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Writing the Practice/Practise the Writing: Writing challenges and pedagogies for creative practice supervisors and researchers

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ABSTRACT

There is now an increasing body of knowledge on creative practice-based doctorates especially in Australia and the United Kingdom. A particular focus in recent years has been on the written examinable component or exegesis, and a number of studies have provided important information about change and stability in the form and nature of the exegesis and its relationship to the creative project. However, we still know relatively little about the pedagogical practices that supervisors use to support these students' development as scholarly writers, nor of how supervisors view 'writing' in relation to the creative practice components of the degree endeavour. This paper draws on data from a recent study of supervision in creative practice higher research degrees and it highlights the transformative nature of writing for the development of creative practice research scholars in the context of competing discourses on research writing. In contrast to institutional silencing of writing, the study relates numerous examples of effective writing-rich supervisory pedagogies illustrating how successful supervisors work with their students to bring their creative projects into articulation.

KEYWORDS

doctoral writing, creative practice-based doctorates, supervision, pedagogy

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Introduction

A common sense view is that writing competence is a key component of higher degree research (HDR) scholarship, and yet it is often taken for granted, even overlooked in dominant discourses on doctoral education and training (Starke-Meyerring, Pare´, Sun, & El-Bezre, 2014).

Historically, higher degree researchers, like their supervisors, learned how to produce written doctoral outputs through a process of assimilation and acculturation built upon common (albeit tacit) perceptions of normalised practices and forms (Aitchison & Pare´, 2012). Thus, knowledge of genres and practices was inherited, transmitted and reproduced unconsciously and uncritically overtime. However, as seismic changes occur in higher education and research studies globally (Boud & Lee, 2009; Danby & Lee, 2012), demands are building for more evidence-based approaches to the development and support of research scholars' writing.

This paper responds to these calls, aiming to explore the complexities of research writing in creative practice-led disciplines drawing from an empirical study of supervisor reports of their approaches for developing HDR writing competence. I employ two conceptual frames: the discoursal of positioning of writing as invisible/visible-as-problem and the epistemic and transformative role of writing. The study is based on a major Australian study of effective supervision in creative practice-led degrees (Hamilton, Carson, & Ellison, 2013). I enter the discussion as an

academic language and learning lecturer not a creative arts scholar, but as a bor- der-dweller institutionally positioned in a learning centre, working into and across multiple disciplines and research paradigms. From this vantage point, I have worked with both doctoral students and their supervisors specialising in research writing for over two decades.

In the 1990s, when Australian and UK universities began accepting creative prac- tice scholars into doctoral programmes, there was a virtual absence of scholarly texts, resources or research on successful thesis writing in these disciplines. Even official university documents provided little guidance on the most basic information such as expected word length, content and format, and the relative weighting of the written and the creative components. Relatively few supervisors had written a PhD and some had very limited experience of the academy or of supervising research students (Paltridge, Starfield, Ravelli, & Nicholson, 2011). Similarly, many newly enrolled students had limited academic experience; neither practice-focussed undergraduates nor industry pathway candidates entering these degrees were likely to have advanced academic writing skills or experience of research scholarship.

The new creative practice degrees and their relatively rapid roll-out generated both excitement and disturbance. In those days, the lack of clarity and consistency about the kind of text (form, style, format, size), the content and purpose of the written component and its relationship to the practice component (to explain, theorise, mirror, deconstruct?) caused considerable frustrations for students, supervisors and administrators. Not surprisingly, as a language advisor, I saw a disproportionate number of these students who sought guidance wherever they could.

This was the context for my own introduction to creative practice-led doctoral writing when scholars undertaking PhDs and newer degrees such as the Doctorate of Creative Arts began appearing in my workshops and writing groups. These students were often arts industry practitioners and they included filmmakers, writers, visual and performance artists. They were as dedicated and capable as other students, and their projects as engaging and worthwhile, but somehow, my job seemed significantly more difficult. Many of the workshop materials I had been using successfully with other students simply missed the mark for these scholars.

Writing in Creative Arts Doctorates: What Do We Know?

It is not surprising that there should continue to be uncertainties about the emerging forms of creative doctoral texts—with the rapid changes in doctoral degrees globally, this is true to some extent for all doctoral dissertations (Paltridge, 2002). In the realm of the creative arts doctorates, such uncertainties are reflected in the ongoing debate over terminology for this type of degree and in disparities around the purpose, form and examination—especially the relationship between the examinable creative and written components (Baker, Buckley, & Kett, 2009).

Early attention to writing in the area of creative practice research degrees took the form of theoretical discussions and personal experiences of the writing journey, but apart from Estelle Barrett's helpful templates for structuring the research practice (Barrett & Bolt, 2009), there were few resources pointing to concrete possibilities for the written form itself. While a limited number of empirical accounts had begun to emerge from small studies of the exegesis (Hamilton & Jaaniste, 2010), in 2012, Paltridge, Starfield, Ravelli and Tuckwell claimed there were still 'few descriptions in the literature as to what the texts these students write should look like, nor any cross- university studies which have examined these texts in detail' (p. 333).

Two notable Australian studies provide important empirical information on the writ- ten component of creative doctoral degrees. Hamilton and Jaaniste's analysis of 59 Masters and PhD exegeses from creative writing, film, interactive media and performance at one university, revealed a common pattern of particular types of content and structure (Hamilton & Jaaniste, 2010). From their study of 36 doctoral texts from the visual and performing arts, Paltridge, Starfield, Ravelli, and Tuckwell (2012) also identified reoccurring organisational patterns in the written component. Both

these studies indicate that while variation continues to characterise the genre, a number of identifiable organisational patterns seem to be relatively stable, and furthermore, many of these patterns resonate clearly with more traditional thesis types (Paltridge et al., 2012).

Our growing knowledge about the doctoral genres of creative practice doctorates is an important aspect of the evolution of this field and is capacity-building for supervisors, the disciplines and institutions. A more thorough knowledge of the genre, of emerging organisational shapes, content and rhetorical patterns, helps build confidence and competence among students and supervisors. Further, knowledge of the evolution of the form can stimulate creativity and even promote more radical forms (Krauth, 2011).

But literacy practices involve more than just knowledge of the written document itself. Fairclough points to discoursal and sociocultural practices as layers of influence on a text and its production (Fairclough, 1992). The text (Layer 1) is at the centre of these mutually constitutive influences. Discursive practices (Layer 2) involve influences such as contextual circumstances, norms and practices that affect the production, distribution and consumption, and the purposes of the text. For example, institutional policies governing doctoral assessment (see for example, Rowe & Buck, 2013) and shortened completion times have direct impacts on what a text may, or may not, be. Fairclough's Layer 3 refers to broader, more abstract influences or discourses on the text, such as the political, ideological, cultural or economic climate affecting the production and reception of the text. Think, for example, of how auditing regimes such as the Excellence for Research in Australia (ERA) or how straitened funding can affect how different kinds of research are valued and rewarded.

For doctoral students engaged in writing and researching, the relationships within and between these layers are highly complex and involve significant questions of epistemology, identity and becoming. In creative doctorates, for those where practice is both the object of investigation and its means, there are additional complexities about practice knowledge and its relationship to research and more conventional notions of scholarship. Students must resolve difficult questions about their project and how they write about it, including for example, How is knowledge created, displayed and evaluated? How will originality, significance and excellence be represented—and measured? What kind of writer, artist, scholar and researcher does the student wish to be? How do students resolve their own desires against the powerful normalising discourses of the discipline, the degree and the institution?

Competing Discourses of (in)Visibility and Meaning Making

In considering institutional discourses on writing, Aitchison and Lee (2006) argued that in relation to policy, theory and pedagogy 'writing' in research degree programmes was significantly under-acknowledged and under-theorised (Aitchison & Lee, 2006). We proposed that despite the centrality of writing for learning and subject formation and as measurements of competence, doctoral writing remained hidden, mostly coming to attention at points of crisis or failure.

Years later, others observe that writing continues to remain largely invisible in official discourses on doctoral programmes, noting that attention—when it does occur—is motivated as risk management and lacks theoretical or evidential substance (Starke-Meyerring et al., 2014; Thesen & Cooper, 2014). Such discourses that view the ability to write as a 'given', ensure writing is silenced, that it is not explicated in curriculum or supervisor training, and is therefore situated as incidental to doctoral scholarship. Thus, discussions about pedagogical practices of writing remain peripheral, even subversive—except at times of crisis, when writing comes very much to the fore. Thus, writing regarded as a 'problem space' is couched in terms of deficit—of skills, confidence or attitude—and always as deficit on the part of the student.

These normalised discourses of writing as 'absence' and as 'problem' permeate research cultures allowing for the entrenched notion that one does the research—or the creative practice—first, and then it is 'written up'. Such narrow, product-focussed discourses fail to acknowledge the

epistemic properties of doctoral writing that are embodied in the processes of 'coming to know' and 'coming to be'. When writing is promoted as a knowledge-making activity, then the *practice* of writing demands attention because knowledge making is, after all, the objective of doctoral scholarship. For creative practice-led scholars and their supervisors, this view of writing has particular solemnity because the doctoral candidate aims to produce both artefact and writing that *work together* as a knowledge contribution.

Drawing from Butler's notions of subjectivity and performativity (1997) and echoing Bakhtin's idea of becoming, James proposes that the production of a 'suit- able' written component can only occur over time as students 'write themselves into becoming' (2014, p. 111). This transformation occurs through the writing processes of imagining, drafting, redrafting, editing, restructuring, re-crafting and discussing the multiple iterations of the written text as it evolves in relationship with the creative practice. This iterative mode of working with text parallels the creative process; both are sites of struggle where much learning and doing are experiential and often motivated by emotional, personal and subjective concerns (Barrett & Bolt, 2009; Ings, 2014; Nelson, 2004). Engagement in these iterative and mutually informing processes of writing and creative practice production is knowledge-building and simultaneously subject-forming as the self-hood of the creative practice-led researcher is negotiated and (re)constructed. This journey of 'becoming' is highly individualised as the researcher comes to know their field, their creative practice and possibilities for expressing this knowledge in a written form that satisfies themselves, their supervisors and the established discourses around doctoral writing.

Unfortunately, however, discourses that ignore the epistemic and subject forming role of writing in favour of output counts and measures remain powerfully influential in higher education research. These limited perceptions of what writing is, can stifle students' learning and deny them opportunities to test out new disciplinary and scholarly identities over the course of their candidature (Barnacle & Dall'Alba, 2013; James, 2013). These silencing and deficit discourses also close down possibilities for pedagogical approaches that harness the transformative powers of writing (Ivanič, 1998) and negatively impact on possibilities for supporting doctoral writing, stigmatising and pushing it to the margins, and positioning those who attend to writing as misguided 'helpers', and those who seek it, as 'needy'.

In paradoxical opposition to these dominant institutional discourses, in reality, of course, writing features as a significant aspect of the doctoral experience for most scholars (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2011). In the humanities and social sciences, writing is the major pedagogical activity that dominates, even defines, interactions between students and their supervisors.

But not all experiences are so writing-focussed. Where knowledge is counted as both creative output and written account, then students and supervisors may struggle to balance the cognitive, temporal and spatial possibilities of attending to both within candidature. As an outsider observing scholars and supervisors in creative led doctor- ates, it has appeared to me that the creative component is sometimes the primary focus of student–supervisory interactions, pushing writing out of the pedagogical space, for months or even years at a time. Such practices may be especially problematic if, as Paltridge et al. (2011) report, 'literature on practice-based doctorates indicates, writing is considered difficult for many whose primary self-identity is that of artist or performer' (p. 990).

How Supervisors Work with the Writer/Writing

The doctoral space is a site of both innovation and conservation. On one hand institutions are keen to set themselves apart by promoting their research programmes as ground-breaking and unique, on the other hand, and simultaneously, pressures from auditing regimes tend to be forces for conservatism working against risk-taking and innovation (Thesen & Cooper, 2014). While there is a growing body of evidence of novelty and innovation in the exegesis (Krauth, 2011) and new

approaches to doctoral education and supervisor preparation and support (Devos & Manathunga, 2012), the student–supervisory relationship remains the pre-eminent locus for learning in the doctoral arena. Nevertheless, despite its importance, our understanding of what goes on in supervision around writing is still relatively limited.

In a Canadian survey of nearly 500 doctoral supervisors, 99.4% of respondents said that supervision of student writing was important for effective supervision, and yet, 95.7% said they had received no formal training in supervising writing (Aitchison & Pare´, 2012). Transcripts from supervisory meetings in this study showed that supervisors struggled with feedback to students, in part from lack of confidence and skill, but also because of difficulties articulating what had become, for them, tacit knowledge (Pare´, 2011). Mirroring the institutional silences on writing, these expert writers had so assimilated the discourses of the discipline and their own writing practices that they failed to be able to articulate them.

In another study of student and supervisor writing experiences in the science disciplines at one university, supervisors indicated a lack of skills, confidence and time, as major frustrations in their ability to work closely with students on their writing. Students, for their part, frequently related unsatisfactory experiences of feedback and interactions around their writing (Aitchison, Catterall, Ross, & Burgin, 2012). Doctoral student frustrations associated with supervisor feedback practices have been noted in other studies (Starke-Meyerring, 2011; Aitchison, 2014).

The Supervisor, the Writing and the Student in Creative Practice Doctorates

In 2013, an Australian government funded project *Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative practice higher research degrees* gathered and disseminated a range of perspectives on supervisory practices (See Project Website for full details: http://supervisioncreativeartsphd.net/). The project aimed to better understand the contextual frameworks of creative practice higher degrees by research and to establish an in-common understanding of effective supervision by 'capturing insights of administrators and supervisors and gathering exemplars of good practices' (Hamilton et al., 2013, p. 3). With funding from the Australian Office of Learning and Teaching, two key data gathering activities were undertaken: a national symposium, *Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees (ESCARD)* with 62 delegates from 20 Australasian universities and in-depth interviews with 25 new and experienced supervisors from the five partner institutions. For this paper, symposium discussions and written responses collected there, plus the interview transcripts, were analysed for supervisor perspectives and practices on writing and writing supervision in creative practice doctorates.

In both interviews with supervisors and at the national symposium, discussions about writing were recurrent. For all stakeholders, it was apparent that far from being invisible or incidental, writing was an integral component of supervisory practice. As recorded in a publication arising from the project, *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees*, 'Supervisors—both new and experienced—acknowledge the importance of the written component in "helping the student do justice to the work they have done"' (Hamilton & Carson, 2013a, p. 7). In transcripts, one supervisor described the written component as a 'performance or modality of the research, which helps to clarify [the practice] in a more familiar and intelligible way for the examiner' and another described the relationship between the writing and the creative practice as 'symbiotic'.

When supervisors were asked to identify key issues for writing in creative arts research degrees, many referred to writer and practitioner subjectivities such as the students' ability to overcome preconceptions about themselves, the discipline or possibilities for the thesis; fear and avoidance of writing; lack of writing confidence; or competence, time constraints and the challenge of finding an authentic and appropriate scholarly voice. While these issues were identified as troublesome for supervision, supervisors nevertheless demonstrated considerable capacity to address these

challenges by bringing practice-orientated perspectives and pedagogies to their writing supervision.

For many supervisors, attention to student writing throughout the candidature was integral to their supervisory practice—indeed, integral to the project of the creative practice research. At the symposium, describing their writing supervision practice, one senior supervisor contested the notion of 'writing up', by stating, 'the exegesis is emergent… We don't "write up", we "write *through*"'. Another spoke of the 'rhythm and engagement with the text over the period of supervision'; and another advocated periodic separation of work on the creative and the written components, saying 'they are in a relationship with each other but in a different way…' recognising the danger that 'the written could overtake the practice'.

Supervisors spoke seamlessly about both the product and the process of writing and its connection to theory development and creative practice. Parallels were drawn between writing practice and creative practice, for example, about how scholars and supervisors had to learn to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty, 'it's often a leap into the unknown'. There was a recognition that writing developed through numerous iterations of cycles of continuous critique and feedback—aspects that characterise both creative and writing practice.

Supervisors expressed a deep understanding of the epistemic and subject-forming functions of writing. They explained how they employed different pedagogical practices for different purposes: 'students should write down their thoughts first in a stream of consciousness, and only then find the literature to back it up, edit, perfect, worry about structure, etc. This is very liberating and far more organic/creative'. Sounding a note of caution, one senior supervisor highlighted how different kinds of writing do different things: 'I've found candidates who just write and then end up with two more years of work at the end of it, and they don't have the skills for editing this down. Writing, and honing that writing are different skills—both of which need developing. Simply writing a lot, doesn't doesn't build the exegesis/thesis'.

This awareness of writing for different purposes was evident again when supervisors shared strategies for working with students whose candidature had stalled. Strategies to kick-start writing included: helping or directing students to write in small time- grabs; asking students to answer questions about their work as bullet points—and then later, together, reworking these in simple clear language; using creative writing exercises; or requesting 'back to basics' short texts on an exhibition. Supervisors found that sometimes students benefited from work that was not directly focused on the production of the thesis or exegesis. Such alternative writing activities nevertheless continued to develop the skill of writing and to maintain momentum around the practice of writing and to progress students' thinking.

Working with Students and their Texts: Pedagogies for Developing the Knowledge and the Knower

Supervisors were surprisingly forthcoming in their willingness to share in detail the actual activities and practices they used with their students. Like research on supervisor writing pedagogy in the sciences (Aitchison et al., 2012), popular strategies included supervisors modelling writing practices with their students; the use of written exemplars; and giving appropriate, staged, feedback including oral feedback.

Supervisors in this study showed impressive agility and sensitivity in their work with students and their texts. The following extract illustrates one supervisors' practice for addressing students' lack of confidence:

> I've worked with candidates who have a very damaged belief in their ability to write, and with them I'll work immersively. I'll climb inside their drafts and we might sit at the computer here and work extensively on three para- graphs. That system works—being close into it, and then gradually

> withdrawing as they grow stronger. This enables me to teach some of conventions, and embed it in what they're trying to write … everything from formal referencing to not repeating ideas.

This approach of getting close up and personal with the student's text, collaborating with them and editing and altering writing together, is the kind of productive pedagogy advocated by Kamler and Thomson (2006). This kind of cooperation and modelling is preferable to telling student writers what to do, or doing it for them.

> I get the drafts; I show them 'how' to write; English, grammar, how to give evidence; give examples, samples, active, not passive…

Two supervisors in particular described how they made use of the confirmation process, not only to develop student thinking (and hence the creative project), but also as an opportunity to identify and work closely on potential areas of writing difficulty: 'so the formal confirmation is a good place to start really editing the work and pulling it apart. Just showing/teaching the student how to write for something like this process'. The following comprehensive account of supervisory practice was volunteered by another:

> For confirmation of candidature, for example, I'll see three drafts. Two weeks between each draft for me to look at it and then two weeks for them to make changes. The first draft is content—What do they have? Are they missing anything or on the other hand have they gone off on tangents? I only look at content. The second review is structure—Is it structured in a way that makes sense of what they're doing; in a way that is most persuasive as an argument; are the bits all in the right place? There are major and minor structural changes—lots of arrows. The third draft is the final editing, looking at the sense of sentences…. It like you're making a sculpture you'd get all the content first—all the clay—get all the stuff—the content on site and then you create an armature… you create the structure. That might just be a contents page. Then you put all the bits on the structure and move it to produce the right shapes, and then you begin to refine it.

Rarely do new supervisors come to hear such pedagogical detail—and yet it is exactly this kind of information they seek.

When supervisors described their pedagogical approaches to working with students on their texts, in most cases, they described an integrated approach where feedback and critique was 'fit for purpose', formative and developmental, and where discussing feedback was routine. Such feedback processes were framed as staged collaborations around the text, where the aim was to build student skill and confidence so that, over time, the supervisor's role was reduced, ' … and then my process is to say—"Ok, we've done this before. Show me how to do it." And then do a light editing of that—and then hopefully the light editing of the final, will work'. But such developmental approaches require considerable time and energy on the part of the supervisor and there was also some evidence of a tougher 'natural selection' (Aitchison et al., 2012) approach, 'First thing, I ask them to write 2000 words. Get it to me next week. Then savage red pen, and see how they respond. Then if they respond well, [I say] "Why don't you put in an application?" You do have to write stuff'. Referring to the extra work required to support those students who may face additional challenges of writing in a foreign language, one supervisor lamented, 'educationally I know it is better to "prompt" but for internationals they have a short time frame, so I edit to do justice to the richness of the research'.

In these examples, supervisors model practices for working with text to shape and improve the writing. Others, however, shared writing-producing strategies, for example, 'as the supervisor I have allocated time to sit down and write alongside my student. If they want to talk about something they have to wait until a break from writing. This is one way to teach and lead through example', another said, 'I require drafts in writing. We set up the structure straightaway and we populate the points'.

Supervisors often spoke of helping students find their voice over the period of the candidature. They demonstrated an acute awareness of the difficulties faced by these creative arts practitioners seeking to develop the 'right' voice in their doctoral texts— one that was appropriate to the scholarly field, but also authentic and satisfying for the emerging creative scholar. It was recognised

that helping a student develop their doctoral voice sometimes involved difficult identity work and that this could be risky business (Barnacle & Dall'Alba, 2013; Ivanič, 1998; James, 2013; Kamler & Thomson, 2006; Nelson, 2004). One person described how they incorporated early writing activities explicitly asking their student to respond to the provocation—'Who are you?' But concern was also expressed about how supervisors might advance or inhibit the development of voice, 'It gets a little bit weird, knowing how far to edit somebody's work—when do you do it for them, and so on. A conundrum—when to know when to go hands off'. These questions of subject formation arose not only for students but also implicated supervisors.

Supervisors also acknowledged the tensions they faced as they steered students to explore the boundaries and possibilities for the textual representation of their practice. Many spoke of the advantages of using exemplars to help themselves, their students and colleagues, imagine possibilities for the doctoral text, 'I use examples of exegeses with supervisors and colleagues, as they are tangible evidence [of what is possible] when used in conjunction with the story'. In addition, such strategies for writing development, when shared with colleagues, worked as 'academic development' building capacity and skill amongst supervisors. In fact, 'an overwhelming majority of supervisors in our study expressed interest in the idea of capturing and sharing case studies and access to other resources that are specifically designed for creative practice research' (Hamilton et al., 2013, p. 46).

Conclusion

This research showed that, in stark contrast to the silencing and deficit discourses that prevail in institutional researcher education, writing for creative practice-led supervisors is highly visible and well valued. It is noteworthy that in this research supervisors spoke of writing with enthusiasm and spontaneity. In the national symposium, writing was quickly identified as deserving of special attention in creative practice supervision. Like creative practice itself, writing is about a process of *becoming* through the production of an artefact (in this case the exegesis). Perhaps because this group of academics are arts practitioners they have a heightened awareness of writing as practice, or maybe because the newness of the field throws up particular unexplored challenges— whatever the reason, for this group, supervising writing, does matter.

Importantly too, this research showed that supervisors valued opportunities to share and learn from each other. There were numerous positive comments from participants about the benefits they gained from reflecting on and exchanging examples of their practices (Hamilton & Carson, 2013b). However, although pleasure was expressed in regard to informal learning associated with mentoring by senior col- leagues or derived from collegial conversations, no one mentioned having received any formal training in developing student writing.

Paradoxically then, writing is recognised as important—and yet it is not formally afforded appropriate attention in supervisor training development. Instead, it would appear, as one supervisor reported, learning how to work with student writing '… seems to occur informally, within the corridors, between colleagues'. There are undoubtedly benefits from peer learning; however, there can also be less welcome consequences, as indicated by a symposium delegate who commented 'all our supervisors are operating out of their own ideologies/experiences which makes for unusual scenarios when they haven't done a doctorate themselves'.

The research showed these creative practice supervisors were both stimulated and challenged by the unique demands of scholarly creative practice writing and the pro- duction of the doctoral exegesis/ written component. Some thrived on the ambiguity and uncertainty of the still-evolving genre, enjoying the tension between formal expectations and constraints and creative experimentation, but others—especially where they lacked support—found the lack of clarity and seemingly conflicting information, unnerving and unhelpful.

The *Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative practice higher research degrees* project, stated that 'Concern about quality and integrity often prompts discussions on the role of academic writing in creative practice higher degrees by research …' and that 'academic writing is an area in which support may be needed' (Hamilton & Carson, 2013a). I am not advocating that we separate writing out from the practice of knowledge making and the creative practice project, but I am suggesting that we take great care to explicitly tend to writing, rather than leaving it sub- merged as an unrecognised layer of supervision practice. There is no doubt that students and supervisors would benefit from better organised, more frequent opportunities to learn about and share pedagogical practices for supporting student writing. We ought not to seek attention to writing simply as an anti-risk measure—the benefits of writing-rich supervisory practice far outweigh such institutional concerns.

What we do know, as we learn more about the supervision of doctoral writing in general, and in the creative practices in particular, is that supervisors recognise the centrality of writing to the creative and intellectual project and they recognise the importance of developing writing confidence and capacities throughout a students' candidature. We know also that there are few avenues for supervisors to learn and to share writing-related supervision practices. It is hoped that by documenting some of these here, we may add to the collective knowledge and further develop practitioners' competence, benefiting supervisors, students and ultimately the creative practice disciplines. As others have noted (Baker et al., 2009; Bruce, 2009; Paltridge et al., 2011), supervisors (and students) wish to have greater access to exemplars of the written pro- duct/exegesis and of successful supervisory pedagogies. The evidence presented here is that there is a very rich seam of knowledge about supervisory practices that support candidates and their writing within creative higher degrees. Making these practices visible, taking concrete, rather than ad hoc and incidental measures to identify and share these, is not only clearly desirable—it is widely desired.

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