; cloud-based software; innovation; soft architecture